Nelson's History of the War

Volume V

John Buchan
1915

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NELSON'S
HISTORY OF THE WAR

VOLUME V.

NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR. By John Buchan.

Volume V. The War of Attrition in the West, the Campaign in the Near East, and the Fighting at Sea down to the Blockade of Britain.

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS
LONDON, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN, AND NEW YORK

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We left the campaign in the West when the critical moment had passed. The thin lines from Nieuport to Arras had done their work, and by 20th November the tide of attack had recoiled and lay grumbling and surging beyond our bastions. A number of German corps were sent East to von Hindenburg—mostly new and reserve formations, but including one first line corps, the 11th (Cassel). General Foch was now at leisure to rearrange his lines and give some rest to the sorely tried defenders. The bulk of the British Second Corps and most of the 7th Division were already in reserve, and the First Corps followed, so that at the end of November, except for the Third Corps and the new 8th Division, portions of the cavalry, and the Indian Corps, the front from Albert to the sea was held by the French troops of d'Urbal's 8th and Maud'huy's 10th Army.

In those days, both in France and Britain, little was known of the great crisis now happily past. The French official *communiqués* gave the barest information, and the Paris papers could not supplement it. The English Press continued to publish reassuring articles and victorious headlines; indeed, we were officially told that our front had everywhere advanced on a day when it had everywhere fallen back. Hence, since the duration of the crisis had caused little anxiety, its end brought no special relief or rejoicing to the ordinary man. Soldiers returning on leave, solemnized

by their desperate experience, were amazed at the perfect calmness of the British people, till they discovered that it was due to a perfect ignorance. There is a peculiarly exasperating type of optimism which in those days our troops had to suffer from. "I suppose we are winning hands down," said the cheerful civilian, and the soldier, with Ypres raw in his memory, could only call upon his gods and hold his peace. This conspiracy of silence may have served some purpose in keeping our nerves quiet, though the courage of the British people scarcely deserves to be rated so low; but in concealing from us the greatest military performance in all our history, it prevented that glow and exaltation of the national spirit which makes armies and wins battles.

Winter had now fairly come; and though in modern war we affect to despise the seasons, the elements take their revenge, and both armies were forced into that trench warfare which takes the place of the winter quarters of Marlborough's day. The shallow shelter trenches of mid-October, hasty lines scored in the mud by harried men, became an elaborate series of excavations to which the most modern engineering knowledge on both sides was applied. At the same time, the enemy had to be kept occupied, and while the bulk of the Allied troops were employed as navvies and carpenters, the guns were rarely silent, and attacks and counter-attacks reminded the armies that they were at war. During the last ten days of November there were only minor operations. On the night of the 23rd, for example, a party of the 2nd Lincolns cleared three of the enemy's trenches opposite the 25th Brigade of the 8th Division. The following night a mixed party of the Royal Engineers and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers mined and blew up a group of farms near Le Touquet, which had been a nest of German snipers. On the 26th and 27th the 2nd Scots Guards from the 20th Brigade, and the 2nd Rifle Brigade from the 25th, made successful incursions upon the German trenches. The most serious counter-attack during those days was upon the left wing of the Indian Corps in the neighbourhood of Festubert. About nine o'clock on the morning of 23rd November the 112th Regiment of the German 14th Corps, having sapped up to within a few yards of the trenches of the 34th Sikh Pioneers, made a determined assault and captured 800 yards of our trenches. Snow had fallen, but during the day the weather cleared to a light frost. In the evening General Anderson, commanding the Meerut Division, organized a counter-attack, and a desperate struggle took place, which dispossessed the main body of the Germans, but left some trenches occupied both by our men and the enemy. When reserves arrived about 10.30 p.m. we succeeded in enfilading the enemy with our left wing, and drove him back with great slaughter, completely reestablishing our line. In the struggle the 39th Garhwal

Nov. 23.

Rifles—the men from the hill country east of Nepal—played a distinguished part, and a naik of that regiment, Darwan Sing Negi, received the Victoria Cross. Though wounded in the arm and twice in the head, he was foremost in pushing round the successive traverses in the trenches in the face of a heavy close-range bomb and rifle fire. Lieutenant Frank de Pass of the 34th Poona Horse, who fell on that day, also won the Cross for his gallantry in entering a German sap. We took three machine guns and over a hundred prisoners, and a hundred German dead were counted on the ground.

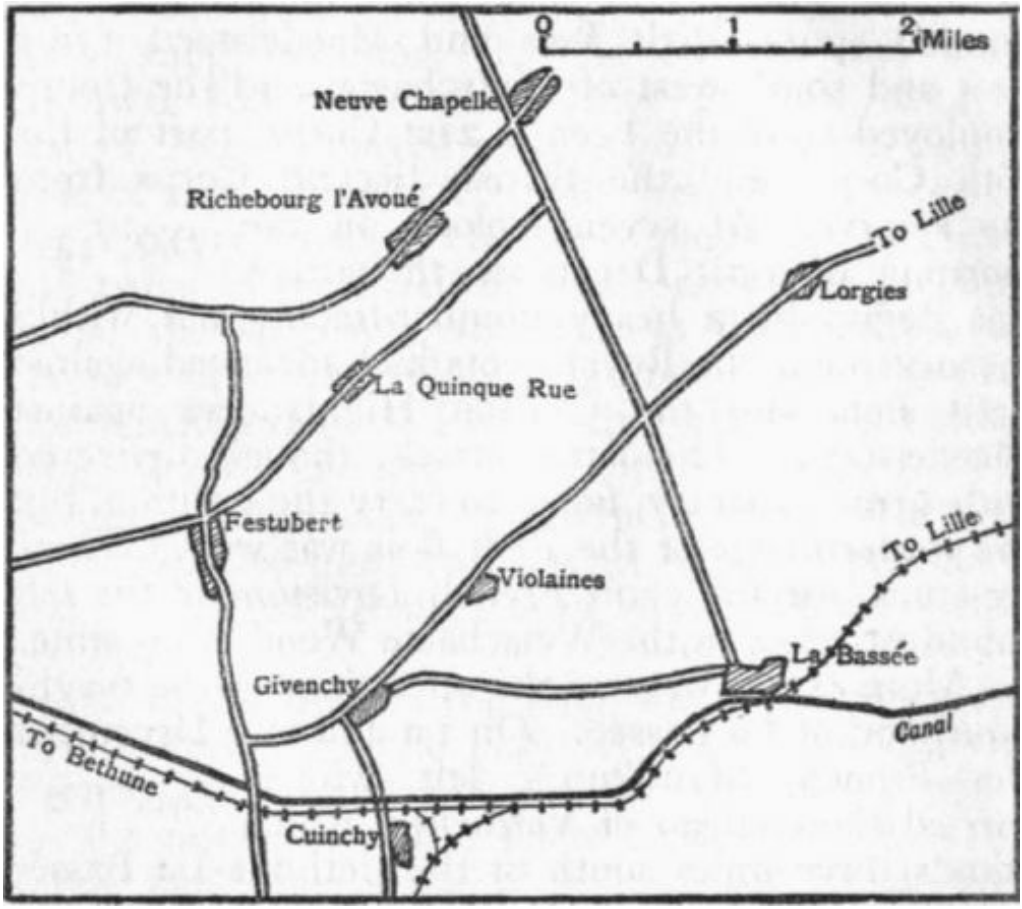
In December the fighting was on a more extended scale. In the first days of the month the French 9th Corps captured the ferryman's house on the east bank of the Ypres Canal, between Dixmude and Bixschoote—a position for which they had striven for weeks. On the 9th the British Third Corps was attacked on the front held by the 1st Middlesex and the 2nd Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders of the 19th Brigade, but the assault was easily repulsed. By this time General Foch had information of the large withdrawal of troops from the German lines to reinforce von Hindenburg in the East, and it seemed a suitable moment to improve our position. One of the weakest points in our front was the re-entrant south of Ypres, where the German trenches at the canal near Klein Zillebeke came up to within two miles of the old ramparts, and the German occupation of Wytschaete and Messines—villages on low ridges—gave them admirable gun positions. Our aim was the two wooded spurs, Petit Bois and Maedelsteed, lying west and south-west of Wytschaete, and the troops employed were the French 21st Corps, part of the 16th Corps, and the British Second Corps from the reserve. At seven o'clock on the morning of 14th December the attack was begun by a heavy bombardment, and within the next hour the Royal Scots had advanced against Petit Bois and the Gordon Highlanders against Maedelsteed. The latter attack, though delivered with great gallantry, failed to carry the position, but the western edge of the Petit Bois was won. There we stuck, for the 32nd French Division on the left found progress in the Wytschaete Wood impossible.

Dec. 14.

More extensive were the operations in the neighbourhood of La Bassée. On 1st and 2nd December the French—Maud'huy's left wing—carried the château of Vermelles, which stands three miles south of the Bethune-La Bassée Canal, close to the railway which runs south to Lens. The work was carried out by three companies of infantry and two squadrons of dismounted Spahis. This gave them a gun position against the communications of that part of the German front, which, consequently, had to retire behind the railway. The capture of the village of Rutoire followed, which meant the gain of about a mile

Dec. 1-2.

and a half of ground. The success of these operations suggested to Sir James Willcocks that the time was favourable for the Indian Corps to attack the advanced trenches of the enemy. The British position at the time on this front was from Cuinchy across the railway and canal through Givenchy, east of Festubert, and continuing north to west of Neuve Chapelle, where the French took over the line. The Lahore Division was on the right, with the Ferozepore Brigade astride the canal, and the Sirhind Brigade in Givenchy. On the left the Dehra Dun Brigade of the Meerut Division lay north in front of Festubert, and the Garhwal Brigade behind Neuve Chapelle.



The Fighting near La Bassée, December 19, 1914.

The attack of the Lahore Division began at 4.30 on the morning of the 19th, and was conducted by part of the 1st Highland Light Infantry and the

4th Gurkhas, from the Sirhind Brigade. Two lines of trenches were captured, but when day broke it was found that the position was one of grave danger, both of its flanks being in the air. Lieutenant-Colonel Ronaldson held on till dark, when he found it necessary to evacuate the trenches he had won. The attack of the Meerut Division on the left was in the same case. At first it had succeeded, but counter-attacks during the 19th drove it back to its original line.

Next day, the 20th, the Germans attacked along the whole Indian front with artillery and trench mortars. Then the infantry was launched against the Sirhind Brigade between Givenchy and La Quinque Rue. By ten o'clock the Sirhind Brigade had fallen back, and the Germans had captured a large part of Givenchy. The right of our line, the Ferozepore Brigade, stood firm—the 57th (Wilde's) Rifles and the 9th Bhopals north of the canal, and the 1st Connaught Rangers south of it. Reinforcements were hurried up, for the position was serious, Givenchy being the pivot of that part of our front. The 15th and 47th Sikhs were sent to help the Sirhind Brigade, and General Carnegy, with the 1st Manchesters, 4th Suffolks, and two battalions of French Territorials, was ordered to attack the invader in Givenchy village. To safeguard the Ferozepore Brigade on our right, a battalion of the 58th French Division was sent to Annequin, two and a half miles west of Cuinchy.

Dec. 20.

The Manchesters and Suffolks attacked Givenchy at five in the evening, retook the village, and cleared the enemy out of two lines of trenches to the north-east, but could not drive them from their position in the north. Meanwhile General Macbean, with the 47th Sikhs, the Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade, and a battalion of the 8th Gurkhas, had been ordered to attack the position from the direction of the Rue de Marais. There was some delay in starting, and the first attack, when it was delivered about one o'clock in the morning of the 21st by the 47th Sikhs and the 7th Dragoon Guards, failed disastrously, the commanding officer of the latter regiment being killed. By 4.30 a.m. the whole of General Macbean's force had been driven back.

Farther north, on the 20th, the Meerut Division was also in difficulties. The German wedge north of Givenchy exposed the right of the Dehra Dun Brigade, where were the 1st Seaforth Highlanders. All the afternoon of the 20th this part of the Meerut Division suffered severely, especially the Seaforths, the troops, says Sir John French, being "pinned to the ground by artillery fire." North of the Seaforths there was a dint in our line, caused by the retreat of a battalion of the 2nd Gurkhas, and the orchard where this happened was soon our chief post of danger, for the 2nd Black Watch managed to close the gap between the Seaforths and the left of the retiring Sirhind Brigade.

That afternoon Sir John French had instructed the First Corps to send a brigade to support the Indians, and later Sir Douglas Haig was ordered to take the whole of the 1st Division. By the morning of the 21st the 1st Division was moving on Givenchy, the 1st Brigade advancing by way of Pont Fixe, and the 3rd Brigade by Gorre against the trenches lost by the Sirhind Brigade. By five o'clock that evening the 1st Brigade[1] held Givenchy and the ground as far south as the canal, and by nightfall the 1st South Wales Borderers and the 2nd Welsh of the 3rd Brigade had won back the original trenches north-east of Festubert. To the 2nd Brigade was entrusted the task of straightening the line of the Dehra Dun Brigade to the north. By 10 p.m. they had reoccupied the support trenches west of the orchard where the 2nd Gurkhas had been forced back, but the original fire trenches had been so utterly destroyed that they could no longer be used.

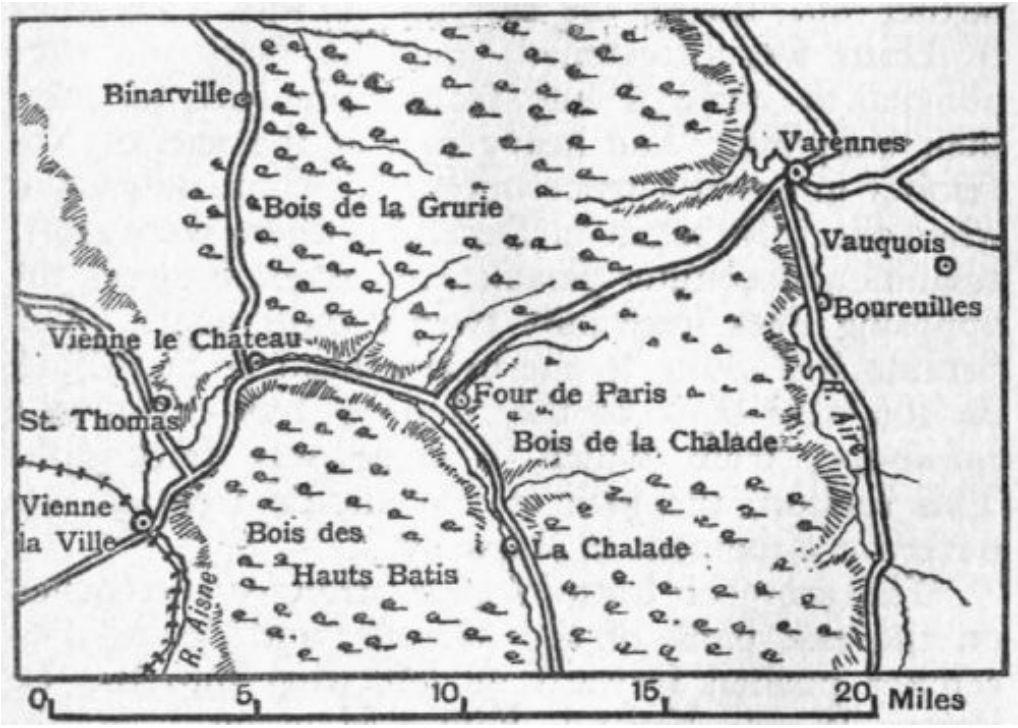
Dec. 21.

At midday next day, the 22nd, Sir Douglas Haig took over the command of that portion of the front from Sir James Willcocks. The position on that day was as follows. South and north of the La Bassée Canal the Ferozepore Brigade maintained its original position. The 1st Brigade held Givenchy, with the 3rd Brigade on its left along and to the east of the Festubert road. North was the Dehra Dun Brigade, with the Seaforth Highlanders relieved by troops of the 2nd Brigade, and part of the same brigade holding an indented line west of the orchard. The 6th Jats, on the extreme left of the Dehra Dun Brigade, and the Garhwal Brigade occupied their original line. During that evening and the following day the whole of the position was re-established. It had been an awkward moment, for the Indian troops were very weary from their two months in the trenches, they had had 10,000 casualties, and they held a long and difficult line, but Sir Douglas Haig's prompt and judicious help had saved the situation. For the rest of the month there was little to chronicle in the Flanders campaign.

Dec. 22.

The fighting in the north was so desperate and constant that to British eyes it obscured the rest of the war in the West. But we must not forget that Sir John French's army held less than a tenth of the front, and that everywhere from Albert to Belfort ran the Allied trenches, with the Germans a few score yards beyond. During December the war languished on the Oise, along the Aisne, and in northern Champagne. The fighting was mostly sniping and artillery duels, but there was a sensible though small advance in every part of the French line, except to the north-east of Soissons, where von Kluck sat impregnable. In the Argonne, however, the Crown Prince was very active, and there, as along the Moselle and on the steeps of the Vosges, the troops fought in wintry forests—clean, dry woods of fir and

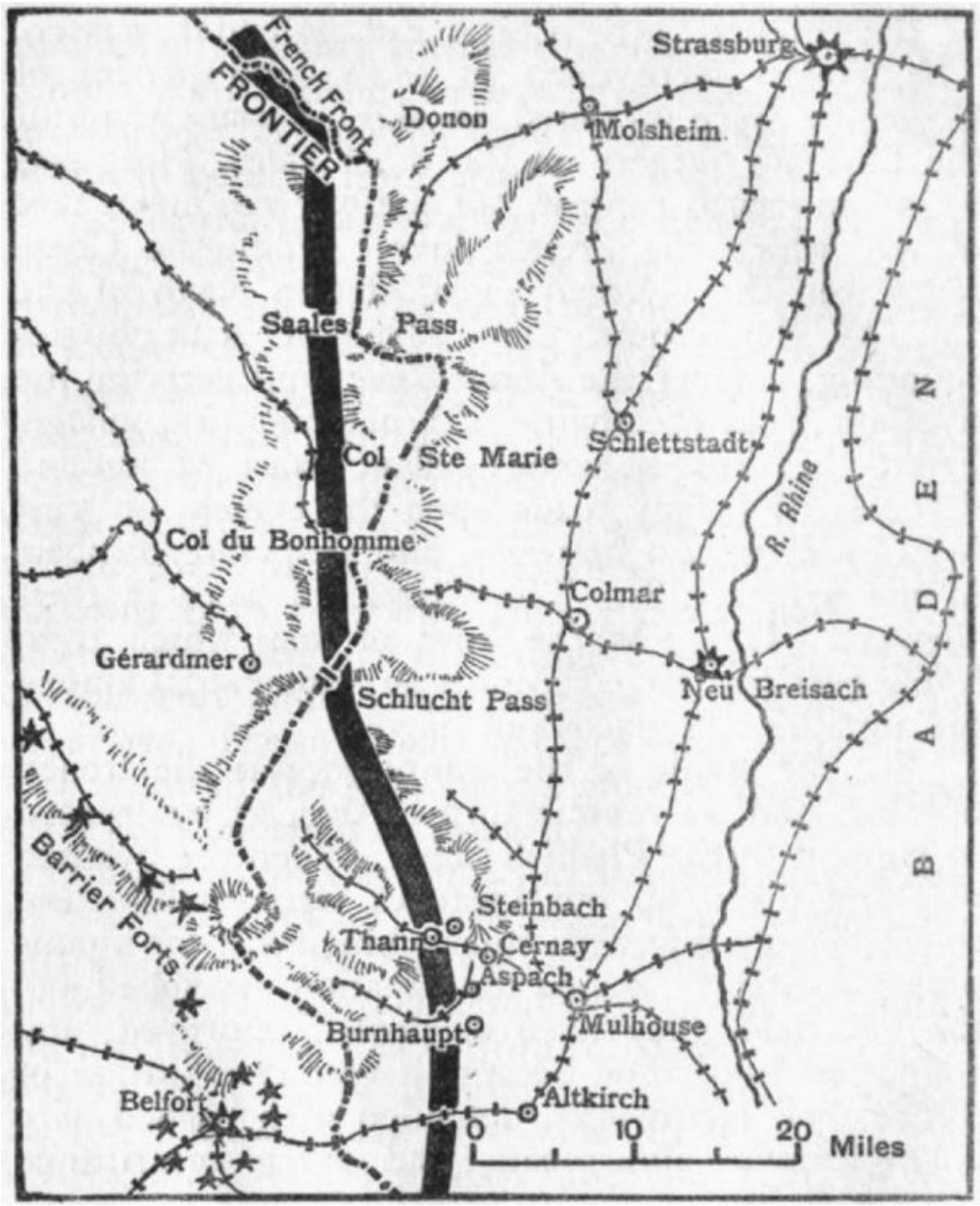
chestnut, very different from the boggy plantations of Ploegsteert and Houthulst. In the Argonne the numbers engaged on both sides were small—the left wing of Sarrail's army of Verdun, and the Crown Prince's right—and the fighting was confined to the narrow strip eight miles broad bounded on the south by the hill road from Varennes to Vienne. We have seen that in the beginning of October the Germans made a great effort to capture that pass, for it provided the link between Sarrail and Langle's army of Champagne. North of the road lies the wood of La Grurie, south the wood of Bolante, and in the space between lie the hamlets of Four de Paris, St. Hubert, and Fontaine Madame. Here during the winter months, among the oaks and hornbeams, there were many German attacks—on the road and the villages beyond it; but all failed, and the French gained ground and pushed their trenches well forward into La Grurie. In this section of the campaign the fighting well consorted with the French genius. There were endless chances for personal enterprise—scouting parties among the dark trees, where each figure showed up sharply against the white ground; look-outs perched high up in the branches of some great fir; night assaults through the snowy dingles and along the frosty ravines which score the plateau. From the Argonne came wonderful tales of chivalry and daring, for fighting under such conditions was bound to become legendary.



The Fighting Front in the Argonne during the Winter.

At Verdun, Sarrail's brilliant defence was unshaken. Weekly the trench lines were pushed farther out, till on the east the railway from Metz to Etain was threatened, and the Germans were obliged to build a line from Spincourt to carry their supplies. The heavy rain at the end of November imposed a truce upon both combatants, but when the frost set in in December there were many assaults and counter-assaults, for at some places the opposing lines were only twenty yards apart. Von Strantz still clung to the bridge-head at St. Mihiel on the west bank of the Meuse; but it proved a *cul-de-sac*, from which advance was impossible. This section, the gate of the middle frontier, was never for a moment in jeopardy.

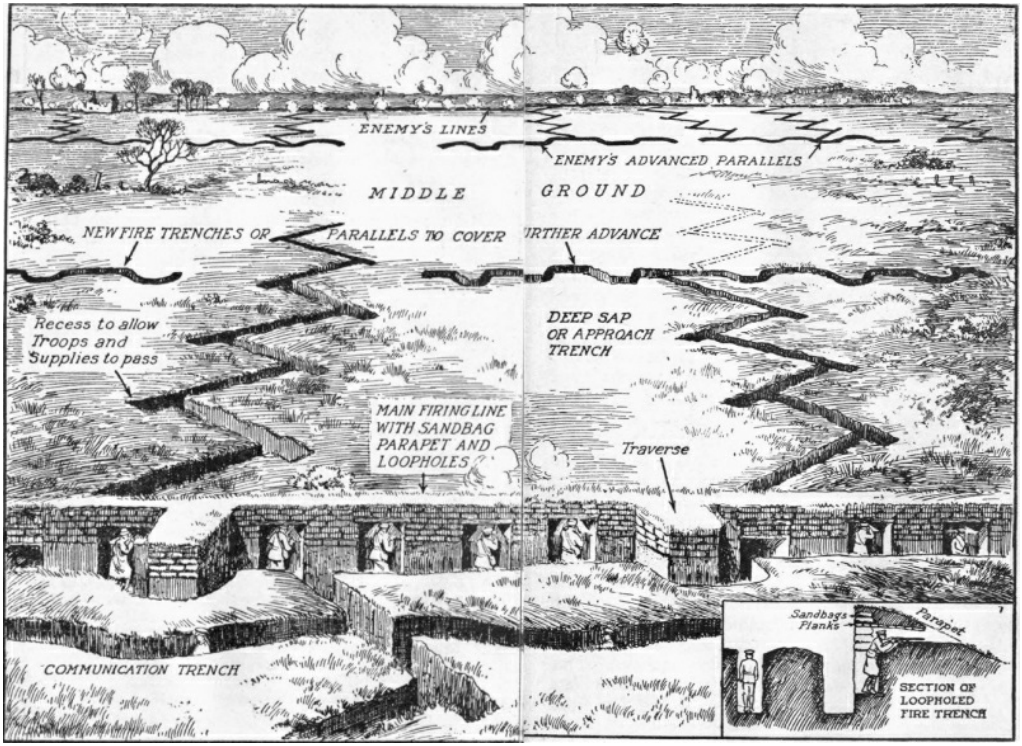
The army of Lorraine was strongly entrenched on the east bank of the Moselle, and during December pushed forward its left wing into the Le Prêtre Wood, beyond Pont-à-Mousson. Southwards its line ran well in front of Nancy and Lunéville to the crest of the Vosges at Mont Donon. Thence it ran on the west side till it crossed the Vosges at the Schlucht Pass, and continued on the eastern side by Steinbach, Aspach, and Upper Burnhaupt to a point a mile or two west of Altkirch. In the struggle for the crests the Chasseurs Alpins[2] of the French 15th Corps did splendid service. The Vosges were deep in snow, and parties of Chasseurs were mounted on skis, as were some of the Bavarian Jaegers on the other side. Here was no sullen trench contest, but the old free movement of war which the French love. When the Chasseurs won the German signal station north of the Col du Bonhomme they advanced with bugles sounding, singing the *Marseillaise*, and carrying the tricolour from the mairie of a neighbouring village. From the Vosges come gallant tales of sudden descents by craggy roads upon the enemy, of great feats by mountain batteries, and desperate combats in the winter hills. The Chasseurs were in their element. This was the kind of war which their forefathers had waged from time immemorial among the aiguilles and glaciers of Savoy.



French Position in the Vosges at the end of December.

But the staple of the campaign was the trench fighting, and we must return to this, as we learned to know it in the Flemish flats. When the position was first taken up our trenches were shallow and rough, hastily dug with entrenching tools for a temporary shelter.[3] But as the situation developed and the line held, they were

deepened, improved, and connected until they became a vast ramification of ditches and earthworks, defended with barbed wire entanglements and moats, and every contrivance that human ingenuity could suggest. Let us look at a section of the front as it appeared towards the end of December. The advanced firing line consisted of a number of short trenches, with traverses and recesses for protection against enfilading. The advantage of a line in short sections is that in the event of the enemy getting into a trench they have to win a number of separate trenches, and cannot clear out the whole line by flank fire. When short sections were not adopted there were recesses in the walls, which gave some protection against a flank attack. The usual advanced trenches were at least five feet deep and very narrow—not more than two feet wide. Usually they were lightly held, being employed chiefly as observation posts. Behind them at right angles were the communication trenches, zigzagged for safety, which provided the connection between the firing line and the next parallel line of occupation trenches. The latter were often partially roofed over for protection against shrapnel. Here were the dug-outs—caves made in the wall or pits a little in the rear reached by a narrow tunnel, where men could sleep, and the trench cooking was done. Behind them further communication zigzags led to another line of reserve trenches, and, in some cases, to a third. Beyond was a network of roads, sheltered as much as possible, leading to the parks of the Transport, the Royal Engineers, and the depots of the Army Service Corps, and beyond them to the villages and farmhouses where reserves were billeted, and to the general advanced base of the army. The trenches were floored and lined with planking, hurdles, or wire netting, and at all the critical points, especially when the enemy's trenches were near, there were vast entanglements and breastworks. Firing was conducted from the advanced trenches and the sniping pits, through loop-holes, and frequently directed by means of periscopes, which showed a man the enemy's position without obliging him to raise his head above the level of the ground.



Sketch to illustrate Trench Warfare

The trenches were not a fixed position. Daily, like a glacier, they endeavoured to creep farther forward by means of sap and mine. Both sides burrowed towards their opponent's lines,[4] and when successful a length of trench would leap into the air in a great explosion, there would be a rush of infantry, and a hundred yards of hostile trenches would be won, and, if the gods were propitious, held. If a party succeeded in getting into the enemy's trenches their first task was to block the communication zigzags to prevent a counter-attack. Every night patrols would creep out into the No Man's Land between the lines, and occasionally fall in with an enemy patrol and rush it with the bayonet, while magnesium flares lit up the darkness, and the guns of both armies awoke. Snipers on both sides were busy all day from pits and prepared positions, and woe betide the unwary man who lifted his head above the ground. The devices of the eighteenth century campaigns returned. The Japanese had used hand grenades at the siege of Port Arthur, and bombs and grenades, bombardiers and grenadiers in the old sense took their places in our scheme of war. The Germans had a trench mortar, which fired a bomb a foot in diameter, and had a range of about 350 yards. The bomb before firing was outside the barrel, and had a kind of stalk

which fitted into the bore. The British bombardier was a strange figure. A correspondent of the *Times* wrote: "Around their middle they carry some twenty or thirty bombs, little cylinders fastened on a long stick, round which fall streamers of ribbon. The clothing of ribbons suggests the birth of a mixed breed of Scotsmen and Red Indians who have taken to wearing the Red Indian head-dress as a kilt. In action they are stranger still. Crouching down among the barbed wire the bombers, with their supporting infantrymen with fixed bayonets, raise themselves a little from the earth, and, seizing one of these rocket-like bombs from their belts, grasp them by the stick and hurl them high above the parapet. They twist and travel uncertainly through the air, and then finally the force of equilibrium supplied by the streamers of ribbon asserts itself, and they plunge straight as a plumb line down into the trench. There is a noise as though a gigantic Chinese cracker were jumping zigzag along the zigzag trench, and clouds of greenish smoke rise up, through which hurtle lumps of earth and stone and fragments of the outer iron ring of the bomb which constitute its shrapnel."

But the true weapon against trenches was the artillery. There were first the ordinary field guns—the British 18-pounder,[5] the French 75 mm., and the German 77 mm.—with an effective radius of a couple of miles. Without an artillery "preparation" an infantry advance in this war was folly, and the guns were used to damage the enemy's trenches, to keep down the fire of the enemy's held guns, and occasionally to bombard positions of importance behind the trenches. But field artillery is at some disadvantage in trench warfare, as compared with its use in a manœuvre battle against advancing infantry. With its flat trajectory, the ordinary field gun does extraordinarily little harm to men in trenches two feet wide. Shrapnel proved nearly useless, and the Allied guns took to firing almost exclusively high explosive shell, which, if the fuses were accurately timed, did a certain damage. At any rate they kept down the fire of the enemy; but with field artillery alone trench warfare would have been an interminable business.

Far more important were the heavy guns—the 60-pounders and especially the field howitzers. The immense power of the shell and the fact that it fell from a high angle enabled them literally to destroy the trench which they succeeded in hitting. Again, they had an ordinary range of four to five miles, and this allowed them to be emplaced well to the rear out of any danger from the enemy, unless one of his own howitzers got their range. The heavy guns played a vital part in trench warfare, and most of the advances were due to their preliminary bombardment. That they did not play a greater part was owing to the difficulties under which they were operated. With trenches close up to each other—in many cases not forty yards off, in some

cases scarcely a dozen—it was a risky matter for artillery to bombard the enemy, for the slightest shortage in the flight of a shell caused devastation among its own men. It says much for the skill of the gunners that misadventures so rarely happened. Our Indian troops detested this part of the business. It took them a long time to realize, when shells came over their heads from behind, that the enemy had not got round their rear.

The discomforts of trench warfare can never be removed; at the best they can be mitigated. In the early days, before 20th November, when regiments were cooped up with their dead for a fortnight under constant fire in shallow mud-holes, the misery of it beggars all description. As the first violence of the attack ebbed and the Allies were given leisure to revise their trenches, many improvements were introduced, battalions were more frequently relieved, and the whole system was regularized. The strain and the *ennui* of the work remained, but the physical hardships grew lighter, the trenches were lined and drained, and the communication network was perfected. The British food supplies were excellent: good feeding will go down to history as a tradition of this army in Flanders, like hard swearing in the case of an earlier expedition. How much this means to the British soldier every one who remembers South Africa will bear witness, for there, when a man complained that he was "fed up," he generally meant that he was not fed up. Frequent relief and better provision for billets and baths in the rear did much to ease their lot. A battalion which came out of the trenches weary, lame, dishevelled, spiritless, and indescribably dirty, would be restored in a couple of days to a reasonable smartness and good humour. Perhaps the officers in the later weeks had the worst of it. For them war justified its old definition: "Months of acute boredom punctuated by moments of acute fear."

The worst part of the business was the wet. A dripping winter and the presence of a million men churned West Flanders into a gigantic mud-hole. Some parts of the Allied line were better than others. The Arras district was fairly dry; so was the Klein Zillebeke ridge and the country round Messines and Wytschaete; while in the Ploegsteert Wood—a stretch about two miles long by one mile wide—a fairly dry and comfortable forest colony was established, where men could move about with a certain freedom. But all along the Lys and the Ypres Canal the trenches were liable to constant flooding, and the approaches were seas of mire. It was worse still between Dixmude and the sea, where life became merely amphibious. Tons of wood laid for pathways disappeared in the sloughs. A false step on a dark night meant a descent into a quagmire, from which a man, if happily rescued by his fellows, emerged, as Trinculo said of Caliban, "No fish, but an islander that hath lately

suffered by a thunderbolt." The Lys overflowed its banks, and inundated our trenches for eighty yards on each side. A brook at Festubert came down in flood, and several men in the neighbouring trenches were drowned. But far worse than any risk to life was the misery of standing for hours up to the waist in icy water, of having every pore of the skin impregnated with mud, of finding the walls of a trench dissolving in slimy torrents, while rifles jammed, clothes rotted, and feet were frost-bitten. It was a lesson in the extremes to which human endurance can go. But so efficient was our commissariat work, and so ample the provision of comforts and warm clothes, that the British sick rate was no more than 3 per cent., lower than that of many garrison towns in peace, and inconceivably lower than that of any war of the past.[6]

The net gains for the fighting during two months and a half since the Allied lines extended to the sea were at first sight insignificant. If we tabulate them from Nieuport to Belfort, we shall find the advance in any one section a matter of yards—a farm, a gun position, a ridge, the farther edge of a brook or canal. But the French Staff were right in their insistence that the Allied achievement was not to be measured by ground gained. The German offensive had been broken on their ramparts, and had lost desperately in the process. Further, the enemy was kept at the stretch, and constantly pressed, on three hundred and fifty miles of front; his line was stretched taut, and when the Allied reserves were ready he would be the nearer to the breaking-point. The view is sound, for trench warfare cannot endure indefinitely. The enemy cannot fall back for ever on new trench lines. He may have in reserve, and be capable of using, a second, a third, a fourth, but probably not a fifth, and certainly not a sixth. The reason is that human powers are limited. A stiff rod will not bend for ever: sooner or later it will break; and the steady pressure of those winter weeks, barren it might seem in brilliant results, was more vital to our ultimate success than any spectacular victory.[7]

The question of the losses of the different armies was one that exercised many ingenious minds; but all estimates were mainly speculative. The Germans published elaborate casualty lists for Prussia alone; the French published no lists of any sort whatever; the British lists were hard to follow, since totals and dates were rarely given. Some figures to the close of the year may be taken as reasonably accurate. The British Prime Minister gave our losses up to 4th February as 104,000, and since January was not a month of heavy fighting, we can probably take 100,000 as the figure at the end of December. Of these, we know on German evidence, which there is no reason to distrust, that prisoners of war made up 20,000, and we know that approximately 10,000 were dead. For the French we have no figures except the

German claim to hold 220,000 French prisoners—a figure no doubt superficially accurate, but one which certainly included many thousands of civilians sent across the frontier. Among the German casualties we have no figures for prisoners. The Prussian casualty lists up to the 31st of January contained 926,547 names, and if we add to this figure a proportion of two-sevenths for the separate armies of Bavaria, Saxony, and Wurtemberg, we shall get a total of 1,200,000. These lists certainly do not go beyond the close of the year—such lists are always in arrear; and since there is some evidence that only serious wounds were counted, we shall probably be right in putting the total, on Germany's own showing, at 1½ millions for purpose of comparison with other armies. Some estimates put the gross losses much higher—one British semi-official calculation giving 2¼ millions. The estimate of the French Staff gave a minimum figure of 1,300,000 total loss, which is much the same as that given above. To argue on such insufficient data as we possess is idle, and the impressions of our soldiers in the field must be used with caution. Sir John French described the German losses at Landrecies as "tremendous," and estimated them at 700 to 1,000. But the civilian remembers only the epithet and forgets the estimate, and is inclined to level the latter up to his notion of the first. In the war of 1870 the Press was full of tales of German carnage; but the total German losses in the campaign were 28,000 killed and 101,000 wounded or missing. An officer on leave speaks of disasters to the enemy; but, having a trained perspective, he means something different from what his civilian hearers gather from his words. On the whole, however, there can be little doubt that the Germans, especially in the West, lost out of all proportion to their opponents. Their strategical purpose was in its essence wasteful of human life. We can therefore regard the long-drawn Battle of West Flanders as an Allied gain, inasmuch as it gravely weakened the man-power of the enemy, and, by depleting the officer class, made the handling of his new formations increasingly difficult. Our British losses were severe—the severest, perhaps, that we had ever suffered. We had lost more than the number we had put in the field at Mons—nearly 40 per cent. of our total strength, including drafts; and in especial we had been deprived by death of the services of some of the best of our younger officers. In the three weeks' fighting around Ypres and Armentières we can scarcely have lost less than 50,000 men. In 1794 and 1795 the dead loss of the British army was 40,000. Mr. Fortescue has estimated that the equivalent to-day, in proportion to population, would be 130,000—150,000 at least if we allow for the wounded who might afterwards rejoin. But this figure was for two years' campaigning, and our 100,000 was for five months of war. Yet Britain was able and willing to fill up the gaps in her line, as she had filled them a century before.

One of the happiest results of the war was the good feeling between the Allied armies and the sincere respect which each formed for the fighting qualities of the other. The British learned to admire methods very different from their own. "Their ways are not ours," was a frequent comment on the French troops, "but it is impossible to imagine better fighters." The two nations were given the chance of studying each other at close quarters under the sternest of all trials, and it would be hard to overvalue the results of such a study for our future friendship. A few notes may not be out of place on the psychology of the French and the British soldier.

The ordinary Frenchman is avowedly bored with politics. In no country, perhaps, is the politician, however sterling his virtues, very generally loved. His rewards are so large and immediate, the qualities which lead to a popular success may be so trivial, that he gets little sincere admiration except from those engaged, or desirous of being engaged, in the same line of business. But in France this aloofness from politics led not only to a profound distrust of all politicians, but to a certain apathy towards the State. The *bourgeois* was content to let the nation go its own way if his family and profession were not interfered with, and among the workmen the growth of syndicalism—which means the dominance of a class and a trade—revealed how weak was the conception of an overruling national interest. Nationalists there were in plenty, but theirs was a creed of sentiment and tradition, and they were equally in revolt against the whole modern business of Government. If a hundred men in Britain, chosen at random, were asked to name the figures they admired in the past half-century, ninety at least would mention no politician; in France, probably the whole hundred would produce a list untainted by politics.

But in war—war for dear life—all was changed. The State was no longer a knot of bungling officials with long tongues and deep pockets, but France, the lovely and eternal. Forgotten tales and traditions, old fragments of nursery rhymes, the dreams and emotions of boyhood, the memory of kin and home and friends, were fused in a conception of France, as a mother to die for, a queen to strive for, a goddess whom the humblest little *pioupiou* felt for "as a lover and a child." That is the happy gift of the French people. They may seem steeped in anti-nationalism, distracted with narrow class interests, sunk deep in matter, when suddenly the guns speak, and there awakes a tempestuous affection, as simple as Joan of Arc's, as splendid as the dream of a crusader. It is another privilege of the race that they are not afraid of heroics. They believe in doing fine things finely, with the grand air. They have no self-consciousness. War is a new world where familiar conventions do not apply, and they rise to the height of its novelty. The *Marseillaise* becomes not an ordinary

marching tune but a psalm of battle; the tricolour is not a flag but the Ark of the Covenant. War is a high adventure, and the man who in normal times sold haberdashery in the Rue de Rivoli trailed a rifle in the Argonne woods with a wild poetry in his head. Again and again we find a touch of noble rhetoric in their deeds and speeches. They were gay after the traditional French manner, but it was not the stolid gaiety of good health and spirits, but a sister to fierce anger and first cousin to tears. For all the ranks of France the war was a crusade, and they moved to it with a consciousness of destiny, and with the high seriousness of Raymond before the walls of Jerusalem.

Some day a poet will arise to sing of these new armies of the Republic. They were different from any that had gone before, different from Napoleon's troops intoxicated with dreams of glory, or the puzzled levies of 1870. They were an armed nation, with every class and condition in their ranks. The easy *camaraderie* of peace time between man and officer gave way to a stern self-imposed discipline and a passionate loyalty to their leaders. In these leaders we find republican dignity at its best. The heroics of France were in the soul, and world-famous army commanders were scarcely to be distinguished in dress and mode of living from the ordinary man. The land had found what Cromwell sought, the "plain russet-coat captain who knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows."

The British soldier was psychologically a world apart. In normal times he was more political than the Frenchman, more interested in his Government, and he had perhaps a more ready consciousness of the nation as something above and beyond ordinary things. He was always prepared to back his own side, as he would do in a football match; and "his own side," though he never tried to define it, was in a dim sort of way a conception of Britain. Hence the war worked no very startling revolution in his point of view. He was a professional man-at-arms, and war meant simply a busy period for his profession and a good deal of overtime. He fought, therefore, partly out of professional pride, partly from a natural love of adventure, and partly from loyalty to his "side." We are talking of the British regular, and what we have written does not apply in the same degree to the new service battalions formed after the outbreak of war, in which many men enlisted solely from motives of duty and patriotism, and which had more affinities with a national army such as the French. The British regular went to war as a matter of everyday business, and he considered it his duty to turn the most desperate affair into something homely and familiar. War was not to him a new world, and he did not see why because of it he should forgo his ordinary tastes and habits. So we find him under heavy fire discussing hotly the merits of his favourite football team, and playing games in his

scanty leisure, and diffusing over the whole ghastly business of slaughter the atmosphere of a placid English Saturday afternoon. At Pieter's Hill in the South African War, while a battalion lay under a hail of bullets on the hillside, one man observed to his neighbour, "I say, Bill, it's about time the bloomin' umpires was coming up, or somebody will be gettin' 'urt." The British soldier declined to make much of anything. While fifty miles from the firing line his letters might enliven his relations with accounts of horrors—how he had no candle, but was writing by the light of bursting shells; but when he got into the real business, he wrote that he wanted a new pipe, and hoped "that all are well, as this leaves me at present."

He was a hopeless puzzle to his enemies. Here was a being who seemed without seriousness, who never talked about glory or his country, who rather prided himself on professing a dislike for war, who behaved, when he was allowed, as if he were in a garrison town at home, and yet who proved resistless in attack and unshakable in defence. Was he merely a capable hireling, an efficient mercenary? If so, how by all the laws of history should he be able to stand against single-hearted patriots? The answer is that he was the best of patriots; but he was a Briton, and had his own way of showing it. He was naturally shy of heroics. The German soldier went into battle with his songs about the Rhine and his Fatherland. The British soldier could not do that to save his life—he would have felt a fool or a play-actor; so, when he sang, it was a music-hall jingle or some doggerel of his own composition—the kind of thing he would shout himself hoarse over in peace. He was as fond of his home as any Rhinelander. The Highlander had in his memory the "lone sheiling on the misty island," the Irishman some thatched cluster amid the brown mosses of the west, the English countryman some village of the green south; but they did not talk about them, for talk would have spoiled their sacredness. We had found out the best device for keeping nerves steady in a nerve-racking war, and that was to pretend that the whole affair was nothing out of the common. "Cheer up, my lad," said the sergeant to the anxious recruit in the trenches. "I've always 'eard as 'ow it's the first seven years of war as is the worst." The British fighting temper was set for seven years—more if necessary.

A campaign fought in this sober, practical spirit must be barren of legends. In Flanders, as the Southerners sang in the American Civil War, we were "tenting again on the old camp ground," and with a more susceptible race we should have heard tales of grey-goose shafts in the air, and phantom knights on dim horses, and periwigged captains leading ghostly cohorts. The Russians in the East, as we know, saw St. George with his great spear riding in their van. But if these tales ever come to be told they will have been invented at home, for our army did not see visions.

Scot and Irish and Welsh had alike come under the spell of a common Britishness, which is chary of speech and fancy.

The British soldier is deeply humorous in war, and his character therein is precisely his character in peace. It is no high-strung gaiety, but ordinary good spirits and a talent for farce. He is profoundly inventive in language, with a gift of ridiculous nomenclature which takes the worst edge off his hardships. Humour and soundness of heart make up sportsmanship, and he is nothing if not a good sportsman. We see this in his attitude towards the enemy. He had none of that childish venom of hate which seems to have been officially regarded in Germany as the proper spirit in which to fight battles. He respected his enemy, and would allow no one to cry down his fighting value. "A bad, black lot, no doubt," said a Scots soldier of the Germans, "but no the ones opposite us. They're verra respectable men, and grand fighters." The dreary business of trench warfare was relieved by practical jokes upon the enemy, and much chaffing, to which he frequently replied in the same spirit. A famous Berlin clown in the German trenches occasionally went through performances amid the applause of both sides. A certain German sniper with a completely bald head was preserved by one battalion as a keeper preserves a rare hybrid, and when they were moved to another part of the front they left instructions to their successors that the old fellow was not to be killed. Outposts have always fraternized to some extent, —they did it in the Peninsula and in the Crimea,—and the close contact of the lines led to the extraordinary truce of Christmas Day. Probably it was connived at by the commanders on both sides, for some of our trenches were nearly flooded out, and the Germans had much timbering to do. In the French part of the field there was little of this fraternizing. They had wrongs to avenge, too many and too deep for these amenities of war. Had the British been holding lines in the Midlands, with a wasted East Anglia before them, there would have been little inclination to exchange courtesies with the enemy.

The French and British tempers in war are the product of national character. Each is fine in itself, each has merits which the other lacks, each is omnipotent in certain forms of fighting, and the combination of the two in one battle front was fortunate and formidable. In the essentials they were one, for behind the exaltation of the French lay a profound practical talent, and beneath the prose of the British attitude was a shining devotion. It rarely found expression in words, but Sir Francis Doyle's "drunken private of the Buffs," the troopers who went down with the *Birkenhead*, the marines on the *Victoria*, and a hundred deeds in this campaign were proof of its presence. From the letter of a young officer who fell in the October battles we take some sentences which put soberly, in the English fashion, this abiding

impulse:—

> "Try not to worry too much about the war. Units and individuals cannot count. Remember we are writing a new page of history. Future generations cannot be allowed to read of the decline of the British Empire and attribute it to us. We live our little lives and die. Some are given chances of proving themselves men, and to others no chance comes. Whatever our individual faults or virtues are matters little, for when we are up against big things we must forget individuals. Some will live and many will die. We cannot count the loss. It is far better to go out with honour than to survive with shame."

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[1] The 1st Brigade had now a fifth battalion—the London Scottish—but it was still much below strength, especially in officers. Brigadier-General H. C. Lowther was in command.

[2] The Chasseur battalions were originally divided among all the French corps, but now they are allocated to five only—the 6th, 7th, 14th, 15th, and 20th. The Chasseurs Alpins are the 6th, 7th, 23rd, 24th, and 27th Battalions, and are all attached to the 15th Corps (Marseilles). There are thirty Chasseur battalions in the army on a peace basis, but on mobilization each battalion forms a reserve and a territorial battalion, so that their number in war is ninety.

[3] In some places, like Ploegsteert Wood, the ground was so wet that any kind of trench was impossible, and breastworks were built up from the ground.

[4] Our underground warfare was not as elaborate as that at Marlborough's siege of Tournai. "Now as to our fighting underground, blowing up like kites in the air, not being sure of a foot of ground we stand on while in the trenches. Our miners and the enemy very often meet each other, when they have sharp combats till one side gives way. We have got into three or four of the enemy's great galleries, which are thirty or forty feet underground and lead to several of their chambers; and in these we fight in armour and lanthorn and candle, they disputing every

inch of the gallery with us to hinder our finding out their great mines. Yesternight we found one which was placed just under our bomb batteries, in which were eighteen hundredweight of powder besides many bombs; and if we had not been so lucky as to find it, in a very few hours our batteries and some hundreds of men had taken a flight into the air." *Daily Courant*, August 20, 1709, quoted in Mr. Fortescue's *History of the British Army*, Vol. I., p. 514.

[5] About 84 mm.

[6] The French sick rate has not been published, but it seems to have been low if we can judge from the rapid recovery of the wounded. A statement issued by the Ministry of War, giving the position at the beginning of December, showed the efficiency of the French Medical Service. Of wounded in the hospitals, 54.5 per cent. had rejoined the colours, 24.5 per cent. were given leave of absence to recruit, 17.4 per cent. remained for further treatment, and only 3.48 per cent. had died.

[7] The amount of ground recovered between 1st September and 9th December is shown in the following table, which gives the percentage of French territory held on the two dates by the enemy:—

Departments.	Sept. 1.	Dec. 9.
Nord	80	60
Pas-de-Calais	35	30
Somme	50	60
Oise	55	8
Seine-et-Marne	20	Nil
Aisne	100	55
Marne	90	12
Aube	7	Nil
Ardennes	100	100
Meuse	55	30
Meurthe-et-Moselle	70	25
Vosges	20	2

CHAPTER XXXV.
THE BATTLE OF THE SERBIAN RIDGES.

Serbian Strategy at beginning of September—Advance into Bosnia—Occupation of Semlin—Battle of the Drina—The Third Austrian Offensive—Austria's Motives—Her strategical Plan—Austrian Forces—Serbia's Position—Shortage of Ammunition—The Crown Prince Alexander—The Serbian Army falls back from Valjevo—Austria weakens her Army—King Peter's Address to his Troops—Battle begins on 3rd December—Serbian Victory—Belgrade retaken—Austrians cross the Save and the Danube—Austrian Losses.

We must turn for a moment to the heroic war which Serbia, ringed round with enemies and suspicious neutrals, short of ammunition, supplies, and everything but valour, was waging in the tangle of hills between the Drina and the Morava. In an earlier chapter we have seen that the first Austrian invasion had completely failed. At the battles of Shabatz and the Jadar the Austrian army had been heavily defeated, and by 24th August there were few Austrians left on the Serbian side of the Drina and the Save. Vienna announced that the campaign had been merely a punitive expedition, which had achieved its purpose, and that for the present her hands were full with weightier matters in the north. On this it may be observed that the casualties of the punitive force were nearly 40,000—eight thousand of whom were dead—and that it lost some fifty guns.

The Serbian army had now to face a question of some difficulty. The enemy was gone, but he would presently return. The wedge of Serbia, bounded by the Drina and the Save, juts awkwardly into the territory of the Dual Monarchy, and offers an intricate problem of defence. Her forces were insufficient to maintain the whole of the long border line, and the nature of her internal communications did not allow of rapid movement. Accordingly she decided that the wisest defence was an offensive aimed against the Bosnian capital of Serajevo. If that city were won there was every chance of a rising among the Bosnian Slavs, which would keep Austria busy. Accordingly, along with Montenegro, the invasion of Bosnia was resumed, and on 14th September the important frontier post of Vishegrad, which they had approached in August, was at length taken. Meantime the Austrian forces north of the Danube continued their bombardment of Belgrade. To put an end to this

annoyance, rather than as a part of a serious advance, a Serbian detachment crossed the Save in the darkness of the night of 6th September, silenced the hostile batteries, and took the Syrmian town of Semlin. *Sept. 6.*

These activities, especially the threat against Bosnia, drove the Austrians to a fresh offensive. The better part of three corps were massed on the Bosnian side of the Drina, between Racha and Zvornik. On the 8th of September the Battle of the Drina began with the crossing of the river in the neighbourhood of Jania. The Austrians made some headway against the weak Serbian forces on the hills, but in the evening, when reinforcements came up, were driven across the river with heavy losses. The attack was renewed next day, and in several places the Austrians won a lodgment on the Serbian side. On the 15th the Serbians made a great effort, and managed to force back the Austrian right centre, which had penetrated five miles beyond the Drina to Rozhan, a point in the hills which commands the roads to Valjevo. The fighting here, which finished on the 17th, meant the end of the main Austrian offensive. But their extreme right managed to maintain itself in the Jagodnia mountains south-west of Rozhan, which gave them control of a bridge head on the Drina and the road from Liubovia to Valjevo. *Sept. 8-17.*

The Line of the Drina.

During the remainder of September and the early part of October Austria contented herself with intermittent bombardments of Belgrade, the Serbian force having fallen back from Semlin during the battle of the Drina, and with resisting the Serbian advance in Bosnia. The latter made little progress, though a Serbian-Montenegrin column got within ten miles of the capital. Serajevo is strongly defended, and can be profitably attacked only from the north, an enterprise which Serbia was too weak to undertake. She occupied herself with entrenching a line along the Drina, along the heights of Jagodnia and Gouchevo, through Lesnitza to Racha, and thence along the Save to Mitrovitza and Obrenovatz—a line of nearly one hundred miles, and utterly beyond the power of her small army to hold. Her hope was in the marching power of her men—the soldiers who two years before had made the famous winter march across Albania to Durazzo. With such troops she might be able quickly to reinforce a threatened point.

The third great Austrian offensive matured towards the end of October. It was inevitable for a dozen reasons. The German activity in Poland and the appearance of new German corps enabled Austria to turn her attention to her enemy in the south-

east. The punishment of Serbia, which had been nominally the reason of the war, was eagerly demanded by the Austrian people, indignant at two humiliating defeats. Further, on 30th October, Sir Louis Mallet at Constantinople had asked for his passports, and Turkey had entered into the struggle. If Serbia could be crushed and Bulgaria conciliated, a junction might be effected with the Ottoman armies which would keep Rumania quiescent, and, more important, would open up to the Teutonic Powers a new way to the sea. In estimating the motives of Austria, and those of Germany behind her, a chief place must be given to that old hankering for an Ægean outlet which had for a decade dominated their Balkan policy.

To understand the campaign which followed we must look closely at the configuration of Serbia. We have seen that on the west and north-west it is bounded by the Drina and the Save. For thirty miles along the right bank of the Lower Drina there is something approaching a plain, which becomes wider as it nears the Save, and extends along the right bank of that river to the Danube. It is never very broad, and it is much broken up with ridges, but it is possible manœuvring ground for modern armies. For the rest, Serbia is a knot of hills, which descend steeply upon the Upper Drina, and stretch eastward to the Bulgarian frontier, where they join the main Balkan range. They are broken up into many subsidiary systems which it is needless to particularize; but one main ridge runs from the Drina in a semicircle south of Valjevo, where it forms a watershed between the river Kolubara, which enters the Save at Obrenovatz, and the Western Morava, which flows from the Albanian border to the Great Morava. The main river is the Great Morava, running through eastern Serbia from south to north. The railways are determined by the river valleys. The trunk line to Constantinople runs up the Morava by Nish to the Bulgarian frontier. Kragujevatz, the Serbian arsenal, is on a branch line to the west of the Morava valley. One line runs south from Obrenovatz up the Kolubara to Valjevo, and another from Valjevo to the main trunk line, while from one of the stations on this latter branch a short railway goes south up the valley of the Lig.

The Austrian objective was Nish, where the Serbian Court had retired, and the main line to Bulgaria. But before these could be reached there were various secondary objectives. The obvious route to Nish was by an advance up the Morava from Semendria on the Danube, but to this there were two insuperable objections. The first was the Morava valley, which at two places contracts to narrows, where the ground falls steeply and forms a strong natural defence. The second was the lateral valleys entering the Morava from the west, which would enable a Serbian force from the central hills to strike at the flank of any Austrian advance. It was clearly the path of wisdom to occupy the central knot of hills, and especially the

upper valley of the Western Morava. With these in their control, they could advance to Nish with an easy mind, for their communications would be safe. The first objective was therefore Valjevo on the Kolubara, the terminus of two railways and the starting-point for the passes of the horse-shoe range to the south, which was the way to the Western Morava. The second was Kragujevatz, the Serbian arsenal, and a point from which the main Morava route could be seriously menaced.

The Austrian forces under General Potiorek concentrated for the movement cannot yet be exactly estimated. In the first invasion there had been employed the 15th and 16th Corps, both from Bosnia, the 4th Corps from Budapest, the 8th Corps from Cracow, the 13th Corps from Croatia, and parts of the 7th Corps from Hungary and the 9th Corps from Bohemia. The Cracow and Bohemian corps were severely handled at the battle of the Jadar, and did not appear again in this theatre; the 4th Corps, too, had apparently gone north. There remained the 15th, 16th, 13th, and 7th Corps, to which were added two Landwehr formations, numbered the 17th and 18th, and the 14th Corps from Tirol—a force little short of 300,000 men. The Austrians advanced on a wide front—their extreme left moving from Semendria up the Morava valley, the left centre and centre moving against the main ridge by way of Valjevo and Lazarevatz, while their right was directed in an enveloping movement from the Drina against the head-waters of the Western Morava. We cannot locate the corps at this stage with precision, but the new formations—the 17th and 18th—seem to have been on the left, and the 15th and 16th Bosnian Corps, which included special mountain brigades, undertook the advance from the Drina.

Against this great army Serbia could not bring forward equal numbers. Though she called every peasant from the plough and every shepherd from the hills, it is probable that her total force, after three battles, did not exceed a quarter of a million; and of first-line troops she must have had less than 200,000. Her army, to be sure, was largely composed of veterans—the men of Kumanovo and Monastir and the Bregalnitsa. But her supplies, especially of ammunition, were terribly depleted, and the arsenal at Kragujevatz was all but empty. She was almost shut off from the outer world, for the one port by which ammunition could enter was the Montenegrin Antivari, and only pack ponies could travel the hill roads that led to it. The great port of Salonika was free for Serbian goods, but to bring in munitions of war by that channel involved a breach of Greek neutrality. But the Serbian army, for all its difficulties, was in good heart, for it had already three victories to its credit, and it had implicit faith in its generals. The Commander-in-Chief, as in the wars with Turkey and Bulgaria, was the young Crown Prince Alexander, and his Chief of Staff was Field-Marshal Putnik, a very able, irascible old gentleman, who knew every

detail in the topography of his native land, and had a great eye for efficient subordinates. The regimental officers were excellent, and the General Staff contained several officers, like Colonel Pavlovitch, the Director of Military Operations, of the highest professional attainments.

Sketch showing Serbia's inlets for Supplies.

Before the wide sweep of the Austrian advance from Save and Danube and Drina, the Crown Prince had no choice but to fall back and look for his help to the hills. For a little he clung to the foothills of the Tser range and a line running east to the Kolubara, but he was too weak to hold it. Had he attempted to defend Valjevo and the low country he would have been outflanked by the movement from Semendria on the east and Liubovia on the west. The Austrian advance began in the first week of November, and by the 10th they held the whole Kolubara valley up to Valjevo, the main trunk railway up to Mladenovatz, and were pushing on the west towards Ushitza, on the head-waters of the Western Morava. The Crown Prince fell back to the summit of the range south of Valjevo which forms the watershed. This

range must be closely observed. The main road from Valjevo to Tchatchak in the Western Morava valley (with a branch leading from Milanovatz to Kragujevatz) crosses a pass about 2,000 feet high, which divides the range into two *massifs*. That on the west is called Maljen, and rises to a little over 3,000 feet; that on the east is called variously Suvobor and Rudnik, and is some 500 feet higher and more precipitous. By the middle of November the whole Serbian army was on these ridges, while their left held the spurs running south to the Western Morava to resist the turning movement of the Bosnian corps from Ushitza. They covered Kragujevatz and Tchatchak, and their line of retreat was open down the Western Morava towards Nish, save in the unlikely event of the Austrian left making its way up the Great Morava.

Then followed an unaccountable delay. For a fortnight the Austrians lay in Valjevo and along the skirts of the hills, and did nothing. No explanation has yet been given of this hiatus, for there can have been no great difficulties in the transport. Apparently General Potiorek regarded the precipitate retreat of the Serbians into the mountains as the end of their serious resistance. He was aware of their scarcity of ammunition, and believed that it could not be remedied. So confident was he of success that he deliberately weakened his army. By the beginning of December the great Austro-German counter-offensive from Cracow was maturing, and he sent three of his corps—the 7th (Hungarian), the 14th (Tirolese), and the bulk of the 13th (Croats)—to assist in the attack from the south against the Carpathian passes.

During that fortnight the Serbians had not been idle. King Peter, enfeebled by illness, had left his capital as the Austrians advanced, and joined the army on the ridges. Every man that could be brought up was added to the strength, and with heroic efforts gun positions were created on the rocky spurs. Most important of all, fresh supplies of ammunition for artillery and small arms had arrived at last from the Western Allies, in spite of attempts by Turkish and Bulgarian bands to wreck the convoys. The tale of how they reached Serbia cannot yet be told; suffice it to say that they did not come by Antivari.

Dec. 1.

On the 1st of December the Austrians had initiated their major strategy, which was to sweep south-eastward with powerful wings, from Mladenovatz on the left and from Ushitza on the right, and enclose the Serbian army. Their centre was advancing against the ridges, with its left moving up the Lig valley, where runs a single-line railway, against the Serbian right on the Rudnik range, and its right moving up the head-waters of the Kolubara against the Maljen range. On the next day they were well up on the slopes of the hills, and by the 3rd they had gained the western ridge of Rudnik. The

Serbians lay along the ridges, with the 1st Army under General Mishitch on the left, then the 3rd Army under General Yourashitch Stürm, and on the right the 2nd Army under Field-Marshal Stepanovitch.

On the afternoon of the 3rd the moment came for the Serbians to strike. It was a crisis of their national history, graver than any they had yet met, and the whole army was inspired with a profound seriousness. King Peter, old, deaf, and sick, rose to a great occasion, and addressed his men almost in the words of Shakespeare's King Harry before Agincourt, or of Robert Bruce before Bannockburn:—

Dec 3.

> "Heroes," he said, "you have taken two oaths—one to me, your king, and the other to your country. I am an old, broken man, on the edge of the grave, and I release you from your oath to me. From your other oath no one can release you. If you feel you cannot go on, go to your homes, and I pledge my word that after the war, if we come out of it, nothing shall happen to you. But I and my sons stay here."

This noble appeal had its effect. Not a man left the ranks. The calculated atrocities of Austria in September—calculated, for we possess the Imperial and Royal instructions on the subject—had made the war a crusade. The weary and ragged troops went into battle with a new passion of sacrifice.

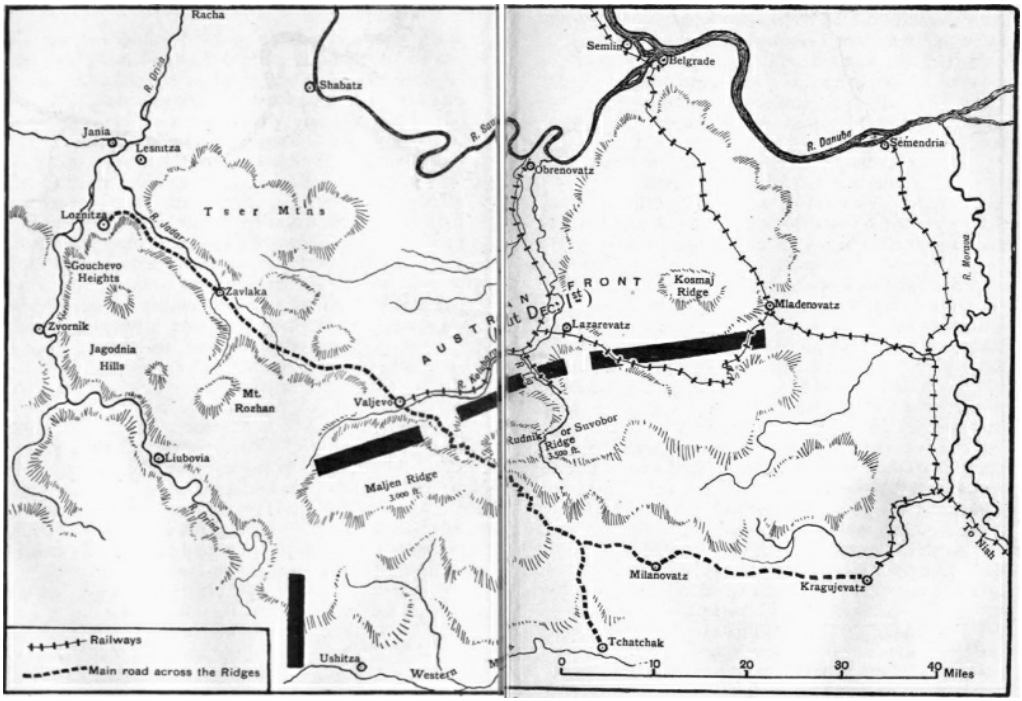
The ridges of Rudnik and Maljen are barren even in midsummer, wide screes and sharp ridges of shale descending to stony glens. No heavy snow had yet fallen, but a powdering of white lay on the rocks. During the night of the 3rd and throughout the 4th the whole Serbian right and centre were heavily engaged, while the left at Ushitza fought a separate battle of its own. The gun positions had been skilfully selected, and the Serbian infantry charged with fury and hurled the enemy from the slopes. The fiercest fighting was on the eastern side, on Rudnik, where the 18th Corps and part of the 17th struggled desperately to keep their footing. In the centre the 8th and the 13th were attacked on the northern side of Maljen, while from the spurs above Ushitza the two Bosnian corps were hotly assailed. Some time during the 5th the Austrian left centre broke and streamed northwards down the Lig valley. Presently came the turn of the centre, which was forced off Maljen along the Valjevo road. That same night the Serbian left at Ushitza won a great victory over the 15th and 16th Corps, driving them north across the western passes of Maljen towards the springs of the Kolubara. At dawn on the 6th the

Dec. 4.

Dec. 5.

Austrian line had everywhere given way. It was not in retreat; it was routed and broken till it had no longer the semblance of an army.

Dec. 6.



The Battle of Serbian Ridges.

The Serbians were as vigorous in pursuit as in battle. By the 7th their front was Ushitza-Valjevo-Lazarevatz. The Austrians fled by the roads from Valjevo to Shabatz and Obrenovatz, where they had a clear path for retreat; but their right, which was in the Maljen and Povljen hills, came out no more. The extreme left attempted a stand on the Kosmaj ridges and at Lissovitch, but after some hard fighting was driven back by Stepanovitch upon Belgrade. The Austrians could not halt short of their own frontier. The Serbian left swept up the Drina and beyond. The centre pushed towards the Save, picking up prisoners and guns with every mile. The right moved swiftly towards Belgrade, and with it went the king. On the 15th the capital was retaken, and while the Austrian rearguard were fighting in the northern suburbs, King Peter was on his knees in the cathedral giving thanks for his victory. A mere remnant of an army straggled over the Save, while the Serbian guns rained shells on its crossing.

Dec. 7.

Dec. 15.

The Battle of the Ridges was a success of a type not unknown to history—a

well-equipped army inveigled into a country where it could be caught at a disadvantage by a weaker force operating under familiar conditions. We do not know with any exactness the enemy's losses. The prisoners numbered not less than 40,000, and there must have been at least as many dead and wounded, while the Serbians made heavy captures of guns and ammunition. The disaster was indeed for Austria what Tannenberg was for Russia: it virtually destroyed a field army. General Potiorek was removed from his command, and all talk of the conquest of Serbia died away. The little Balkan state had done inestimable service to the Allied cause, for it had put four corps out of action, and delayed for some weeks the Austrian main offensive against Eastern Galicia. The two most decisive battles in the first six months of war were triumphs for age and youth. Tannenberg was won by a veteran nearing seventy, and the Serbian ridges by a young gentleman of twenty-six.

CHAPTER XXXVI.
THE CAMPAIGN IN THE AIR.

The Air Fleets of the Powers before the War—Uses of Aircraft—Importance of Air Reconnaissance—Instances—Difficulties of Weather—Use against Artillery—The Task of the Observer—*Flêchettes*—Destruction of Troops, Stores, etc.—Work of Naval Wing—Raids upon Cologne and Düsseldorf—Raid upon Friedrichshafen—Raids upon Brussels—Christmas Raid upon Cuxhaven—German Destruction—Failure of Zeppelins—Raids upon England—Duels in the Air.

In the years before the war it had become the fashion to announce that the next European conflict would witness a phenomenal use of aircraft. Ingenious romancers had pictured an Armageddon in the clouds, and lovers of peace had clung to the notion that the novelty and frightfulness of such a warfare would make the Powers of the world hesitate to draw the sword. The results have been both below and in excess of expectation. The air was a realm of pure guesswork, for in the Tripoli and Balkan wars there was no serious aerial service, though various adventurers experimented in the new arm. What may be the ultimate outcome no man can tell, for aircraft are still in an early stage of development. But up to date we can say that they have not altered any of the traditional principles of war in their fundamentals, while, on the other hand, they have proved a far more manageable, precise, and calculable branch of the service than even their warmest supporters foretold.

France led the way in aerial experiment, and her government between 1909 and 1914 acquired the largest air fleet in the world. Her aviators were brilliant performers, especially in long-distance flights, but they were not thoroughly absorbed into the military machine. They had less knowledge of the tactical use of aircraft than of their mechanical capabilities, and the organization of the French Air Corps was severely criticized by the Committee of the Senate just before the war. It suffered, too, from having a somewhat heterogeneous collection of machines, many of an excellent type, but many indifferent. There was no government standardized pattern, and hence supply of spare parts and accessories became a difficulty.[1] The French airmen had brilliant technical skill and endless courage—men like Garros and Pégoud had no rivals—but as a corps they were not so fully organized for war as their neighbours. The Germans had preferred at first to interest themselves rather in

airships than in aeroplanes, but their military advisers were well aware of the value of the latter, and had prepared a strong corps. The German aviator could not fly as well as the French; on the whole he had not as useful a machine; but he understood perfectly his place in the military plan. He was thoroughly trained to reconnaissance work, and especially to the task of range-finding for the field guns. The Austrian air service was much inferior, though it contained some dashing pilots. The Russian had enormously improved, under the Grand Duke Alexander, but it suffered from a shortage of machines and a chronic difficulty in rapid manufacture. It possessed, however, several giant biplanes, useful for destructive purposes, for each could carry over a ton's weight of explosives.

The British air service, the last to be started, had been so wisely and energetically developed by Sir David Henderson and his colleagues that on the outbreak of war it was probably the best equipped in the world. We had a good type of machine and enough of them, a number of highly qualified pilots and observers accustomed to go out in all weathers and under every condition of difficulty, and, above all, trained in tactical co-operation with other arms. We have rarely been successful in occupations which demand a peculiar and fantastic gift—in trick-flying and high-speed motoring we have been outstripped easily by continental rivals; but we have the power of making a novel art subserve a prosaic and practical purpose, just as the British soldier brings to the business of bloodshed something of the homely atmosphere of his ordinary life. The British Royal Flying Corps contained a military and a naval wing. Each wing was divided into squadrons, consisting of twenty-four aeroplanes and twenty-four pilots, under a major or commander. The squadron was in turn divided into six flights, each flight comprising four machines commanded by a captain in the one case and a commander or lieutenant in the other. The squadron was a self-contained unit, having its own transport in the shape of motor wagons calculated to maintain on good roads a speed of twenty miles an hour. Armed motor cars were also attached to it.

The uses of aircraft, so far as the war has revealed them, are principally two—for reconnaissance in its many forms, and for destruction. The latter purpose, from the strict military point of view, is exemplified by the destruction of enemy troops, fortresses and fortified bases, ships, transports, communications, and munitions of war. To these uses the Germans have added a third—the destruction of civilian life and property with a view to intimidation; but in this sinister departure they have happily not been followed by the Allies. There is also the important duty of driving off and, if possible, destroying hostile aeroplanes, for it is now clear that the only real weapon against one aeroplane is another. Let us glance at these different functions

and the main instances of their performance during the first six months of war.

The reconnaissance of aircraft has, as we have seen, worked a revolution in strategy. More rapid and comprehensive than cavalry, the aeroplane makes surprises on a grand scale an impossibility except in a densely-wooded land or under weather conditions so bad that no aviator can ascend. Instances are endless. It was the German aviators who revealed to the German generals the weakness of the Allied line along the Meuse and the Sambre. It was an air reconnaissance that inspired the first abortive advance of the French into Alsace. From our Flying Corps we first learned of von Kluck's wheel to the south-east—a fine performance, of which General Joffre wrote: "The precision, exactitude, and regularity of the news brought in by its members are evidence of their perfect organization and also of the perfect training of pilots and observers." Aircraft gave the Germans news of our enveloping movement from the Aisne, and gave us information of their counter-movement which led to the race for the sea. In the long struggle between Arras and Nieuport we were able from the reports of aviators to follow the track of the German reinforcements and strengthen our own thin lines. Aircraft told Japan all that she needed to know about the fortress of Tsing-tau; they warned us of the Turkish movement across the desert against the Suez Canal; they told us of the coming of the Prussian Guard at Ypres. In the East it was by aeroplanes that von Hindenburg found out the weakness of Samsonov's position; aircraft gave the Grand Duke Nicholas early news of the first assault upon Warsaw, and of the Austrian *revanche* from Cracow. Now and again the service was at fault. It did not tell us soon enough of the four new German formations advancing on Menin about 15th October, nor did it inform von Hindenburg of the Russian trans-Vistula movement which drove him back from Warsaw, or the Grand Duke Nicholas of the dash against Lodz, or the later assault from East Prussia, when he lost his 20th Corps. But, generally speaking, the commanders of all the great armies have had early knowledge of the main hostile movements, and have been able to provide against them. Without aircraft there would have been fewer battles, perhaps, and more manœuvring on the defensive, but when a disaster came it would have been more crushing. Foreknowledge, shared pretty well by all sides, means a slow war.

The work of aircraft has been well described in an official note by the French Government: "They give information to our commanding officers, who find in them an invaluable auxiliary, concerning the movements of the enemy and the progress of columns and supplies. They are not liable to be stopped like cavalry by the uninterrupted lines of trenches. They fly over positions and batteries, enabling our forces to aim with accuracy. They drop bombs on gatherings of troops, convoys,

and staffs, and are an instrument of demolition and demoralization."[2] Of this varied programme the most important item is the first. In half a dozen hours an aviator will scan many hundreds of miles of country, and if the air is clear, the odds are that no important enemy movement will escape his notice. He may misjudge it, as the Russian airmen misjudged von Hindenburg's activity before Tannenberg, but that is a risk in all reconnaissance, aerial or otherwise.

In the blue weather of the late summer and early autumn the Allied aircraft went far afield. The famous French airmen, Pégoud and Finke, flew 200 miles into German territory. During the twenty days previous to 10th September the British Flying Corps maintained a daily average of more than nine reconnaissance flights of over a hundred miles each. Then the only danger came from the enemy's fire. The aviator flew every now and then into a zone of peril, where the bullets from rifles and anti-aircraft guns rattled on his machine and his planes,[3] and where bursts of shell engendered a hundred odd currents. In such circumstances he had to rise to an altitude of some 6,000 feet to be secure from the enemy. But observation cannot be carried on at that height, and he had to descend again, picking his way in sharp zigzags. When the weather broke in October the work became harder. Mists and winter gales often made flights impossible; but whenever there was a sporting chance our airmen went out, for movements on land do not wait on the weather in the clouds. On 15th November, for example, it was bitterly cold, and rain fell in torrents. "Nevertheless," wrote the British "Eye-witness," "in spite of all difficulties our aviators carried out a successful reconnaissance, observing the emplacements of batteries, and searching the roads for hostile columns in the midst of a storm of driving snow and sleet." A pilot, strapped to his seat 5,000 feet in the air during a north-east gale, is one of the least protected of God's creatures. Yet in spite of the immense appearance of risk, the service was, in results, the least dangerous of all. About a dozen casualties made up the total of the British Flying Corps during the first six months of war. Just as our seamen, freezing in the North Sea, commiserated their unfortunate brothers in the trenches, so an airman was often heard to express his shame at being engaged in so secure and well-sheltered an occupation.

When the campaign became a war of positions the most vital duty of aircraft was to detect the positions of big guns—especially the howitzers, with their high-angle fire, which could be concealed miles away behind a hill. Without such an aid it is difficult to see how hostile artillery could be fairly met. The Germans showed in the early days of the fighting an extraordinary mastery of this tactical use of aircraft, but the Allies speedily learned the game, and established what the official report calls "an

individual ascendency." They drove back the reconnoitring "Taubes,"[4] and themselves performed some remarkable feats of intelligence work. At the Aisne, and in the first weeks in Flanders, they located the German trenches; and later, when the trench lines were only too well known to both sides, they did admirable service in fixing the emplacements of the big howitzers. Such work was far more risky than long-distance reconnaissance, for they had to fly at a low elevation, and they were exposed to the fire of the enemy, and not infrequently to that of their own side. Often an aeroplane returned from its trip to be welcomed by rifle shots from the troops it was safeguarding.

In this work the most vital task was that of the observer; the most difficult, too, for, while the pilot had the excitement of manipulating his machine, the observer sat still to see and to be shot at. British observers proved themselves amazingly efficient. They seemed to have a natural eye for country, and to pick out a movement as a stalker picks out a stag on a hill which he has known from childhood. The most skilled aviator in the world may not have this talent; it is a gift as specific as a turn for rockclimbing, and its prevalence among our officers may perhaps be attributed to the national training in field sports. "Eye-witness" has well described it. "The temperament of the observer," he wrote, "is of the greatest importance. He must be cool and capable of great concentration in order to keep his attention fixed upon his objective in spite of all distractions—such as, for instance, the bursts of shell close to him, or the noise of rifle bullets passing through the planes of his machine. He must withstand the temptation to make conjectures, or to think that he has seen something when he is not absolutely certain of the fact, since an error in observing or an inaccuracy in reporting may lead to false conclusions, and cause infinite harm."

> "The really first-rate observer," we are told, "must possess extensive military knowledge, in order to know what objects to look for and where to look for them; he must have very good eyesight in order to pick them up, and he must have the knack of reading a map quickly, both in order to mark correctly their positions and to find his way. To reconnoitre is not easy even in fine weather; but in driving rain or snow, in a temperature perhaps several degrees below zero, or in a gale, where an aeroplane travelling with the wind rocks and sways like a ship in a heavy sea and may attain a speed of one hundred and fifty miles an hour, the difficulties are immense. In these circumstances, and from the altitude at which it is necessary to fly in order to escape the projectiles of anti-aircraft guns, columns of transport or of men are easily missed. Indeed, at a first

attempt, an observer will see nothing which is of military value, for it is only after considerable practice that the eye becomes accustomed to scouring a great stretch of country from above and acquires the power of distinguishing objects upon it."

Mr. Roosevelt in one of his books defines scouting as the art of seeing wherein a bit of landscape differs from the ordinary. An old hunter can tell that a wapiti is on a hillside, because he knows the normal look of that hillside from long experience, and sees in a second the minute difference caused by the presence of the deer. But this experience was impossible for our observers. They had never cast eyes before from a great elevation upon the slag heaps and canals and chess-board fields of Flanders, or the broad green valleys of Oise and Aisne. The art had to be learned, and an Admirable Crichton had to be produced who combined the gifts of a lookout man, a Polar explorer, a Staff-College professor, and Patience on a monument. After our island fashion we did not know we possessed him till the crisis came.

The second task of aircraft—destruction of enemy troops and materials—had to take second place so far as the military wing was concerned, for most aeroplanes were busied with the more urgent duty of reconnaissance. We hear of various incidental successes by both French and British—an ammunition convoy blown up during the Marne battles, bombs dropped on the railway station at Freiburg and the airship sheds at Metz, a park of transport severely damaged at La Fère, the killing of artillery horses, the demolition of rolling stock on the railway at Laon, the destruction of two food trains, the burning of six German aeroplanes found in one shed. Both French and German aviators made use of steel arrows, called *flêchettes*,[5] dropped in batches of five hundred (an aeroplane being able to carry a stock of four thousand). Such darts would undoubtedly have pierced a man's skull if they had happened to hit him, but the aiming must have been difficult, for we heard of few successes. The aircraft of no army was so organized as to be capable of great and continued damage to troops. For that five times the number of machines was needed, and a strategy of attack which no General Staff had yet elaborated. In this direction, perhaps, we may look for the main future development of aircraft as a fighting arm. In the destruction of *matériel* an aeroplane is hampered by the comparative smallness and fewness of the bombs it can carry. It can never work the damage caused by a shell from a great howitzer. It must seek out places containing delicate structures or explosives—gasworks, magazines, airship and aeroplane sheds—for it is of little use against normal fortifications.[6]

The chief destructive work was done, as we should expect, by the naval wing of

the Royal Flying Corps, on whom fell no daily duty of reconnaissance. During the crossing of the British force to France the seaplanes had scouted to east and west of the Channel, and on 27th August, when Ostend was occupied by British marines, a strong squadron was sent there. It presently removed its headquarters to Dunkirk, whence many bold raids and reconnaissances were made. Between 4th and 23rd September successful skirmishes of both aeroplanes and armed motor cars took place; and on 16th September, near Doullens, Commander C. R. Samson, with a force of armed cars, annihilated an Uhlan patrol. On 22nd September a naval airman, Flight-Lieutenant C. H. Collet, flew 200 miles in misty weather to Düsseldorf, and descending to a height of 400 feet, dropped bombs upon the airship shed. His machine was hit, but he returned safely. At the same time two other British airmen had visited Cologne, but the fog was too thick to enable them to locate the Zeppelin sheds, and they refrained for honourable reasons from dropping bombs upon the civilian part of the city. We do not know the actual damage done at Düsseldorf, but the moral effect was great. "The importance of the incident," ran the Admiralty announcement, "lies in the fact that it shows that, in the event of further bombs being dropped into Antwerp or other Belgian towns, measures of reprisal can certainly be adopted."

Sept. 4-23.

Sept. 22.

On 8th October four or five aeroplanes, under Squadron-Commander D. A. Spencer Grey, set out for Germany. The party divided, one section making for Düsseldorf and the other for Cologne. At the first place bombs were dropped on the airship shed by Lieutenant Marix, and an outburst of flames and the collapse of the roof showed that their object had been attained. The attacking aeroplanes were badly hit, but the airmen succeeded in reaching the British lines in safety. The Cologne party circled for some time above the city at a height of 600 feet, and although heavily fired upon, succeeded in wrecking a large part of the military railway station. The boldness and skill of these raids deserve the highest praise; and as an instance of the spirit of our naval airmen another incident may be quoted. During some patrol work it became necessary to change a propeller blade. This meant that the machine must descend, but to avoid loss of time two of the crew volunteered to carry out the work in the air. At a height of 2,000 feet they completed their task, climbing out on the bracket which carried the propeller shafting.

Oct. 8.


NORTH SEA
Cuxhaven
Hamburg
HOLLAND
Zeebrugge
Ostend
Dunkirk
Hoboken
Antwerp
Furnes
Hazebrouck
180 Miles
196 Miles
BELGIUM
Essen
Düsseldorf
Cologne
GERMANY
LUXEMBURG
Metz
R. Rhine
FRANCE
Friedrichshafen
Freiburg
Belfort
124 Miles
Lake of Constance
SWITZERLAND
0
50
100 Miles

Air Raids against Germany.

On 1st November bombs were dropped by a British aviator on Thielt, then the German headquarters, which the Emperor had only just left. Next day, by way of a return, the Germans dropped bombs on Furnes, which President Poincaré was believed to be visiting. The chief aerial feat of November was the raid of British naval airmen on Friedrichshafen, the town on the Lake of Constance where the Zeppelins are largely built. On 21st November Commander E. F. Briggs, Lieutenant J. T. Babington, and Lieutenant S. V. Sippe flew from Belfort, 250 miles distant, and dropped bombs on the airship factory and an adjacent gas factory, which they seriously damaged. All three machines were hit, and that of Commander Briggs was brought down through shrapnel bullets striking his petrol tank, and its occupant taken prisoner. The Cross of the Legion of Honour was awarded to the bold adventurers.

Nov. 1.

Nov. 21.

In the beginning of December the wild weather kept the aeroplanes at home. But on the 20th Commander Samson visited Brussels, where the Germans had erected airship sheds, and dropped bombs on the flying ground at Etherbeek, damaging many machines. Four days later Squadron-Commander R. B. Davies flew to the same city, and dropped twelve bombs on the airship sheds, probably destroying a Parseval machine. But the great expedition of the month came on Christmas Day. Seven seaplanes flew early in the morning from England, and rendezvoused at a point described as "in the vicinity of Heligoland." Thence, escorted by cruisers and submarines, they advanced to the Schillig roads off Cuxhaven, where some German warships were lying. On these and on the shore defences they dropped their bombs, with what result it is still uncertain, for the morning fog was dense, but there is good reason to believe that one or more of the Zeppelin sheds were destroyed. According to arrangement, the escorting warships waited for the return of the airmen, and while so doing were sighted from Heligoland and attacked by four German seaplanes, two Zeppelins, and several submarines. The bombs of the seaplanes fell near our ships, but failed to hit them, and the Zeppelins were easily put to flight by the guns of the *Arethusa* and the *Undaunted*. For three hours the cruisers maintained their station, and returned home after picking up three of the aviators. Three others who came back later destroyed their machines, to prevent them falling into the enemy's hands, and were taken on board the submarines. The fate of the seventh, Flight-

Dec. 20.

Dec. 24.

Dec. 25.

Commander F. E. T. Hewlett, was for a day or two uncertain, his machine having been seen broken and derelict about eight miles from Heligoland. He was, however, picked up by a Dutch trawler, and returned safely. Lastly—to bring the record to the end of the first six months of war—Squadron-Commander R. B. Davies and Flight-Lieutenant R. Peirse on 22nd January flew over the new German naval base at Zeebrugge, and dropped bombs on the artillery and two submarines, one of which they destroyed. Commander Davies was at one time surrounded by seven hostile aeroplanes, but he managed to elude them, and returned, slightly wounded, to his base. Seldom in history have more adventurous deeds been done with fewer losses than in our air campaign from August to January. By this time the German anti-aircraft guns were becoming very formidable, especially at places like Antwerp, Zeebrugge, and Ostend, where they had frequent practice.

Jan. 22.

The German aircraft have also a long record of destruction. Their pet invention, the Zeppelin, proved, indeed, something of a fiasco. It had revealed itself as a highly delicate and vulnerable contrivance in peace time,[7] and it was not less so in war. Stories of the misadventures of the huge airships were published daily; but though perhaps half a dozen cases can be authenticated, we must be sceptical about most of them. Human nature believes what it wants to believe—a gift which makes for happiness but not for truth; and just as every German aeroplane was a Taube and every howitzer a 42 cm. gun, so in the popular mind every German airship was a Zeppelin. On 16th September the British Headquarters stated that the Royal Flying Corps, who had been out on reconnaissance every day since their arrival in France, had never seen a Zeppelin. One—No. VIII., the largest of all—was brought down by artillery in Alsace on 22nd August, when it was flying from Strassburg, and the pieces were exhibited in Paris; the same fate befell another which a few days later was engaged in dropping bombs on the railway station at Mlawa; and a third seems to have been captured by the Russians about 6th September, and sent to Petrograd. One may have been destroyed at Friedrichshafen and one at Düsseldorf; but we shall not be far wrong if we put half a dozen as the outside number of Zeppelins which were demolished by the Allies.

The Zeppelins—and indeed all the large airships—were singularly unhandy weapons, and they served a better use as a popular bogey than as instruments of offence,[8] though they were undoubtedly present at various times at Antwerp, at Nancy, and at Warsaw. Far more effective for destruction were the German aeroplanes. They destroyed the railway station at Charleroi; they did considerable execution among the French cavalry; they dropped bombs upon Ghent, Ostend,

Dunkirk, Calais, Lunéville, Pont-à-Mousson, Nancy, Paris, and Warsaw; and towards the end of October killed over a hundred persons close to the headquarters of the Russian General Staff. At Hazebrouck in December nine British soldiers and five civilians were killed by bombs from aircraft, and during January Dunkirk suffered severely. In these visitations no precautions were taken to attack only objects of military significance. Populous streets and suburbs in Paris and Warsaw were assaulted, for the distinction between soldiers and civilians is a quibble unknown to the German doctrine of war. A Zeppelin raid upon London was the most cherished of German dreams; for on this theory any place which possesses a single trooper or an antique gun is a fortress, and therefore a legitimate object for destruction.

Of such a type—aimless from a military point of view, and useful only as a practice flight and as an inspiration of panic—was the raid upon England on 19th January. Ten days before a fleet of aeroplanes, estimated at sixteen, had been sighted in the Channel, but the stormy weather drove them back from our coasts. The raid of Tuesday, the 19th, seems to have been carried out by two craft; but whether they were Zeppelins or airships of another pattern, or merely big aeroplanes, is not yet clear. They reached the coast of Norfolk about 8.30 in the evening, dropped bombs on Yarmouth, and then steered north-west across country towards King's Lynn, dropping bombs there, and on several villages *en route*. As these are not populous places, and by no conceivable definition military stations, it is possible that the aim of the invaders was the royal residence of Sandringham. At Yarmouth two persons were killed and some damage done to property; at King's Lynn the death-roll was the same, but more buildings were injured. The accounts of eye-witnesses differed widely. Some declared that they saw four ships, an account from Holland spoke of the return of three, and the German report spoke of them in the plural; but it is unlikely that there were more than two. The view that they were Zeppelins rests partly upon the general impression as to their size, and partly on the weight of the bombs dropped. A few weeks later a single aeroplane visited the Essex coast and dropped a bomb at Colchester, the result being the destruction of a child's perambulator.

Jan. 19.

Destruction, except in the special case of gasworks, airship sheds, and magazines, must rank at present far behind reconnaissance in the tale of the work of aircraft. But one other task falls to the aviator—the duty of engaging an enemy machine, for it has been abundantly proved that the true weapon of offence and defence against an attack from the air is a counter-attack in the same element. Airmen have instructions to engage at once a hostile aeroplane or airship; and though

a duel between a Zeppelin and an aeroplane has not yet been witnessed, almost every day of the war saw a fight between two aeroplanes. It is curious that the most modern device should have restored to the campaign the old single combat of the Middle Ages with both armies looking on. In such duels the individual ascendency of the Allies brilliantly revealed itself. The manœuvring for position, the sudden crack of pistol or rifle, the wounding of the pilot or the crippling of the machine, the momentary disappearance of the foe into a bank of cloud, the ever-present possibility of being dashed to a violent death, make up a tale of sensations which no duello of the past has ever equalled. The two foes struggle to get the higher position till they are mere specks in the heavens, and the upper drives his opponent in zigzags and whorls to earth like a hawk circling above a finch. The grim business may even have its humorous side. In December there was an encounter between a British and a German airman, in which the former emptied his pistol at the enemy without any visible result. He then proceeded to take a photograph, and the sight of the camera drove the German to incontinent flight.

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[1] The French Army ultimately adopted three types of biplane and one of monoplane.

[2] Up to January 31, 1915, according to an official announcement, the French airmen had undertaken 10,000 reconnaissances, which involved 18,000 hours of flight.

[3] An aeroplane can stand a lot of hitting. One biplane, exhibited at the Invalides, had over four hundred wounds, which did not completely disable it.

[4] One reason for this ascendency was the nature of the German machine, which has the motor and propeller in front. It can thus only fire horizontally, or upwards, since the wings prevent it from firing to left or right, and the tail from firing downwards. A new development is reported, by which a rigid gun can fire through the propeller.

[5] The *flêchette* was shaped like a modern rifle bullet, with a fluted steel stem feathered with thin blades.

[6] It may conceivably be the weapon of the future against submarines. In clear water a submarine can be easily detected

from the air, and Mr. T. F. Farman thinks it "quite possible to invent missiles which, dropped from no great height, would nevertheless penetrate the water with sufficient force to break through the shell of a submarine navigating at the depth of 32 feet," which would be about the usual depth of a submarine in the English Channel.

[7] Of the twenty-five constructed, twelve were totally destroyed before the outbreak of war and one badly damaged.

[8] The special menace of the Zeppelin was believed to be the large quantity of explosives it carried, but a French expert, M. Georges Prade, has proved that on a twelve hours' voyage a Zeppelin cannot carry more than a ton of bombs.

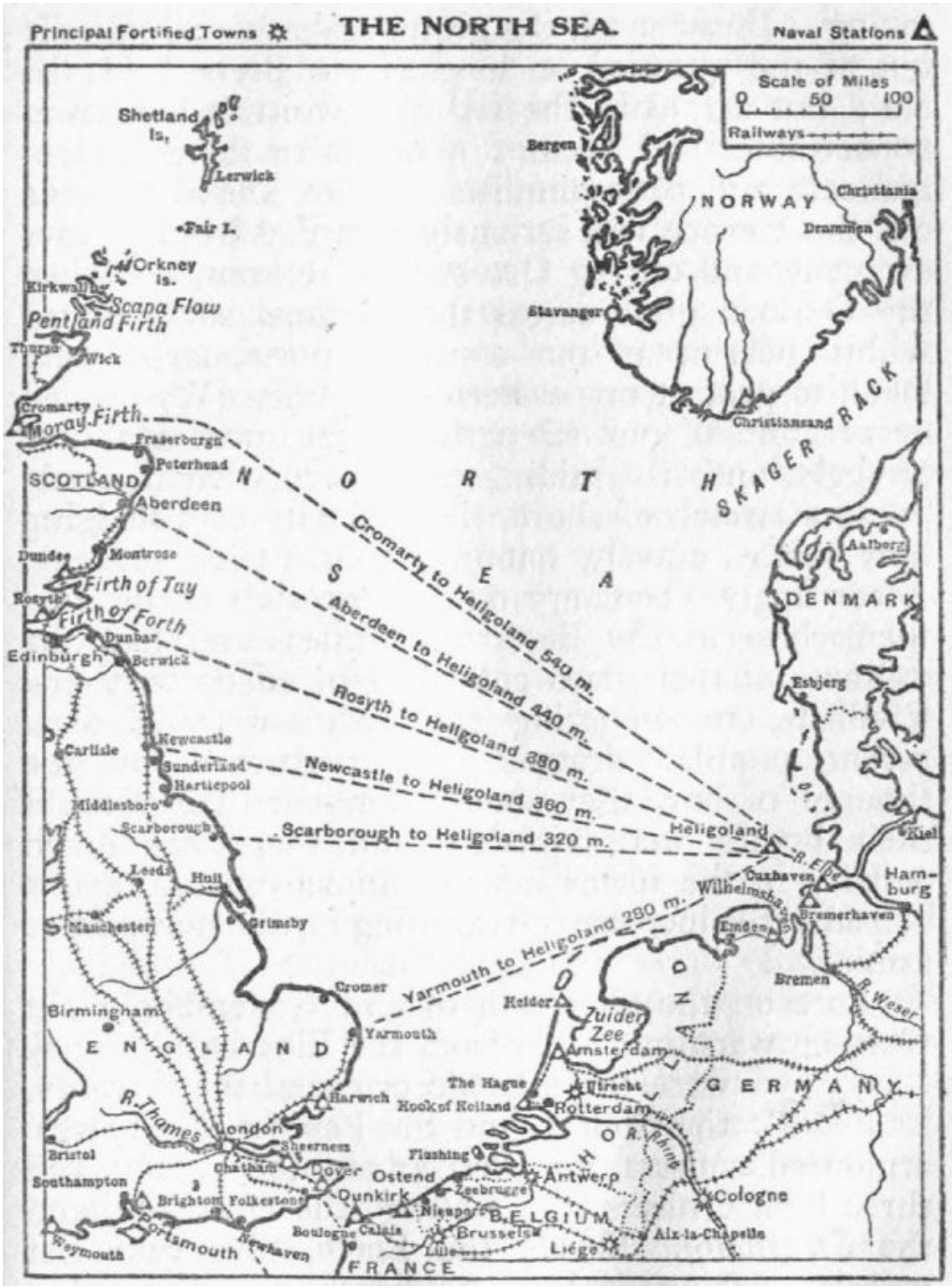
CHAPTER XXXVII.
RAIDS AND BLOCKADES.

The Risk of Invasion—The Raid upon Yarmouth—The Attack on Scarborough, Whitby, and the Hartlepools—Heroism of Territorial Battery—Narrow Escape of the Invaders—The German Motive—The German Defence—Loss of the *Formidable*—The Battle of 24th January—Sinking of the *Bluecher*—The *Lion* damaged—The Action broken off—Admiral von Ingenohl superseded—Mr. Churchill's Summary of the Work of the Navy—Germany takes Control of all Bread Supplies—Britain treats Foodstuffs as Contraband—Arrest of the *Wilhelmina*—Germany's Submarine "Blockade"—Blockade of Germany declared by the Allies—Achievements of German Submarines.

The war in northern waters now enters upon a singular phase which has no parallel in the conflicts of the past. An old dread took bodily form, and its embodiment proved farcical. Exasperated by failure, Germany cast from her all the ancient etiquette of war, and the result was that the law of the sea had to be largely rewritten.

The shores of Britain since the days of Paul Jones had been immune from serious hostile attentions. Very properly we regarded our navy as our defence, and paid little heed to coast fortifications, except at important naval stations such as Portsmouth and Dover. But the possibility of invasion remained in the popular mind, and was used as a goad to stir us to activity in our spasmodic fits of national stock-taking. Invasion on the grand scale was admittedly out of the question so long as our fleets held the sea; but a raid in the fog of a winter's night was conceivable, and became a favourite theme of romancers and propagandists. When the war broke out the menace was seriously regarded by the Government, and during October and November, when the German guns across the Channel were almost within hearing of our southern ports, steps were taken to protect our eastern coast-line. We needed every atom of our strength for the great Flanders struggle, and if a raiding party succeeded in occupying a stretch of shore, the necessity of dislodging him might gravely handicap our major strategy. Accordingly Yeomanry and Territorials entrenched themselves in the Eastern counties, and had the dullness of their days enlivened by many rumours. Civilians, remembering the awful warning of a recent

popular drama, were perturbed by the thought of how they should conduct themselves if their homes were violated, and there was much activity in the formation of national guards, and a considerable increase in recruiting for the new service armies.



THE NORTH SEA.

British East Coast, showing distances from German Base.

Late on the afternoon of 2nd November, eight German warships sailed from the Elbe base. They were three battle cruisers, the *Seydlitz*, the *Moltke*, and the *Von der Tann*; two armoured cruisers, the *Bluecher* and the *Yorck*; and three light cruisers, the *Kolberg*, the *Graudenz*, and the *Strassburg*. Except the *Yorck*, they were fast vessels, making at least 25 knots, and the battle cruisers carried 11-inch guns. Cleared for action, they started for the coast of England, and early in the winter dawn ran through the nets of a British fishing fleet eight miles east of Lowestoft. An old coast police boat, the *Halcyon*, was next sighted, and received a few shots, but the Germans had no time to waste on her. About eight o'clock they were opposite Yarmouth, and proceeded to bombard the wireless station and the naval air station from a distance of about ten miles. For some reason still unknown they were afraid to venture farther inshore—probably they took their range from a line of buoys marked on the chart, and did not know that after the declaration of war these buoys had been moved 500 yards farther out to sea—so their shells only ploughed the sands and plumped in the water. In a quarter of an hour they grew tired of it, and moved away, dropping many floating mines, which later in the day caused the loss of one of our submarines and two fishing-boats. The enterprise was unlucky, for on the road back the *Yorck* struck a mine and went to the bottom with most of her crew.

Nov. 2.

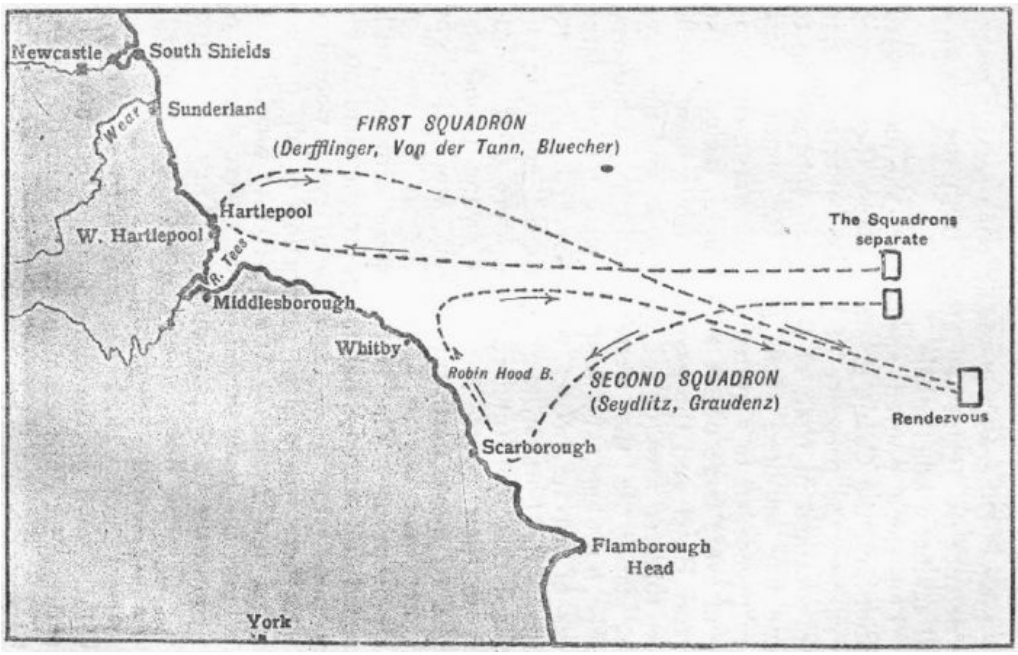
The raid was a reconnaissance, and a blow aimed at the *sang-froid* of Britain. The latter purpose miscarried, for nobody in Britain gave it a second thought. To bombard the beach front of a watering-place seemed a paltry achievement. It would have been wiser had the authorities taken it more seriously, and issued instructions to civilians as to what to do in case of a repetition of such attempts. For, having found the way, the invaders were certain to return.

They came again on 16th December, when a thick, cold mist lay low on our Eastern coasts. Von Spee and his squadron had gone to their death at the Falkland Islands, and Germany was fired with a passion of revenge. Espionage had been rampant, for somehow she seemed to have learned not only the navigation of the Yorkshire coast and the topography of the coast towns, but the way through the British minefields and our own naval dispositions at the moment. The composition of the raiding force, which was under Rear-Admiral Funke, the second in command of the battle-cruiser squadron, is not yet clear; but it is almost certain that it included the *Derfflinger*, the newest of the battle cruisers, and the *Von der Tann*. The *Bluecher* was there beyond doubt, and the other two may have been the *Seydlitz* and the *Graudenz*. There were also at least two light cruisers present. Before daybreak on the 16th the squadron arrived

Dec. 16.

off the mouth of the Tees, and there divided its forces. The *Derfflinger*, the *Von der Tann*, and probably the *Bluecher*, went north to raid the Hartlepools, and the other two went south against Scarborough.

A few minutes before eight o'clock those citizens of Scarborough who were out of bed saw approaching from the north four strange ships. It was a still morning, with what is called in Scotland a *haar* on the water, and something of a sea running, for the last days had been stormy. Scarborough was entirely without defences, except an old Russian 60-pounder, a Crimean relic, which was as useful as the flint arrowheads in the local museum. It had once been a garrison artillery depot, and had a battery below the Castle, but Lord Haldane had altered this and made it a cavalry station. Some troops of the new service battalions were quartered in the place, and there was a wireless station behind the town. Otherwise it was an open seaside resort, as defenceless against an attack from the sea as a seal against a killer-whale.



Raid on Scarborough and Hartlepool.

The ships poured shells into the coastguard station and the Castle grounds, where they seemed to suspect the presence of hostile batteries. Then they steamed in front of the town, approaching to some five hundred yards from the shore. Here they proceeded to a systematic bombardment, aiming at every large object within sight, including the Grand Hotel and the gasworks, while many shells were directed

towards the waterworks and the wireless station in the western suburbs. Churches, public buildings, and hospitals were hit, and large areas of private houses were wrecked. For forty minutes the bombardment continued, and it is calculated that five hundred shells were fired. Midway in their course the ships swung round and began to move northwards again, while the light cruisers went out to sea and began the work of mine-dropping. The streets were crowded with puzzled and scared inhabitants, for they had no instructions what to do, and, as in every watering-place, there was a large proportion of old people, women, and invalids. At a quarter to nine all was over, and the hulls of the invaders were disappearing round the Castle promontory. They left behind them eighteen dead, mostly women and children, and about seventy wounded.

About nine o'clock the coastguard at Whitby, the little town on the cliffs north of Scarborough, saw two great ships steaming up fast from the south. Ten minutes later the newcomers opened fire on the signal station on the cliff head. Several dozen shells were fired in a few minutes, many striking the cliff, and others going too high and falling behind the railway station. Some actually went four miles inland, and awakened a sleepy little village. The old Abbey of Hilda and Caedmon was struck but not seriously damaged; and on the whole, considering the number of shells it received, Whitby suffered little. The casualties were only five, three killed and two wounded. The invaders turned north-eastward and disappeared into the haze, to join their other division.

That other division had visited the Hartlepools, the only town of the three which came near to fulfilling the definition of a fortified place. It had a small fort, with a battery of small, antiquated guns. It had important docks and large shipbuilding works, which were busy at the time on Government orders, and some companies of the new service battalions were billeted in the town. Off the shore was lying a small British flotilla—a gunboat, the *Patrol*, carrying 4-inch guns, and two destroyers, the *Doon* and the *Hardy*.

About the same time as the bombardment of Scarborough began, the *Derfflinger*, the *Von der Tann*, and the *Bluecher* came out of the mist upon the British flotilla and opened fire. The action took place on the north side of the peninsula on which Old Hartlepool stands. With great gallantry the small British craft tried to close and torpedo the invaders, but they were driven back with half a dozen killed and twenty-five wounded, and their only course was flight. The German ships approached the shore and fired on the battery.

Then began the first fight on English soil with a foreign foe since the French landed in Sussex in 1690—the first on British soil since the fight at Fishguard in

1797. The achievement deserves to be remembered. The battery was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Robson, a Territorial officer, and consisted of some Territorials of the Durham Royal Garrison Artillery and some infantry of the Durhams. The 12-inch shells of the *Derfflinger* burst in and around the battery, but the men stood to their outclassed guns without wavering, and aimed with some success at the upper decks of the invaders. For more than half an hour a furious cannonade continued, in which some 1,500 shells seem to have been fired. One ship kept close to the battery, and gave it broadside after broadside; the other two moved farther north, and shelled Old Hartlepool, and fired over the peninsula at West Hartlepool and the docks. The streets of the old town suffered terribly, the gasworks were destroyed, and one of the big shipbuilding yards damaged, but the docks and the other yards were not touched. Churches, hospitals, workhouses, and schools were all struck. Little children going to school and babies in their mothers' arms were killed. The total death-roll was 119, and the wounded over 300; six hundred houses were damaged or destroyed, and three steamers that night struck the mines which the invaders had laid off the shore, and went down with much loss of life.

The spirit in which the inhabitants of the raided towns met the crisis was worthy of the highest praise. There was dire confusion—for nobody had been told what to do; there was some panic—it would have been a miracle if there had not been; but on the whole the situation was met with admirable coolness and courage. The authorities, as soon as the last shots were fired, turned to the work of relief; the Territorials in Hartlepool behaved like veterans both during and after the bombardment; the girls in the Hartlepool Telephone Exchange worked steadily through the cannonade; and there were many instances of heroism on the part of the children who suffered so terribly. It should be remembered that we cannot compare this attack on the East Coast towns with the assaults in a land war on some city in the battle front. In the latter case the mind of the inhabitants has been attuned for weeks to danger, and preparations have been made for defence. But here the bolt came from the blue, the narrow, crowded streets of Old Hartlepool were a death-trap, and the ordinary citizen was plunged in a second from profound peace into the midst of a nerve-racking and unexpected war.

Somewhere between nine and ten on that December morning the German vessels rendezvoused and started on their homeward course. They escaped only by the skin of their teeth. Before the first shell was fired word of the attempt had reached the British Grand Fleet. Somewhere out in the *haar* two battle-cruiser squadrons were moving to intercept the raiders, and behind came half a dozen of the

great battleships. But for an accident of weather the German battle-cruiser squadron would have gone to the bottom of the North Sea. But the morning *haar* thickened, till a series of blind fog-belts stretched for a hundred miles east from our shores. No dispatch has yet told the tale of that lamentable miscarriage, which was due solely to the weather, and not to any lack of skill and enterprise on the part of our admirals. Our Second Battle-Cruiser Squadron actually came within view of the enemy at a distance of eight miles, and the sight of it deflected the German course. Then, just as the trap seemed about to close, the fog thickened, speed had to be reduced, and Admiral Funke slipped through. There is reason to believe that in the flight the *Von der Tann* rammed one of the light cruisers and damaged her own bows. With this slight misadventure the raiders returned safely to the Heligoland base, to be welcomed with Iron Crosses and newspaper eulogies on this new proof of German valour.

On that same day the Admiralty issued a message pointing out that "demonstrations of this character against unfortified towns or commercial ports, though not difficult to accomplish provided that a certain amount of risk is accepted, are devoid of military significance." "They must not," it was added, "be allowed to modify the general naval policy which is being pursued." The first, perhaps, was a pardonable over-statement, unless we interpret the word "military" in a narrow sense. These raids had a very serious military and naval purpose, which it is well to recognize. The German aim was to create such a panic in civilian England as would prevent the dispatch of the new armies to the Continent, and to compel Sir John Jellicoe and the Grand Fleet to move his base nearer the East Coast, and undertake the duties of coast protection. The first was defeated by the excellent spirit with which England accepted the disaster. No voice was raised to clamour for the use of the new armies as a garrison for our seaboard. The second, though at first there was some natural indignation on the threatened coast and a few foolish speeches and newspaper articles, had no chance of succeeding. In vain is the net spread in sight of the bird. The only result was that more stringent measures were taken to prevent espionage, that civilians were at last given some simple emergency directions, and that recruiting received the best possible advertisement.

Germany made much of the exploit, till she discovered that neutral nations, especially America, were seriously scandalized, and then she took to lame explanations. Scarborough had been bombarded because it had a wireless station, Whitby because it had a naval signal station, Hartlepool because it had a little fort. The defence was one of those curious quibbles in which Germany delights. Technically she could make out a sort of case, and Hartlepool might fairly be said to

have come within the category of a defended place. It is true that the fortifications were lamentably inadequate, but she might retort that that was our business, not hers. But the real answer is that she did not aim at the destruction of military and naval accessories, except as an afterthought. The sea-front of Scarborough and streets of Old Hartlepool were bombarded not because they were in the line of fire against a fort or a wireless station, but for their own sakes—because they contained a multitude of people who could be killed or terrorized. German espionage is wonderful and German information good. If Germany had the exact plans of the coast ports and of their condition at the time, as she certainly had, she knew very well how far they were from being fortified towns or military and naval bases. She selected them just because they were open towns, for "frightfulness" there would have far greater moral effects upon the nation than if it had been directed against Harwich or Dover, where it might be regarded as one of the natural risks of war. Her performance was a breach not of a technicality but of the unwritten conventions of honourable campaigning.[1] The slaughter of civilians to produce an impression is one of those things repellent to any man trained in the etiquette of a great service. The German navy has been justly admired, but it was beginning to show its parvenu origin. Individual sailors might conduct themselves like gentlemen, but there was no binding tradition of gentility in the service, and, as in the army, those at the head disliked and repudiated any such weakness. The last word is with the Mayor of Scarborough. "Some newcomers," he wrote, "into honourable professions learn the tricks before the traditions."

The British casualties by sea, apart from the losses in battle which have been described in an earlier chapter, were not serious during the last two months of the year, but on the first day of 1915 there was a grave misfortune. On the 31st of December eight vessels of the Channel Fleet left Sheerness, and about three o'clock on the morning of 1st January, in bright moonlight, the eight were steering in single line at a moderate speed near the Start Lighthouse. There seems to have been no screen of destroyers, and the situation invited an attack from submarines, several of which had been reported in these waters. The last of the line was the *Formidable*, Captain Loxley, a pre-Dreadnought of 15,000 tons, and a sister ship to the *Bulwark*, which had been blown up at Sheerness on 26th November. Some time after three she was struck by two torpedoes, and went down. Four boats were launched, one of which capsized, and out of a crew of some 800 only 201 were saved. Captain Loxley, one of the ablest of our younger sailors,

Dec. 31.

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went down with his ship. The rescue of part of the crew was due to the courage and good seamanship of Captain William Pillar, of the Brixton trawler *Providence*, who in heavy weather managed to take the inmates of the *Formidable's* cutter aboard his vessel. For this fine performance he was given a commission in the Royal Navy, and decorated by the King, who, speaking as a sailor, said: "I realize how difficult your task must have been, because I know myself how arduous it is to gybe a vessel in a heavy gale." The misfortune showed that the lesson of the loss of the *Cressy*, *Hogue*, and *Aboukir* had been imperfectly learned. For eight battleships to move slowly in line on a moonlit night in submarine-infested waters without destroyers was simply to court destruction.

Jan. 24.

Early on the morning of Sunday, 24th January, Rear-Admiral Hipper, who commanded the German Battle-Cruiser Squadron, left Wilhelmshaven with a strong force to repeat the exploits of Admiral Funke. The *Von der Tann* was still undergoing repairs, but he had with him the *Seydlitz*, in which he flew his flag, the *Moltke*, the *Derfflinger*, the *Bluecher*, six light cruisers, one of which was the *Kolberg*, and a destroyer flotilla. To recapitulate their strengths: the *Derfflinger* had 26,200 tons, a speed of nearly 27 knots, an armour belt of 12 inches, and eight 12-inch guns; the *Seydlitz* had 24,600 tons, the same speed, and ten 11-inch guns; the *Moltke* had 22,640 tons, 25 knots, and ten 11-inch guns; the *Bluecher* had 15,550 tons, 24 knots, and twelve 8.2-inch guns. Before starting Admiral Hipper took certain precautions. He enlarged the mine field north of Heligoland, and north of it concentrated a submarine flotilla, while he arranged for Zeppelins and seaplanes to come out from the island in certain contingencies. It is impossible to dogmatize as to the purpose of his movements. It has been suggested that he hoped to get one or more of his battle cruisers round the north end of Scotland to attack the sea highroads of British commerce. He may have intended a new raid on our eastern coasts—the Tyne, perhaps, or the Forth. But, judging from his preparations and his subsequent tactics, it is likely that his main motive, assuming that he encountered part of the British fleet, was to retire and fight a running action, and entice our vessels within reach of his submarines or the Heligoland mine field.

The same morning the British Battle-Cruiser Squadron, under Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty, put to sea. Probably some hint of the German preparations had reached the Admiralty, and developments were anticipated. He flew his flag in the *Lion*—Captain A. S. M. Chatfield—a vessel of 26,350 tons, nearly 29 knots, and an armament of eight 13.5-inch guns. With him sailed five other battle cruisers: the *Tiger*—Captain Henry Pelly—28,000 tons, 28 knots, eight 13.5-inch guns; the

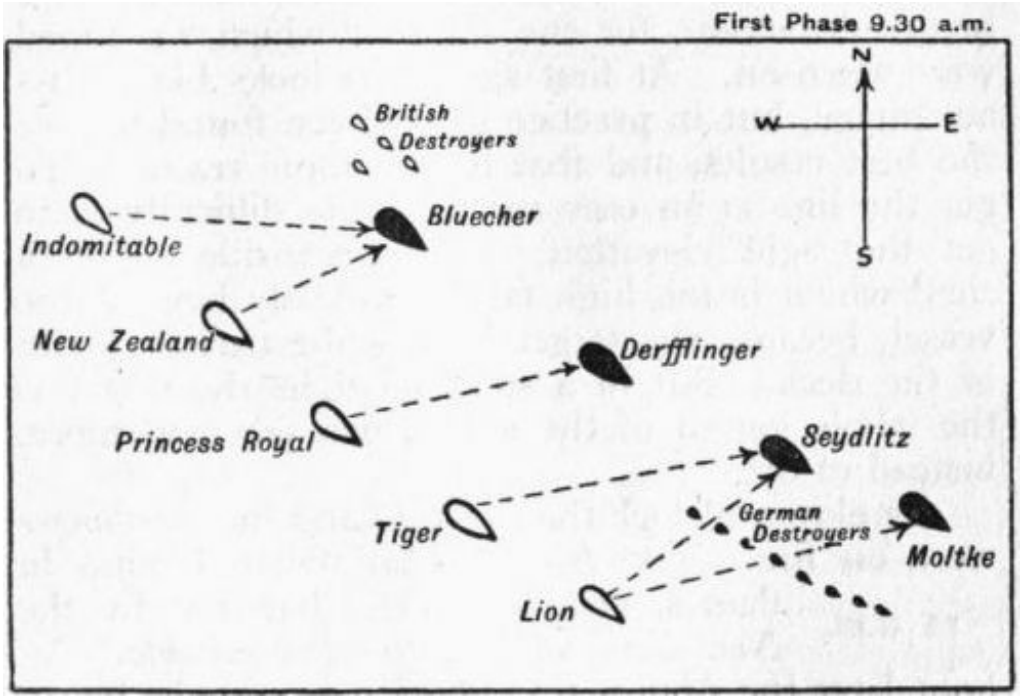
Princess Royal—Captain Osmond Brock—a sister ship of the *Lion*; the *New Zealand*—Captain Lionel Halsey—18,800 tons, 25 knots, and eight 12-inch guns; the *Indomitable*—Captain Francis Kennedy—a sister ship of the *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, which were in the battle of the Falkland Islands. With the battle cruisers went four cruisers of the "town" class—the *Southampton*, the *Nottingham*, the *Birmingham*, and the *Lowestoft*; three light cruisers—the *Arethusa*, the *Aurora*, and the *Undaunted*—and destroyer flotillas, under Commander Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt. Admiral Beatty's squadron completely outclassed Admiral Hipper's both in numbers, pace, and weight of fire, and the Germans were heavily handicapped by the presence of the *Bluecher*, whose low speed of only 24 knots marked her out as a predestined prey.

The night of Saturday, the 23rd, had been foggy, and the destroyers, scouting east of the Dogger Bank, had a difficult time. Sunday morning, however, dawned clear and sharp, for the wind had changed to the north-east, and swept the mist from the seas. About seven o'clock the *Aurora*, Captain Wilmot Nicholson, sighted the Germans off the Dogger Bank, signalled the news to Admiral Beatty, and presently opened fire. Admiral Beatty steered to the direction of the flashes, and Admiral Hipper, who had been moving north-west, promptly turned round and took a course to the south-east. This sudden flight, when he could not have been informed of the enemy's strength, suggests that the German admiral's main purpose was to lure our vessels to the dangerous Heligoland area.

7 a.m.

About eight o'clock the situation was as follows: the Germans were moving south-east in line, with the *Moltke* leading, followed by the *Seydlitz*, *Derfflinger*, and *Bluecher*, with the destroyers on their starboard beam, and the light cruisers ahead. Close upon them were the British destroyers and light cruisers, who presently crossed on the port side to prevent their smoke from spoiling the marksmanship of the larger vessels. Our battle cruisers did not follow directly behind, but, in order to avoid the mines which the enemy was certain to drop, kept on a parallel course to the westward. The *Lion* led, followed by the *Tiger*, the *Princess Royal*, the *New Zealand*, and the *Indomitable*. What followed was an extraordinary tribute to the engineers. The first three ships could easily be worked up to 30 knots, but the last two, which had normally only 25 knots, were so strenuously driven that they managed to keep in line. Our leading ships had the pace of the Germans, and no one of our squadron was seriously outclassed, while the unfortunate *Bluecher*, on the other hand, was bound to drop behind.

8 a.m.



Battle of January 24.

Fourteen miles at first separated us from the enemy, and by nine o'clock we were within 11½ miles of the last ship. The *Lion* fired a ranging shot which fell short, but soon after nine, when the squadrons were ten miles apart, she got her first blow home on the *Bluecher*. As our line began to draw level the *Tiger* continued to attack the *Bluecher*, while the *Lion* attended to the *Derfflinger*. At 9.30 the *Bluecher* had fallen so much astern that she came within range of the guns of the *New Zealand*, and the *Lion* and the *Tiger* were busy with the leading German ship, the *Seydlitz*, while the *Princess Royal* attacked the *Derfflinger*. The *Moltke*, first in the line, seems to have got off lightly, because of the smoke which obscured the range. Our destroyers and light cruisers had dropped behind, but presently, when the German destroyers threatened, the *Meteor* and "M" division, under Captain the Hon. Herbert Meade, went ahead and took up a position of great danger in the very thick of the firing.

9 a.m.

9.30 a.m.

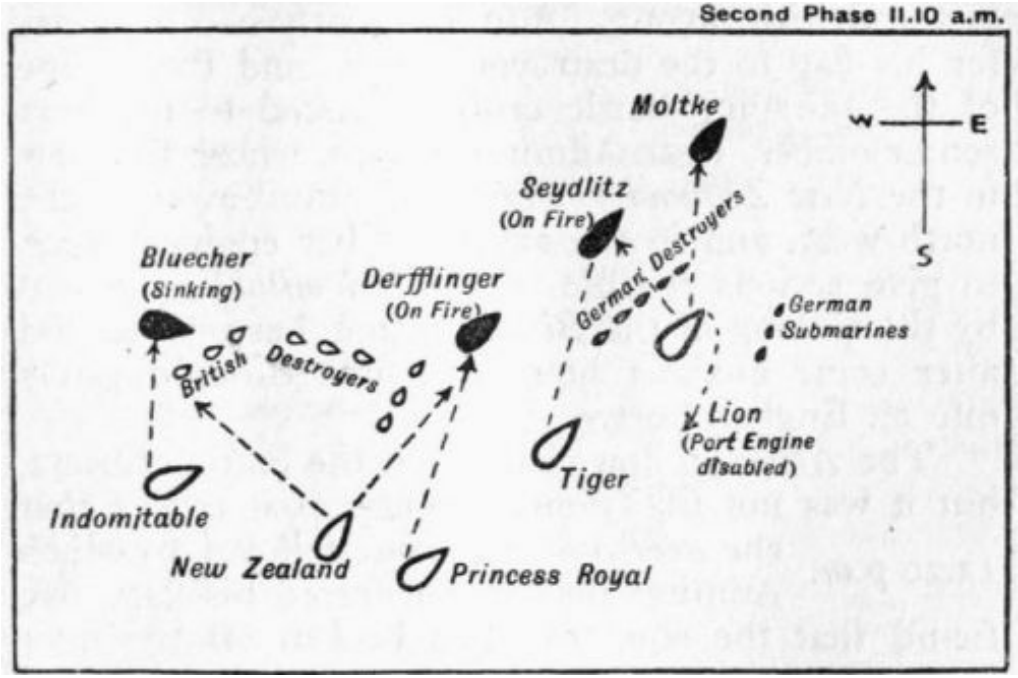
The British gunnery was precise, shell after shell hitting a pin-point ten miles off —a pin-point, too, moving at over thirty miles an hour. It was not a broadside action, for the ships at which we aimed were stern-on. At first sight this looks like a

disadvantage, but in practice it has been found to give the best results, and that for a simple reason. To get the line is an easy matter; the difficulty is to get the right elevation. In a broadside action a shell which is too high falls harmlessly beyond the vessel, because the target is only the narrow width of the deck. But in a stern-on fight the target is the whole length of the vessel, 600 feet and more, instead of 90.

By eleven o'clock the *Seydlitz* and the *Derfflinger* were on fire. The *Bluecher* had fallen behind in flames, and was being battered by the *New Zealand* and the *Indomitable*. An hour later the *Meteor* torpedoed her, and she began to sink. The crew lined up on deck, ready for death, and it was only the shouts of the *Arethusa* that made them jump into the water. With a cheer they went overboard, and none too soon, for presently the *Bluecher* turned turtle and floated bottom upwards. Our boats rescued over 120 of the swimmers, and would have saved more had not some German aircraft from Heligoland dropped bombs upon the rescue parties and killed several German sailors. The airmen clearly thought that the *Bluecher* was a sinking British cruiser, and this may have been the basis of the preposterous tale of our losses which the German Admiralty subsequently published.

11 a.m.

12 a.m.



Battle of January 24.

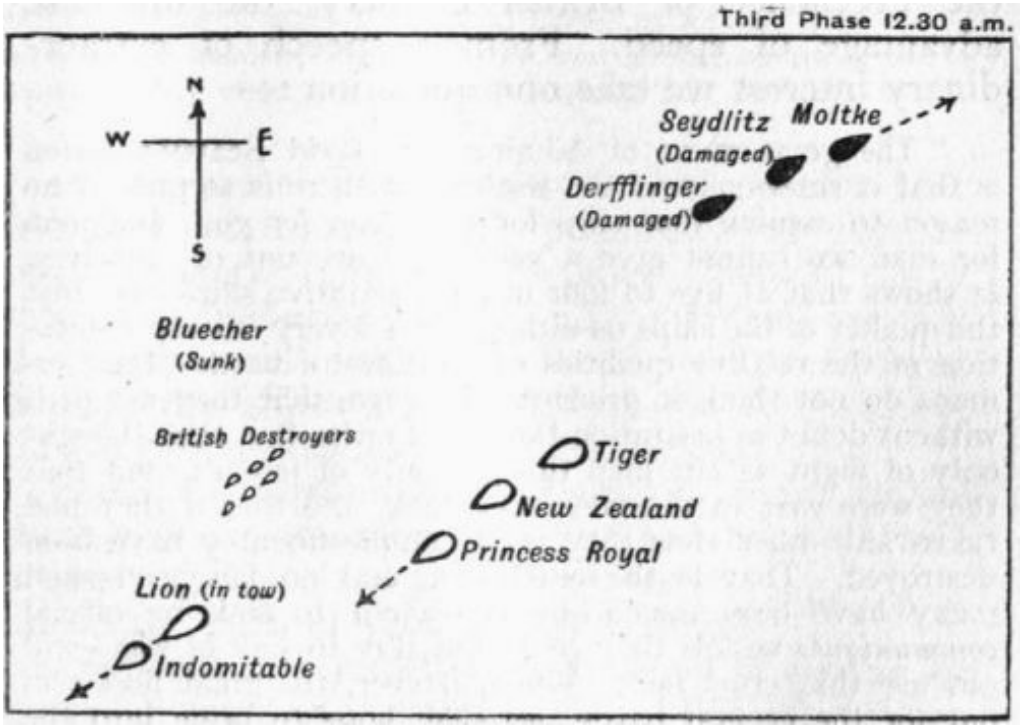
We must return to the doings of the three leading battle cruisers. The German destroyers managed to get between them and the enemy, and under cover of their smoke the Germans made a half turn to the north, and increased the distance. Admiral Beatty promptly altered his course to conform. The destroyers then attacked us at close quarters, hoping to torpedo, but the 4-inch guns amidships on the battle cruisers drove them off. Presently submarines were sighted, and Admiral Beatty himself saw a periscope on the starboard bow of the *Lion*. The flagship at this time was much under fire, but suffered remarkably little damage. At three minutes past eleven, however, as her bow lifted from the water it was struck by a shell which damaged the feed tank. She had to reduce her speed, and fell out of the line.

11.3 a.m.

This accident had unfortunate effects on the battle, which up to now had been going strongly in the British favour. Admiral Beatty had to transfer his flag to the destroyer *Attack*, and the charge of the pursuing battle cruisers passed to the next senior officer, Rear-Admiral Moore, whose flag flew in the *New Zealand*. The *Lion* moved away to the north-west, and in the afternoon her engines began to give serious trouble. The *Indomitable*, released by the sinking of the *Bluecher*, took her in tow, and after some anxious hours she was brought safely into an English port.

The *Attack* followed hard on the battle cruisers, but it was not till twenty minutes past twelve that she overtook the *Princess Royal*, to which Admiral Beatty transferred his flag. He found that the squadron had broken off the fight and were retiring. The reasons which led Admiral Moore to this step have not yet been given to the world. According to the German report, which there is no cause to distrust, the British squadron at the moment of turning was seventy miles from Heligoland and probably at least forty from the new mine field which Admiral Hipper had laid. Admiral Moore had to make a momentous and most difficult decision, and any verdict upon its wisdom would be premature. The consequence was that what might have been a crushing victory was changed to a disappointment. The British losses were few—ten men killed on the *Tiger*, four on the *Meteor*, and six wounded on the *Lion*; no British vessel was lost, and the hurt to the flagship was soon repaired. The Germans lost the *Bluecher*; the *Derfflinger* and the *Seydlitz* were seriously damaged, and many of their crews must have perished. But minor successes seem almost a failure when we were within an ace of destroying the whole German force of battle cruisers.

12.20 p.m.



Battle of January 24.

To Germany the result was a grave annoyance, which was covered by a cloud of inaccurate reports. Admiral Hipper was apparently not held responsible, but Admiral von Ingenohl, for some reason still obscure, was the target of criticism. He was shortly afterwards removed from the command of the High Sea Fleet, and his place taken by Admiral von Pöhl.

Three weeks later the British First Lord of the Admiralty made a statement in the House of Commons which summed up the work of the navy, and drew the attention of the nation to the lesson of the North Sea action—the power of the great guns, the excellence of British gunnery, the immense advantage of speed. From a speech of extraordinary interest we take one quotation:—

> "The great merit of Admiral Sir David Beatty's action is that it shows us and the world that there is at present no reason to assume that ship for ship, gun for gun, and man for man we cannot give a very good account of ourselves. It shows that at five to four in representative ships—because the quality of the ships on either side is a very fair representation of the relative qualities of the lines of battle—the Germans do not think it

prudent to engage, that they accepted without doubt or hesitation their inferiority, that they thought only of flight as our men thought only of pursuit, and that they were wise in the view they took, and that if they had taken any other view they would unquestionably have been destroyed. That is the cruel fact, and no falsehood—and many have been issued—no endeavour to sink by official *communiqués* vessels they could not stay to sink in war—will obscure that cruel fact. When, if ever, the great fleet sets out for the general battle, we shall hope to bring into the line a preponderance not only in quality, but in numbers, which will not be five to four, but will be something considerably greater than that. Therefore we may consider this extra margin as an additional insurance against unexpected losses by mine and submarine, such as may at any moment occur in the preliminaries of a great sea battle. It is for these important reasons of test and trial that we must regard this action of the Dogger Bank as an important, and I think I may say satisfactory, event. The losses of the navy, although small compared to the sacrifices of the army, have been heavy. We have lost, mainly by submarines, the lives of 5,500 officers and men, and we have killed, mainly by gun fire, an equal number, which is, of course, a much larger proportion of the German forces engaged. We have also taken in sea fighting 82 officers and 934 men prisoners of war. No British naval prisoners of war have been taken in fighting at sea by the Germans. When they had the inclination they had not the opportunity, and when they had the opportunity they had not the inclination. For the loss of these British lives we have lived through six months of this war safely and even prosperously. We have established for the time being a command of the sea such as we had never expected, such as we have never known, and such as our ancestors have never known at any other period of our history."

In the concluding words of his speech Mr. Churchill adumbrated the possibility of further naval pressure against an enemy "which, as a matter of deliberate policy, places herself outside all international obligations." He referred especially to the imports of food, hitherto unhindered, and his prognostication was soon verified.

From the beginning of the struggle merchandise which was not contraband of war had been allowed to pass into Germany in neutral vessels. But on the 26th of January the German Government announced their intention of seizing all stocks of corn and flour, and forbade all

Jan. 26.

private transactions as from that morning. This meant that grain had become a munition of war, for it was no longer possible to distinguish between imports for the civilian population and for the army in the field. Accordingly the British Government had to revise its practice. The American steamer *Wilhelmina*, laden with a cargo of food-stuffs for Germany, was stopped at Falmouth, and the case referred to the Prize Courts. In this policy Britain did not depart from the traditional principles of international practice. She did not propose to seize non-contraband goods in neutral vessels. All that happened was that certain goods, which are normally non-contraband, were now made contraband by the action of Germany.

The economic and legal bearing of these events will be discussed in a later chapter. Here it is sufficient to note the actual consequences. Germany, much perturbed by the unforeseen results of her declaration, attempted to modify it by announcing that imports of food would not be used for military purposes; but such a declaration could not be accepted by Britain, for it was not possible in practice. Then in a fit of fury Germany took the bold step of declaring war against all British merchandise—war which would follow none of the old rules, for it would be conducted by submarines, who had no facilities, even if they had the disposition, to rescue the crews. She further announced that from 18th February onward the waters around the British Isles would be considered a war region, and that any enemy merchant vessels found there "would be destroyed without its always being possible to warn the crew or passengers of the dangers threatening." The sea passage north of the Shetlands and the coastal waters of the Netherlands were declared to be exempt from this menace.

The "blockade" of Britain was not really a blockade in any technical sense. Germany merely specified certain tracts of water in which she proposed to commit acts which were forbidden by every code of naval warfare. In 1806 Napoleon had issued an earlier Berlin Decree, in which he proclaimed the British Isles to be in a state of blockade. He could not enforce it, and British trade, so far from suffering, actually increased in the ensuing years. But Napoleon, though he used the word "blockade" improperly, sought his purpose by means which were not repugnant to the ethics of civilized war. Germany, utterly incapable of a real blockade, could only succeed by jettisoning her last remnants of decency. An inferior boxer may get an advantage over a strong opponent if he gouges out his eyes.

The German announcement not unnaturally gave serious concern to neutral nations, especially to America. Germany had warned them that neutral ships might perish in the general holocaust, and their anxiety was increased by an incident which happened on 6th February. The

Feb. 6.

Cunarder *Lusitania*, which had a number of Americans on board, arrived at Liverpool flying the American flag. Such a use in emergencies is a recognized practice of war—one of Paul Jones's lieutenants passed successfully through the British Channel Fleet by hoisting British colours—and the British Foreign Office was justified in defending the custom. But clearly if it was made habitual it would greatly increase the risks of neutrals, and America had some grounds for her request that it should not be used "frequently and deliberately."

March 1.

The next step of the British Government was to close absolutely to all ships of all nations the greater part of the North Channel leading from the Atlantic to the Irish Sea. Then on 1st March Mr. Asquith announced in the House of Commons that the Allies held themselves free to detain and take into port all ships carrying goods of presumed enemy origin, ownership, or destination. No neutral vessel which sailed from a German port after 1st March would be allowed to proceed, and no vessel after that date would be suffered to sail to any German port. It was not proposed to confiscate such vessels or their contents; but they would be detained. Such an announcement implied the strict blockade of Germany, and was defended by Mr. Asquith not as a fulfilment of, but as a departure from, international law upon the subject. It was, in his view, a legitimate retaliation against a foe which had broken not only every international rule but every moral obligation. Clearly it could not be an "effective" blockade in the strictest sense, and this we shall consider later. But here it may be noted that it was at least as effective as the blockade proclaimed by the North in the American Civil War, when a highly-indented coast-line of 3,000 miles was watched by only twelve ships.

Feb. 18-March 31.

Before 18th February, the day of destiny, German submarines had been busy against our merchantmen. They had succeeded from the beginning of the year in sinking eight, and they had been wholly unscrupulous in their proceedings, as was proved by the attack off Havre upon the hospital ship *Asturias*. By 24th February they had sunk seven more, by 10th March another four, by 17th March another eight, by 24th March another three, by 31st March another three. If we take the total arrivals and sailings of oversea steamers of all nationalities above 300 tons to and from ports in the United Kingdom during that period, we shall find that the losses work out at about three per thousand. It was not a brilliant achievement. The mountain which had been in travail with awesome possibilities brought forth an inconsiderable mouse. The "blockade" hindered the sailing of scarcely a British ship. It did not raise the price of any necessary by a farthing. But it effectively ruined what was left of Germany's

reputation in the eyes of the civilized world, and it increased, if increase were needed, the determination of the Allies to make an end of this crazy international anarchism. Some of the commanders of the German submarines—notably Captain von Weddigen, who lost his life—went about the business as decently as their orders allowed. Others, such as the miscreant who sank the *Falaba*, torpedoed the vessel before the passengers were in the boats, and jeered at the drowning. In the German navy, as in the German army, humanity depended upon the idiosyncrasies of individual commanders, for it had no place in the official traditions. It is a curious comment upon Baron Marschall von Bieberstein's proud boast at the Hague: "The officers of the German navy—I say it with emphasis—will always fulfil in the strictest manner duties which flow from the unwritten law of humanity and civilization."

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[1] "Military proceedings are not regulated solely by the stipulations of international law. There are other factors—conscience, good sense. A sense of the duties which the principles of humanity impose will be the surest guide for the conduct of seamen, and will constitute the most effectual safeguard against abuse. The officers of the German Navy—I say it with emphasis—will always fulfil in the strictest manner duties which flow from the unwritten law of humanity and civilization."—Baron Marschall von Bieberstein at the Hague Conference, 1907.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.
TURKEY AT WAR.

Turkey enters the War—The Turkish Army—The Turkish Soldier—The Turkish Strategical Problem—The Persian Gulf—The Bagdad Railway—German Activity at the Gulf—The British capture Basra—Capture of Kurna—The Fighting at Azerbaijan—Capture and Recapture of Tabriz—Russian Columns in Kurdistan—The Caucasus—Enver's Strategy—His Enveloping Movement—The Russians take Koprikeui—Turks move on Sarikamish and Ardahan—Retreat of 10th Turkish Corps—Capture of 9th Corps—Defeat of 11th Corps—Retreat of 1st Corps—Turkish Disasters at Sea.

On 29th October Turkey's many breaches of international etiquette, of which her behaviour in regard to the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, and her summary abolition of the Capitulations were the chief, culminated in definite acts of war. A horde of Bedouins invaded the Sinai Peninsula and occupied the wells of Magdala, and three Turkish torpedo boats raided Odessa, sank and damaged several ships, and bombarded the town. On the 30th the ambassadors of the Allies had interviews with the Grand Vizier, which Sir Louis Mallet described as "painful." The Sultan, the Grand Vizier, and Djavid Bey were in favour of peace, but Enver and his colleagues overruled them. The Odessa incident was justified by a cock-and-bull story of prior Russian hostilities, and nothing remained for the ambassadors but to ask for their passports. On 1st November Sir Louis Mallet left Constantinople, and the century-old friendship of Britain and Turkey was rudely broken.

Oct 29.

Oct. 30.

Nov. 1.

The Turkish army was based nominally on a universal conscription, but in practice only the Mussulman population was drawn upon; not all of that, indeed, for the Arabs were more usually opposed to than incorporated in the Turkish ranks. The conscript served for twenty years—nine in the First Line (Nizam), nine in the Active Reserve (Redif), and two in the Territorial Militia (Mustafiz). The major unit was the army corps of three divisions, each division embracing ten battalions. The artillery, which had suffered severely in the Balkan wars, was patchy and largely out of date, though in recent months Germany and Austria had strengthened it with a number of

heavy batteries. The peace strength of the army was, roughly, 17,000 officers and 250,000 men, and in war some total like 800,000 might have been looked for, provided equipment was forthcoming. The Commander-in-Chief was Enver Bey, and the German Military Mission under General Liman von Sanders had practically taken over the duties of a General Staff. The German system of "inspections" had been instituted—four in number, with headquarters at Constantinople, Damascus, Erzhingian, and Bagdad. The fourteen army corps were distributed in peace throughout the Empire at strategic points. The 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th were nominally stationed in Europe—at Constantinople, Adrianople, Kirk Kilisse, and Rodosto; but they drew most of their reserves from Asia Minor. The 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th belonged to the Damascus "inspection;" the 9th, 10th, and 11th were in Armenia and the Caucasus, the 12th at Mosul, and the 13th at Bagdad, while the 14th Corps had no territorial basis. On the outbreak of war these corps were reshuffled, six apparently having been concentrated around the Sea of Marmora.

Peace Distribution of Turkish Army Corps.
(The 14th Corps has no Territorial Base.)

The Turkish infantryman had for many years a high reputation as a soldier—especially, as he showed at Plevna, in a stubborn defensive. His physique was good, his nerves steady, and his power of endurance incredible. But in recent wars his fame had suffered a certain eclipse. He had been badly led and badly armed, the

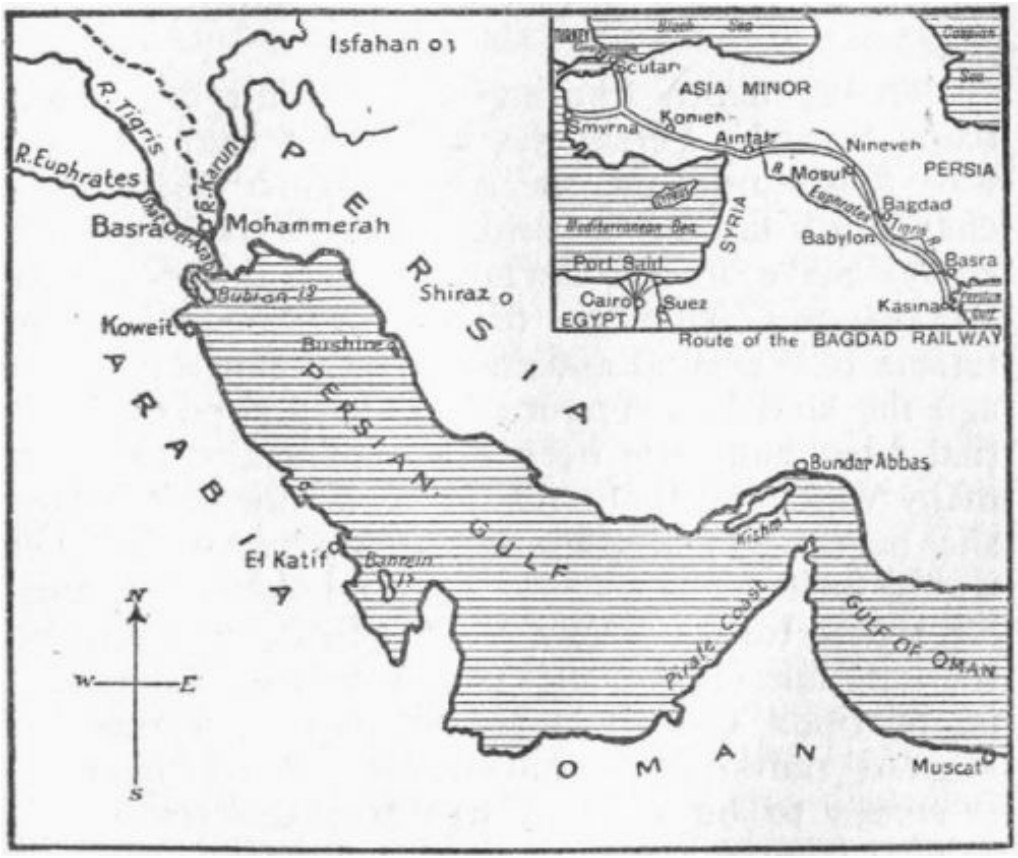
commissariat and transport had been rudimentary, and successive defeats were believed to have shaken his *moral*. The truth seems to be that Turkey had fallen between two stools. Her ill-provided levies in the past had fought desperately under brilliant officers, because they were inspired by a simple trust in their religion and their leaders and a genuine patriotic devotion. An attempt had been made to engraft upon this tradition the mechanical perfection of the German system. But the Turk is not meant by Providence to be a soldier of the German type, and the seed of Marshal von der Goltz and General Liman von Sanders was sown in barren soil. The consequence was a machine without precision and without motive power. The Turk had been at his best when he fought for Islam and the Padishah; but Islam was inconspicuous in the ideals of the new Committee, the old Padishah was somewhere in exile, and the new one too patently a cypher. In addition, he could have little confidence in men who had already led him to disaster, and who had caused him to endure needless and horrible privations. A perfect machine is a mighty thing, but an imperfect machine is so much scrap iron. The Turkish soldier was now an incomplete German, which is like a gun lacking the breech-block. It is impossible to withhold our sympathy from a brave race going out to battle in a cause which they neither liked nor understood, from an army in the grip of an unfamiliar and imperfect machine, from a nation sacrificed to a muddled *Welt-politik*. Disaster loomed large in its horoscope, but courage never failed it; and the time was to come when the machine went to pieces, and, amid the snows of the Caucasus or the sands of the desert, the children of Osman, fighting once more in the old fashion, died without fear or complaint.

The beginning of war found Turkey with a curious strategical problem before her. Europe was the chief interest of her leaders. She hankered to recover the lost provinces of Thrace, and there she looked for her reward when her allies emerged victorious. But, so long as Greece and Bulgaria remained neutral, there was no room for an offensive in Europe and no need of a defensive. Accordingly she was free to move the bulk of her corps to those frontiers where she faced directly the belligerents. The chief was Transcaucasia, where, in a wild cluster of mountains, she looked across the gorges at Russia. An offensive in Transcaucasia was what Germany and Austria urgently desired. Russia, they knew, had none too many equipped men, and a diversion on her flank would draw troops from that thin line, a thousand miles long, which she held from the Niemen to the Dniester. Against Britain, too, Turkey might use her armies with effect. An attack upon the Suez Canal would precipitate the long-expected Egyptian rebellion, and would at the worst detain the Australian and Indian troops now training there, and at the best compel

Britain to send out as reinforcements some of her still scanty reserves. Further, it would bar the short road to India, and give the flame of Indian insurrection time to kindle. But the great chance of fermenting Indian trouble, in the certainty of which Germany still firmly believed, lay in the scheme now coming to a head on the Persian Gulf. German agents had been busy among the Gulf traders, and elaborate preparations had been made for undermining the virtue of the Amir of Afghanistan, and for preaching a *Jehad* among the Mussulman tribes of the Indian north-west. Turkey believed that she had little to fear in the way of attack. The Russians were too busily engaged elsewhere to penetrate far west from the frosty Caucasus, while Britain had enough to do in Flanders without attempting an advance into Syria or Mesopotamia. The one serious danger-point in a war with a great naval Power was the Dardanelles; but Enver and his colleagues were confident that the penetration of these Straits, long ago pronounced by experts a task of the utmost difficulty, had been rendered impossible for all time by the heavy guns which Krupp and Skoda had so diligently provided.

The doings in the Dardanelles and the fighting on the Suez Canal must be reserved for later chapters. Here we propose to consider only the campaign on Turkey's eastern frontier—in Transcaucasia and in Persia. The latter comes first in order of time. Turkey had shown her hand since the last week of August, and Russia and Britain had anticipated the events of 30th October. On the Persian Gulf the Ottoman troops found their offensive forestalled by a British invasion.

The Persian Gulf is one of the oldest of Britain's fields of activity. Englishmen, looking for trade, visited it in the reign of Elizabeth. In its early days the East India Company established a party at Bundar Abbas, and fought stoutly with Dutch and Portuguese rivals for the better part of two centuries. The Indian navy first began the survey of the Gulf, and looked to its lighting. For fifty years we hunted down the pirates and cleared out their strongholds on the Pirate Coast. We protected Persia against those who would have deprived her of a seaboard, we policed the waters, we suppressed slavery and gun-running, we wrestled with the plague, and introduced the rudiments of sanitation in the marshy estuaries. For three hundred years we did this work for the benefit of the shipping of all nations, since we claimed no monopoly and desired no perquisites. All we took in return was a fraction of an island for a telegraph station. One thing, indeed, we asked, and that was a matter of life and death, on which compromise was impossible. No other Power should be allowed to seize territory, and no other flag should dominate those land-locked waters. For with our prestige in the Persian Gulf was bound up the future of India and of the Empire.



The Persian Gulf.

Before ever the Turkish crescent appeared on the shore of Arabia, Britain had shown her flag in the Gulf. In the sixteenth century Suleiman the Magnificent had captured Bagdad, but it was not till 1638 that the conquest was confirmed, and not till 1668 that Turkey reached Basra and the seacoast. For the next two centuries the writ of Constantinople ran haltingly on the western shores or not at all. The rise of the Wahabis threatened the Turkish power, and all through the nineteenth century Eastern Arabia was the scene of a rivalry between the great Wahabi houses of Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid, a rivalry in which the Khalif did not dare to interfere. At Koweit and at Bahrein lived independent sheikhs, and not all the efforts of Midhat Pasha could turn that coast into a Turkish province. The Gulf shores, baked and barren, and hot as a furnace, were a museum of types of incomplete sovereignty and *de facto* rule. But out on the waters lay British warships which kept the peace.

To this happy hunting-ground the eyes of Germany turned. Persia was a decrepit

state, Turkey was moribund, and in Mesopotamia she saw a chance of finding a field for exploitation which would make it for Germany what Egypt was to Britain and Morocco to France. German professors told excited audiences that a thousand years ago the land had supported six million people, and that what had once been might be again. If Germany won a foothold on the Gulf, not only would she have the exploiting of Mesopotamia, but she would have weakened the British hold upon India. To secure this end Turkey must be conciliated, and the long tale of intrigue began which we have noted in previous chapters. Her trump card was the Bagdad railway, the full history of which, when it comes to be written, will fascinate the world. Suffice it to say that in 1899 a German company, backed by the Deutsche Bank, obtained a concession from the Porte to build a railway from Konieh, then the terminus of the little Anatolian railway, to Bagdad and Basra on the Persian Gulf. The concession was made valuable by a Turkish guarantee of the interest on the cost of construction at the rate of £700 per kilometre per annum. Britain awoke somewhat late in the day to the political purport of the new railway, and a diplomatic conflict began which was still in progress at the outbreak of war. Germany had followed the practice of that Lord of Breadalbane who built his castle on the extreme confines of his land with the avowed intention of "birsing yont." Her "yont" was Koweit, on the actual Gulf shores, and she persuaded Turkey into various pretensions to suzerainty, which the watchful eyes of the British agents detected in time and frustrated.

Meantime she was busy at her old game of "peaceful penetration." A certain firm, Wonckhaus by name,[1] played here the part which Woermann played in West Africa and Luderitz in Damaraland. A simple, spectacled gentleman in white ducks and a *topi* appears on the beach in quest of pearl shells. From a modest shanty on the foreshore he directs his operations, and spends freely money which cannot come out of his profits. Presently arrives a German consul, and soon there are little tiffs between the employees of the shell merchant and the natives, which give the consul something to do. Quickly the business grows, but not on commercial lines. Then comes the Hamburg-Amerika line, playing national airs and dispensing sweet champagne, and the spectacled gentleman is revealed as its accredited agent. Very soon the innocent traders go concession hunting, and call upon Turkey to ratify their claims under a pretence of suzerainty. Then Britain interferes, reveals the hollowness of the business, and puts her veto on the game. But next week it begins all over again elsewhere. Colonel Sir Percy Cox, the British Agent and Consul-General on the Gulf, had a task scarcely less difficult than that of Lord Cromer in the early days in Egypt, and he performed it with a patience, judgment, and resolution which deserved well of his country.

By the beginning of November the British in the Gulf were ready for the offensive. The Government of India had sent the Poona Brigade,[2] under Brigadier-General W. S. Delamain, to Bahrein On 7th November the force reached the bar of the Shat-el-Arab, where the village of Fao, with its Turkish fort, lies among the flats and palm groves. The gunboat *Odin* bombarded the fort, and troops landed and occupied the village. The Brigade then sailed thirty miles up the estuary, passing the refinery of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company at Abadan, and disembarked at Sanijeh, on the Turkish bank, where it prepared an entrenched camp, and sat down to wait for the rest of the British force.

Nov. 7.

Here, on the 11th, there was some fighting with the Turks from Basra, who were dislodged from a neighbouring village by the 117th Mahrattas and the 20th Punjabis. Two days later Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Barrett arrived with the rest of the Indian contingent—the Ahmednagar Brigade and the Belgaum Brigade.[3]

Nov. 11.

Nov. 13.

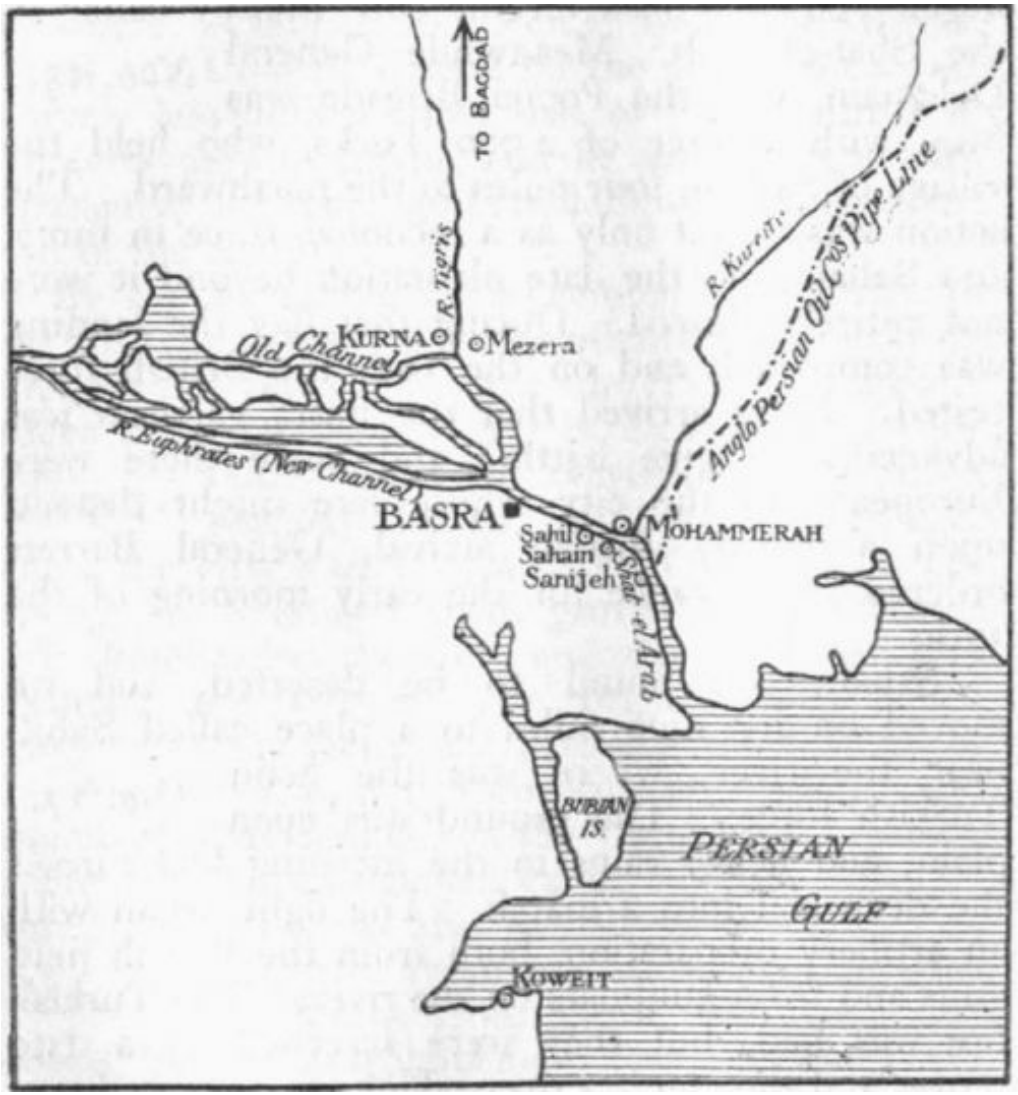
On the 15th the disembarkation of the remainder began—no light task on the soft, muddy banks of the Shat-el-Arab. Meanwhile General Delamain with the Poona Brigade was busy with a force of 2,000 Turks, who held the village of Sahain, four miles to the northward. The action was meant only as a reconnaissance in force, and Sahain and the date plantation beyond it were not entirely cleared. During that day the landing was completed, and on the 16th the British force rested. News arrived that the Basra garrison was advancing to give battle; and since there were Europeans in the city whose fate might depend upon a speedy British arrival, General Barrett ordered the advance for the early morning of the 17th.

Nov. 15.

Sahain was found to be deserted, and we moved on for nine miles to a place called Sahil, near the river, where was the main Turkish force. The ground was open plain, and heavy rains in the morning had turned the deep soil into a marsh. The fight began with an artillery preparation, both from the British field guns and from gunboats on the river. The Turkish fire was bad, but they were screened by a date grove, and the country over which we advanced was as bare as a billiard table. Under a punishing fire our men never wavered, the Dorsets especially behaving with admirable coolness and decision. The enemy did not wait for the final bayonet charge, but broke and fled. Pursuit was wellnigh impossible, partly because of the heavy ground, and partly owing to a mirage which, fortunately for the enemy, appeared to screen his flight. Our losses were 353, of which 130 were in the Dorsets. Our killed were 38. The Turkish casualties were estimated at over 1,500. The action decided the fate of

Nov. 17.

Basra.



Basra and Kurna.

On the 21st, while the bulk of our force lay at Sanijeh, news came that the Turks had evacuated Basra, and that the Arabs had begun to loot the place. Accordingly General Barrett embarked certain troops on two river steamers, and ordered the rest of his forces to take the direct road across the desert. The Turks had sunk three steamers at one point in the Shat-el-Arab, and had a battery to command the place, but after silencing the

Nov. 21.

battery the river expedition managed to pass the obstruction early on the morning of the 22nd. About ten o'clock General Barrett reached Basra, where the Turkish Custom House had been set on fire, and the British flag was flown on the German consulate. The desert column, after a thirty mile march, came in about midday. Next day the British formally entered the city of Sindbad the Sailor.

Nov. 22.

Nov. 23.

During the remainder of the month we were occupied in preparing a base camp. Our position was secure, but it was certain that we would be subjected to further attack. The enemy had fled at Sahil, but he would return, and the great military station of Bagdad was little more than three hundred miles distant. Fifty miles above Basra, at the point where the former channel of the Euphrates joins the Tigris, lies the town of Kurna—a position now of less strategical importance than in former days, for the old Euphrates is little use for traffic Kurna is the point where ocean-going steamers can no longer ascend the river. On 2nd December we heard that the Turks had reassembled there, and next day a small force of Indian troops, with a detachment of the Norfolks under Lieutenant-Colonel Frazer, was sent upstream to deal with them, accompanied by three gunboats, an armed yacht, and two armed launches.

Dec. 2.

Kurna proved to be a more difficult business than was expected. The British force landed on the eastern bank four miles below the town early on the morning of the 4th, while the gunboats went ahead, shelled Kurna, and engaged the Turkish artillery on the east bank of the Tigris near Mezera, about ten miles above the town. Meanwhile the British column advanced, and about midday came abreast of Kurna, which was clearly held in force. Our men were subjected to a heavy fusilade, and since the Tigris is there three hundred yards wide, and Kurna is screened in trees, we could do little in reply. Accordingly Colonel Frazer led his troops back to the original camp, which he had strongly entrenched, and sent a message to Basra for reinforcements.

Dec. 4.

Nothing happened on the 5th, and on the 6th General Fry appeared with help—the 7th Rajputs and the rest of the Norfolks. On the 7th we advanced against Mezera, which the Turks had again occupied, took it, and drove the defenders across the water to Kurna, while our naval flotilla was busy on the river. It was now decided to take Kurna in the rear; so, early on the 8th, the 104th and 110th were marched some miles up the Tigris. A body of sappers swam the stream with a line, and with the aid of a dhow a kind of ferry was established, and our men crossed. By the evening the force was close to Kurna, entrenched among

Dec. 7.

Dec. 8.

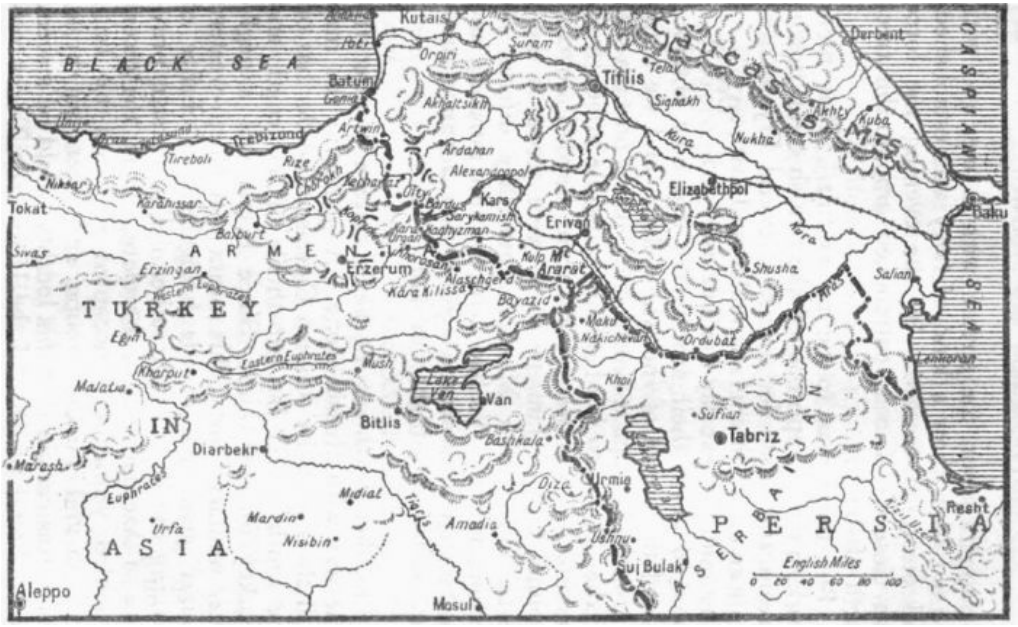
the trees north of the city.

But there was to be no assault. That night Turkish officers approached the British camp downstream and asked for terms. General Fry insisted upon an unconditional surrender, and just after midday next day the Turkish garrison laid down their arms. We had now obtained complete control of the whole delta, and we made entrenched camps at Kurna and Mezera on each side of the Tigris, to hold off any possible attack from the north. Turkish troops from Bagdad hovered around, and in January there were 5,000 of them seven miles from Mezera; but they offered no serious attack. We had achieved our purpose, and established a barricade against any advance upon the Gulf which might threaten India.

Dec. 9.

Farther north on Turkey's eastern frontier the war was with Russia alone. A glance at the map will show that the Russian Caucasian border has on the south Persia for two-thirds of its length and Turkey for one-third. Since Persia was a negligible military Power, this meant that North-western Persia gave each of the belligerents a chance of turning the flank of the other. The Persian province of Azerbaijan had, therefore, during the recent troubled years been occupied in parts by both Russian and Turkish troops, and when war broke out it was certain that this locality would be a scene of fighting. South of Lake Urmia the Turks took the offensive. A Kurdish force advanced by way of Suj Balak upon Tabriz, and meeting with no resistance from the Persian governor, took that city in the beginning of January, and moved some way northwards towards the Russian frontier. Russia, who had left no troops to speak of in Tabriz, soon repaired her omission, and having heavily defeated the invaders at Sufian, reoccupied Tabriz on 30th January.

Jan. 30, 1915.



The Frontiers of Turkey, Persia, and Russia.

In this unimportant section of the campaign we have to chronicle two other movements where Russia was the invader. Early in November a Russian column, assisted by the tribesmen of Maku, crossed the Turkish frontier from the extreme north-west corner of Persia, and occupied on 3rd November the ancient town of Bayazid, which lies under the snows of Ararat, on the great trade-route between Persia and the Euxine. Other columns entered Kurdistan from the east, and a movement was begun against Van. Farther north, and fifty miles west from Bayazid, another Russian column from Erivan crossed the frontier in the neighbourhood of the Alashgird valley. The town of Kara Kilisse was taken, but the Turks under Hassan ed Din Pasha—part of the Bagdad 13th Corps—showed a vigorous defensive, and held the invaders on the borders. The struggle died away towards the beginning of January, when the disaster in the Caucasus compelled a general retreat of the Turkish frontier guards upon Erzerum.

Nov. 3.

We come now to the vital part of the Eastern campaign—the struggle in Transcaucasia, upon which Germany built all her hopes and Enver expended all his energy. The main features of the district are sufficiently familiar. The great range of the Caucasus, which contains the highest of European mountains, runs from the

Black Sea to the Caspian, blocking the isthmus much as the Pyrenees block the neck between the Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean. South-west of the range is a huge trough running nearly all the way to the two seas. Here stands Tiflis, the ancient capital of Georgia, and through it runs the main railway of those parts, from Batum on the Black Sea to Baku on the Caspian. On the south-west side of the trough lies the mountain tangle of Transcaucasia, midway in which comes the Russian frontier. A railway runs from Tiflis past the fortress of Kars to a terminus at Sarikamish, fifteen miles from the Turkish border, while another line runs from Alexandropol by Erivan to the Persian frontier. Erzerum, the Turkish fortress, stands about the same distance from the frontier as Kars, but it is on no railway, and has none nearer than about five hundred miles. The mountain ranges extend north to the shores of the Black Sea, and south into Persia and Kurdistan. The whole district is one vast upland, most of the villages and towns standing at an altitude of 5,000 and 6,000 feet, and the hills rising as high again. All the passes are lofty, and in winter wellnigh impassable; none of the roads are good, and, as we have seen, there is no railway on the Turkish side, and but one that matters on the Russian. Winter campaigning there was likely to be as desperate as Xenophon's Ten Thousand had found it.

It is an old theatre of war since the days of Cyrus and Alexander, and whenever Russia and Turkey have faced each other it has been the cockpit of the struggle. There, in 1853, Shamyl led his mountaineers. There, two years later, Fenwick Williams held Kars against Muraviev in one of the greatest stands in modern history. There, in 1877, Loris Melikov and Mukhtar met, and Kars and Ardahan and Bayazid were the scenes of desperate conflicts. If Kars could be seized, the way would be open to Tiflis and the Caspian oil fields—perhaps even across the great Caucasus itself to the levels of Southern Russia. To the leaders of a race which have always been famous as mountain fighters the offensive in the Caucasus seemed the easiest way of effecting that diversion which Germany had commissioned.

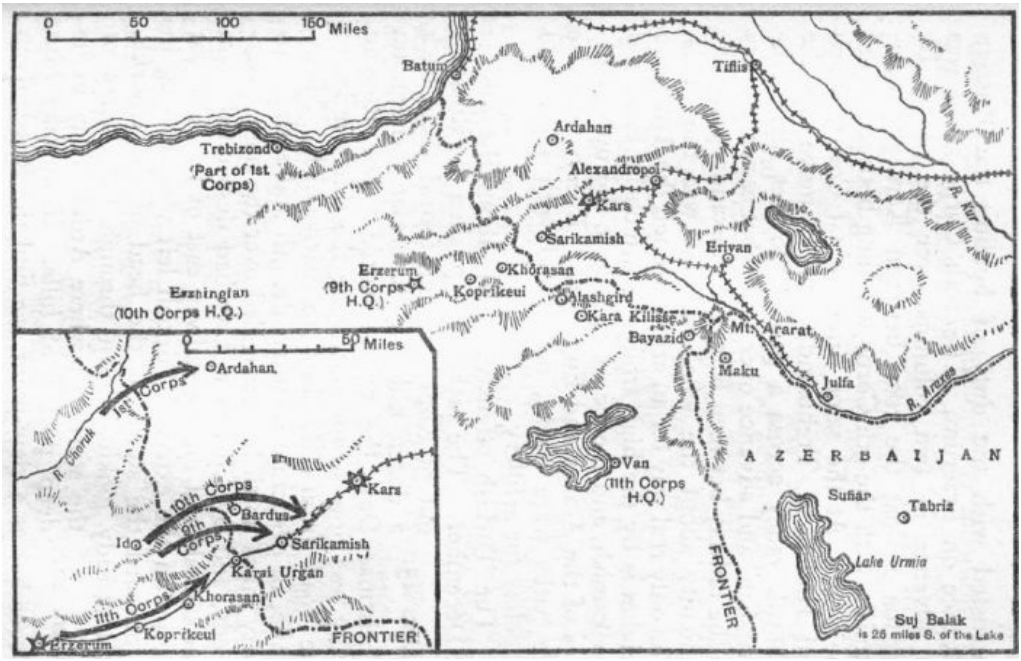
Enver's strategy was ambitious to the point of madness, but it was skilful after a fashion. He resolved to entice the Russians from Sarikamish across the frontier, and to hold them at some point as far distant as possible from the railhead. Then, while thus engaged, he would swing his left centre in a wide enveloping movement against Sarikamish, and with his left push round by Ardahan and take Kars in the rear. The device has been generally described as the ordinary German enveloping movement, but it has also affinities with the Napoleonic "pivoting square" which we discussed in an early chapter. To succeed, two things were necessary. The force facing the Russian front must be strong enough to hold it while the envelopment was going on;

and the operative part, the left wing, must be correctly timed in its movements, for otherwise the Russians would be able to destroy it piecemeal. It was this "timing" which formed the real difficulty. The swing round of the left must be made by a variety of mountain paths and over necks and valleys deep in snow, where progress in winter must be tardy and precarious. To "time" such a plan accurately was beyond the wits of any mortal General Staff.

For the Caucasian campaign Turkey had the 9th, 10th, and 11th Corps—stationed in peace respectively at Erzerum, Erzhingian, and Van—which had been concentrated at Erzerum about the middle of October. To reinforce the 11th Corps, the 37th Arab division had been brought up from the 13th Bagdad Corps. For the movement on the extreme left two divisions of the 1st Corps had been brought by sea from Constantinople to Trebizond. Turkey could obviously get no reserves in case of disaster. The nearest corps, the 12th, at Mosul, had gone to Syria, and the remainder of the Bagdad Corps had its hands full with the British in the Persian Gulf. The nominal commander of the Caucasian army was Hassan Izzet Pasha, but Enver was present as the real generalissimo, and he had with him a large German staff. A German, Posseld Pasha, was appointed Governor of Erzerum. The total Turkish strength was not less than 150,000, and they had against them the army of General Woronzov, which cannot at the outside have been more than three corps strong—say 100,000 men.

Fighting began in the first fortnight of November, when the Russians crossed the frontier and reached Koprikeui on the Erzerum road, which after a great deal of trouble they occupied on 20th November. The time was now ripe for Enver's plan. The 11th Corps was entrusted with the duty of holding the Russian advance on Erzerum. The 10th Corps at Id was to advance in two columns over the passes by Bardus against the road between Kars and Sarikamish, with the 9th Corps wheeling between it and the 11th. At the same time the 1st Corps, which had landed at Trebizond, was to move up the Choruk valley across a pass 8,000 feet high, take Ardahan, and advance over somewhat easier country to the railway between Kars and Alexandropol. The difficulty about the whole scheme was the roads. The only real way for an army through the Armenian heights is by the high trough in which lie Kars and Sarikamish, and thence westwards to the upper valleys of the Araxes and Euphrates. Everywhere else the paths were tracks, now blind with snow, and hopeless for artillery.

Nov. 20.



The Campaign on the Caucasian Frontier.
(Inset—The Turkish Advance.)

The Turkish offensive began about the middle of December. The 11th Corps pushed the Russians out of Koprikeui and forced them back a dozen miles to Khorasan, where, on Christmas Day, the retreat halted. The Russian army was now strung out along the thirty miles of the road from Khorasan to Sarikamish. Meanwhile, in desperate weather, the 9th and 10th Corps forty miles north had struggled over the high watersheds, and by Christmas Day had descended upon Sarikamish and on the railway east of it. The 1st Corps on the extreme Turkish left was crossing in a blizzard the steeps at the head of the Choruk, and already looking down through the pauses of the storm on where Ardahan lay in its deep pocket of hills. If we take 28th December as a view-point, we find the Russian van held by the 11th Turkish Corps at Khorasan, the 9th Corps at Sarikamish, and the 10th east along the Kars railway, threatening to pierce the Russian front, and sixty miles north-east the 1st Corps descending upon Ardahan. It looked as if Enver's ambitious project had succeeded.

Dec. 25.

Dec. 28.

But the attacking force was worn out, half starved, and short of guns and ammunition, for no transport on earth could cope with such a breakneck march. The

Russian general dealt first with the 10th Corps. From 28th December to 1st January there was a fierce struggle on the railway, which late on New Year's Day resulted in the defeat of the Turks and their retreat into the hills to the north. This withdrawal isolated the 9th Corps at Sarikamish, which was now enclosed between the Russian right, flung well forward in pursuit of the 10th Corps, and the Russian vanguard at Khorasan. That corps was utterly wiped out. Its general, Iskan Pasha, with all his staff, Turkish and German, surrendered after a gallant and fruitless stand. The Turks fought with their old stolidity till hunger and cold were too much for them, and they surrendered as much to the Russian field kitchens as to the Russian steel. Meanwhile the 1st Corps, which had entered Ardahan on New Year's Day, found that it could go no farther. On 3rd January a detached Russian force drove it out of the town, back over the ridges to the Choruk valley, whither the flight of the 10th Corps was also heading.

Jan. 1, 1915.

Jan. 3.

The 11th Corps at Khorasan did its best to redeem the disaster. It could not save the 9th Corps, but it might cover the retreat of the 10th, and accordingly it pushed back the Russian van from Khorasan, and advanced as far as Karai Urgan, some twenty miles from Sarikamish. It achieved its purpose, for the pursuit of the 10th Corps was relaxed, and the bulk of the Russian army went westwards to reinforce the van. At Karai Urgan a three days' battle was fought among snowdrifts, and by the 17th the 11th Corps had been broken also, and, with heavy losses in men and guns, was retreating upon Erzerum. Meanwhile the 1st Corps and the remnant of the 10th were cleared from the Choruk valley by the Russian right, and driven towards Trebizond. The Turkish navy, which attempted to send stores and reinforcements by sea, was no more fortunate, for the several transports and provision boats were sunk along the coast by Russian warships, and the *Breslau* and the *Hamidieh* were hunted home by the Black Sea Fleet. The *Goeben* had been for some weeks out of action.

Jan. 17.

So ended Enver's bold diversion. It had failed signally because his reach exceeded his grasp, as has happened before with adventurers. The three weeks of desperate conflict amid snowdrifts and blizzards—for the battlefields were scarcely less than 8,000 feet high—must have accounted for not less than 50,000 of Turkey's strength. Badly led and ill equipped, the starving Turkish levies had fought like heroes, and their sufferings were among the most terrible of the war. The Battle of Sarikamish—to localize the series of engagements—made certain that Russia would not be menaced from the Caucasus. Turkey must look elsewhere to find the joint in the armour of the Allies.

[1] A brilliant account of the doings of Wonckhaus, by an authority of the first rank, will be found in Chapter LII. of the *Times' History of the War*. It should be studied by any one who desires to realize the exceeding patience and ingenuity of German methods.

[2] The Brigade contained the 2nd Dorsets, the 20th (Punjab) Infantry, the 104th (Wellesley's) Rifles, the 117th Mahrattas, and the 23rd (Peshawur) and 30th Mountain Batteries.

[3] The Ahmednagar Brigade (Brigadier-General W. H. Dobbie) contained the 1st Oxford Light Infantry, the 119th Infantry, and the 103rd Mahrattas. The Belgaum Brigade (Brigadier-General C. I. Fry) contained the 2nd Norfolks, the 110th Mahrattas, the 7th Rajputs, and the 120th (Rajputana) Infantry. There were also the 48th Pioneers, the 3rd Sappers and Miners, and the 33rd Light Cavalry.

CHAPTER XXXIX.
THE SITUATION IN EGYPT.

The making of Modern Egypt—Egyptian Nationalism—German Miscalculations—Deposition of the Khedive Abbas II.—Egypt proclaimed a British Protectorate—The Turkish Army of Syria—Strategical Importance of Suez Canal—Difficulties of a Turkish Invasion—The possible Routes—The Turkish Advance—Assault on Ismailia-Bitter Lakes Line—Turkish Repulse—Action of Gunboats on the Canal—Turkish Losses—Annexation of Cyprus—Fighting at Akaba and Muscat.

The story of modern Egypt is the romance of recent politics; but this is not the place to describe at length its slow and varied drama. For that the reader must consult the works of Lord Cromer and Lord Milner, the men who were the chief actors in the piece. In 1517, forty-eight years before the Turkish invasion of Europe spent itself on the fortifications of Malta and the gallantry of the Knights of St. John, the Sultan Selim acquired Egypt by conquest; and in spite of many vicissitudes, of the weakness of Turkish rule, the ambitions of Napoleon, and the boldness of Mehemet Ali, the suzerainty of Constantinople continued. The misgovernment of Ismail and the precarious position of the Egyptian bondholders brought in the Western Powers, France and Britain, and a dual control was established over administration. Then came the deposition of Ismail, followed by the Nationalist rising under Arabi, the bombardment of Alexandria, and the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir. To Britain fell the task of restoring order, and that British occupation began which has never ceased. There succeeded the menace from the Sudan, the devastating advance of the Mahdi and his fanatical armies, the loss of the southern provinces, and the death of Gordon. *Quae caret ora cruore nostra?* is more true of Britain than of Rome, and the sands of the Nile have had the best of our British blood.

From 1885 onwards the task of the *de facto* rulers of Egypt was twofold—the reconquest of the Sudan, and the elevation of the Nile valley from bankruptcy to prosperity. The first was accomplished in 1898, when Lord Kitchener, at the Battles of the Atbara and Omdurman, shattered the Dervish levies. The second, in the wise hands of Lord Cromer, progressed yearly, in spite of international bickerings, Court intrigues, and a preposterous dualism in finance. In a multiplicity of problems there is

usually, as Lord Cromer saw, one master question, the settlement of which involves the others. In the case of Egypt this was finance; and with infinite patience and perfect judgment the greatest of modern administrators first of all reduced taxation, then from his scanty balances spent wisely on reproductive works, till he had given Egypt the water which is her life, and raised the peasants from a condition of economic slavery to a comfort unknown in the Nile valley since the days of the Pharaohs. In 1904 the British occupation was formally recognized by the Powers of Europe, and the Egyptian finances were released from the bondage of international control.

With prosperity came political activity, and with political activity its degenerate offspring, the demagogue. Lord Cromer handled the thing discreetly, providing means for the expression of popular opinion, and giving to the Egyptians as large a share in the administration of their land as was compatible with efficiency. He devoted himself, too, to educational schemes, with excellent results. His successor, Sir Eldon Gorst, came at a time when, both in Turkey and Persia, Liberal movements were beginning, and it fell to him to make a further experiment in meeting the wishes of Egyptian Nationalists. British control was reduced to a minimum, and Egyptian ministers were given a large responsibility. The venture was not altogether successful, for the Khedive was there to turn Nationalism into a Court intrigue, and the attempt to "Liberalize" Egypt resulted in the reappearance of some of the old abuses. The advent of Lord Kitchener found the Nationalist movement a good deal discredited, and his brilliant years of office represented a return to something like paternal government. He knew the East as few living men knew it, and he speedily acquired the confidence and admiration of all classes of the population. Under him there was no sudden attempt to Westernize institutions, but a continuation of the patient and gradual adjustment and remodelling which had been Lord Cromer's policy. "The counsels to which Time hath not been called, Time will not ratify."

Germany, as we have seen, looked on Egypt as a nursery of sedition. She had considered carefully events like that at Denshawai and the wilder speeches of the demagogues; and with her curious inability to look below the surface of things, she had jumped to the conclusion that democracy and Islam and Chauvinism would combine to produce an explosion. But the truth was that the ordinary Egyptian was perfectly content, and had no grievance; while in the Sudan the war awoke an extraordinary enthusiasm for the British cause, led by a descendant of the Prophet and the eldest son of the Mahdi. Let Lord Cromer speak:—

"Why is it that the appeals to religious zeal and fanaticism made by the Turkish militarists and their German fellow-conspirators have been wholly unproductive of

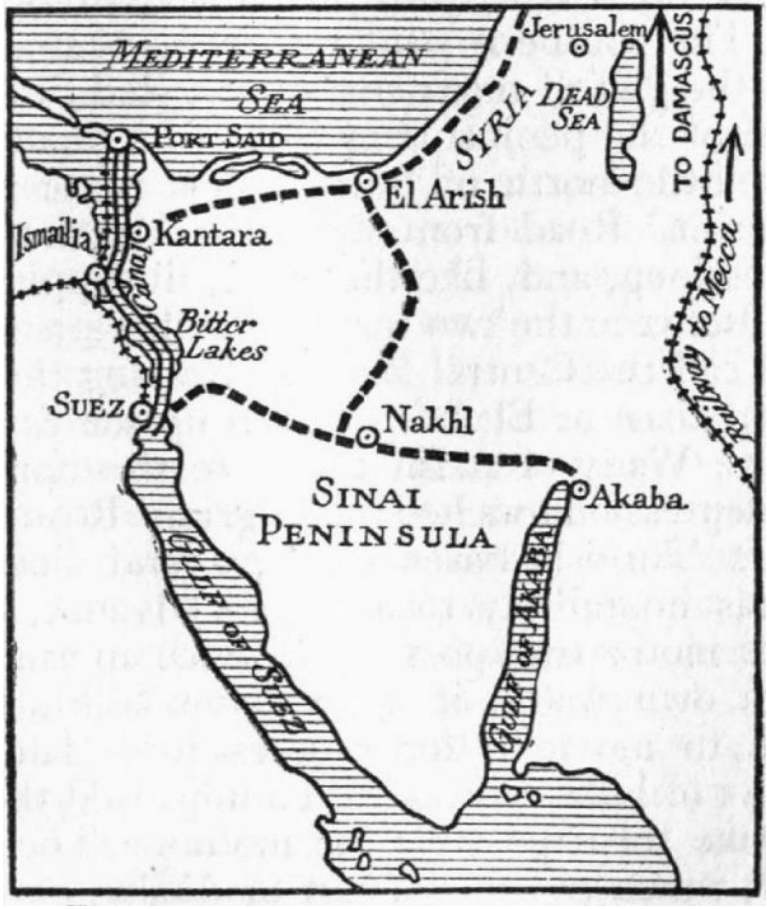
result, and have been answered both in Egypt and in the Sudan by the most remarkable expressions of loyalty and friendship towards the British Government? The presence of British garrisons in Cairo, Alexandria, and Khartum unquestionably counts for much in explanation of these very singular political phenomena. Something also may possibly be attributed to the fact that the more educated classes may have recognized that the Turco-Prussian *régime* with which they were threatened would assuredly combine many of the worst features both of Western and Eastern administration. But amongst contributory causes I have no hesitation in assigning the foremost place to the fact that no general discontent prevailed of which the agitator, the religious fanatic, or the political intriguer could make use as the lever to further his own designs. In spite of the most positive assurances that they were the victims of ruthless tyranny and oppression, the population both of Egypt and the Sudan refused to believe that they were misgoverned. And why was it that no general discontent prevailed? . . . The true reason . . . is, I believe, that State expenditure has been carefully controlled, and has been adapted to the financial resources of the two countries concerned, with the result that taxation has been low. It was futile to expect that the Egyptian fellah, or the Sudanese tribesman, would believe that he was oppressed and maltreated when the demands of the tax-gatherer not only ceased to be capricious, but were far more moderate than either he or his immediate progenitors had ever dreamed to be possible.'[1]

Dec. 17.

On 17th December the Khedive Abbas II., having thrown in his lot with Turkey, ceased to reign in Egypt, which, with the assent of France, was formally proclaimed a British Protectorate. Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Henry MacMahon, a distinguished Indian political officer, was appointed High Commissioner. The title of Khedive, first adopted by Ismail, disappeared; and the throne of Egypt, with the title of Sultan, was offered to Prince Hussein Kamel Pasha, the second son of Ismail, and therefore the eldest living prince of the house of Mehemet Ali—an able and enlightened man, who had done great services to Egyptian agriculture. The change thus made was the smallest which the circumstances permitted. There was no annexation; the shadowy suzerainty of Turkey disappeared; but otherwise things remained as before. Apparently the tribute to Constantinople still continued, since that tribute had been ear-marked for the interest on the Ottoman debt, and was paid direct to the bondholders. Protectorate is the vaguest of political terms, and may involve anything from virtual sovereignty to an almost complete detachment. In this case it meant that Britain was now wholly responsible for the defence of Egypt and for her foreign relations. The very vagueness of the arrangement had its merits, for nothing was laid down as to the

order of succession to the sultanate, and the hands of the British Government were left free for some future revision of the whole arrangement. In the meantime it regularized an anomalous international status.

The first object of a belligerent Turkey would naturally be the Suez Canal. The Turkish force in Syria in peace time consisted of the 8th Corps of three divisions, whose headquarters were Damascus. But during November there was a large concentration in Syria, which included the bulk of the 12th Corps from Mosul, part of the 4th Corps from Adrianople, and apparently the Anatolian division normally stationed at Smyrna. Out of this force, which cannot have been less than 90,000, an Expeditionary Army of 65,000 men was created. Its commander was Djemal Pasha, the Turkish Minister of Marine, a vehement Pan-Islamist, and an inveterate enemy of Britain. The seizure of the two Ottoman Dreadnoughts building in England had embittered his mind, and he burned to wipe off the score by a blow at the Suez Canal, one of the channels by which Britain exerted her naval supremacy. He had been Governor of Bagdad and of Basra, and had been at the head of an army corps in the Balkan war. He had no particular military reputation, having won his power rather as an energetic leader of the Committee of Union and Progress than as a general in the field.



The Suez Canal and the Sinai District.

The advantages of a blow at the Suez Canal were obvious. If the eastern bank could be held the use of the canal by shipping would be endangered, and Britain cut off from one of her most vital sea routes. If the Canal could be crossed in force, then there was the chance of that Egyptian rising for which the faithful of Turkey and Germany hoped. But the difficulties were no less conspicuous. To reach the Canal from Syria an all but waterless desert had to be traversed, a stretch varying from 120 to 150 miles in width. Across this tract of rock and sand there were three routes, all of them hard. The first, which we may call the northern, touched the Mediterranean coast at El Arish, and ran across the desert to El Kantara, on the Canal, twenty-five miles south of Port Said. It was 120 miles long, and had on its course only a few muddy wells, quite insufficient to water an army. The southern road ran from Akaba, at the head of the gulf of that name on the Red Sea, across

the base of the peninsula of Sinai to a point on the Canal a little north of Suez. This route was the old Pilgrims' Road from Egypt to Mecca; it was 150 miles long, and, like the other, ill supplied with wells. Between the two was a possible variant which we may call the Central Route. Leaving the Mediterranean coast at El Arish, it ran up the dry valley called the Wady el Arish to where the upper part of that depression touched the Pilgrims' Road. Now, from the Turkish bases of Gaza and Beer-sheba there was no railway to assist an advance, and no route for motor transport; and, since an army must carry its own water, it seemed impossible for the invaders to move in force unless they laid down some sort of light railway, or so improved the roads as to make them possible for motors. The Mecca Railway, which ran to the east of Akaba, gave them no help, for between it and the escarpment of the Sinai peninsula lay two rugged limestone ridges, enclosing a trench 3,000 feet deep. The best route—indeed the only possible—for a light railway was up the Wady el Arish, but this had the disadvantage that at its debouchment on the coast it would come under fire from the sea.

The difficulties of Turkey's strategical problem were enhanced by the nature of her object of attack. The Suez Canal is not only the equivalent of a broad and deep river, but it is navigable for warships, and its banks provide superb opportunities for defence. It cannot be turned, for it runs from sea to sea. It has a width of over 200 feet, and the banks in most places rise at an angle of thirty degrees to a height of 40 feet. On its western shore a lateral railway runs the whole way from Port Said to Suez, connecting at Ismailia with the line to Cairo, and a fresh-water canal follows the same bank for three-quarters of its length, from Suez to El Kantara. Again, most of the ground to the east is flat, and offers a good field of fire to the defenders on the west bank, or to ships in the channel. In a few places there are dunes on the east side which might give cover to an invader. Such a place is just south of El Kantara, several others are to be found south of Ismailia, and there is a small rise south of the Bitter Lakes. Any Turkish attack might therefore be looked for in the Ismailia-Bitter Lakes section. The size and composition of the British forces in Egypt at the time were rightly kept secret, for they were largely a reserve for the Allies in Western Europe. We know that they included certain detachments of Indian cavalry and infantry, the Australian and New Zealand contingents under Major-General Birdwood, a number of British Territorials, among them the East Lancashire Division, as well as the regular Egyptian army. The whole force was under the command of Major-General Sir John Maxwell, a soldier with a long experience of the Nile valley wars.

At the end of October it was reported that a force of 2,000 Bedouins was

marching on Egypt, and on November 21st there was a skirmish at Katiyeh, east of the Canal, between this force or a part of it, and some of the Bikanir Camel Corps under Captain Chope. Previous to this the Anglo-Egyptian posts had been withdrawn from El Arish and from the Sinai Peninsula. Nothing more was heard of the invasion for more than two months. There were many rumours that Djemal Pasha was having difficulties with his Syrian command, and was impressing for his expeditionary force a variety of unwarlike Syrians from peasants in the Jordan valley to cab drivers in Jerusalem. On January 28, 1915, small advanced parties had crossed the desert. One coming by the El Arish route reached Katiyeh, and was beaten back by a Gurkha post east of El Kantara. Another party coming by the Akaba route was driven back at Kubri, just east of Suez. The desert was well scouted by British airmen, and about that time we landed a party at Alexandretta Bay, in North Syria, and cut the telegraph wires. On the 29th it was announced that the Turks had occupied Katiyeh, and had several posts to the west of that place. Four days later, on 2nd February, came the main attack, for which these proceedings had been reconnaissances.

Nov. 21.

Jan. 28, 1915.

Jan. 29.

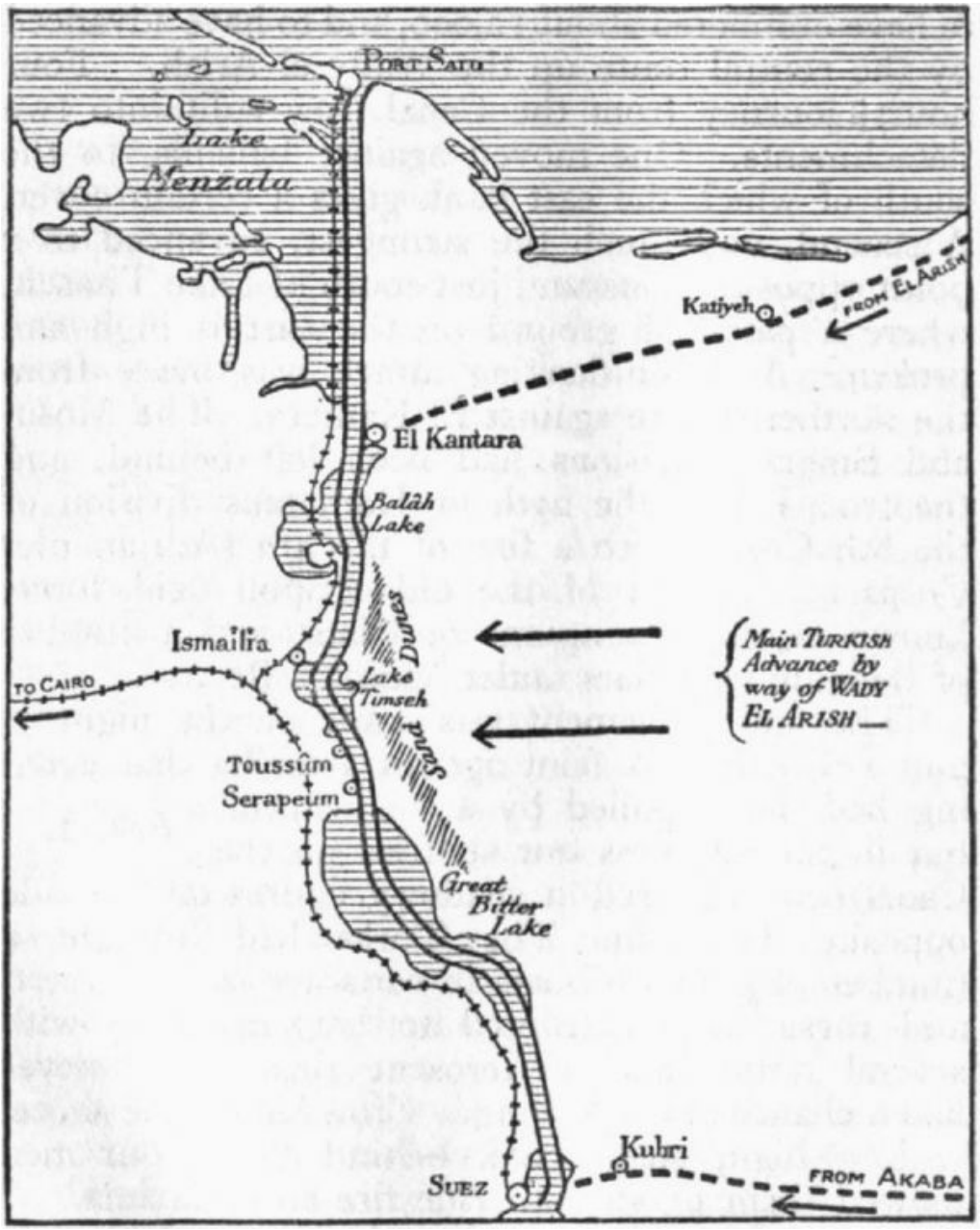
The Turks officially described the main attack as a reconnaissance, and we may accept the description, for it cannot be regarded as a serious invasion. But it seems likely that it was a reconnaissance, not of design but by compulsion, and that Djemal Pasha found, when he began the attempt, that to transport even one army corps across the desert was wholly beyond his power, and that of his German Chief of Staff, von Kressenstein. The troops seem to have numbered about 12,000, and to have advanced by the central route up the Wady el Arish. Four hours' journey from the Canal they split into two detachments. One moved against Ismailia, to the south of which the east bank gives a certain cover. A second, and much the strongest, advanced to a point opposite Toussum, just south of Lake Timseh, where a patch of ground on the east is high and broken. A small flanking attack was made from the northern route against El Kantara. The Mosul and Smyrna divisions had been left behind, and the troops were the 25th or Damascus division of the 8th Corps, with a few of the 4th (Adrianople) Corps, a remnant of the old Tripoli field force, known as the Champions of Islam, and a number of Bedouin irregulars under Mumtaz Bey.

The first movement was made on the night of 2nd February. A feint against Ismailia that evening had been spoiled by a dust storm, but in the darkness our sentries on the Canal saw and fired at shadowy figures on the side opposite Toussum. The Turks had brought a number of pontoon boats in carts across the desert, and these they attempted to

Feb. 2.

launch, along with several rafts made of kerosene tins. They never had a chance of succeeding. Crowded on the shore, with a high, steep bank behind them, our men mowed them down with rifle fire and Maxims. A few of the vessels were launched, but they were soon riddled and sunk. The enemy then lined the high banks, and tried to silence our fire, and the duel went on till morning broke. With daylight the battle became general all along the stretch from Ismailia to the Bitter Lakes. We had a small flotilla on the Canal—several torpedo boats, the old Indian Marine transport *Hardinge*, and the French guardships *Requin* and *d'Entrecasteaux*. The Turks had a number of field batteries and two 6-inch guns, which one of the French ships promptly silenced. The torpedo boats made short work of the remaining pontoons, and the crew of one landed on the eastern bank, and raided a trench of the enemy. A few Champions of Islam had got across in the night—a score, perhaps, in all—and sniped our men in the rear; but they were speedily disposed of, and those who swam over later were deserters.

Feb. 3.



Fighting at the Suez Canal. February 2-4.

In the afternoon our Indian troops from Serapeum and Toussum took the offensive, and, admirably supported by artillery, drove the enemy from a large part of the eastern bank. Meanwhile the Ismailian garrison also moved forward, and

cleared their front. About the same time the half-hearted attacks on our flank near El Kantara and Suez had also failed. By the evening of the 3rd the fiasco was over, and early next morning we crossed the Canal in force and began the work of rounding up the enemy. We counted 400 killed and made 600 prisoners during the two days' fighting, so we may estimate the total Turkish casualty list for the battle of the Canal at well over 2,000. The list grew rapidly in the succeeding days, as deserters began to drift in. By 8th February there were no Turks within twenty miles of the Canal, and beyond that only a few scattered rearguards, the main force being in full retreat for the borders. It should never have been allowed to return. With 130 waterless miles to cover, there was no reason why a beaten and dispirited force should ever succeed in reaching Beer-sheba. That it did, and with all its guns, detracts considerably from the British success. The cause of this escape seems to have been a heavy sandstorm, which made it impossible to use our camel corps. It is believed, however, that the Turks suffered heavily in the retreat from their Bedouin allies, who, baffled of the plunder of Egypt, took what they pleased from their friends.

Feb. 4.

Feb. 8.

It remains to notice one or two further incidents in the Turkish campaign. Cyprus, which had been administered by Britain since 1878, was formally annexed to the British Empire. The town of Akaba on the Red Sea, which was apparently being used as a station for mine-laying, was visited by H.M.S. *Minerva*, who found the place occupied by soldiers, including one German officer. The *Minerva*, being unable to get satisfaction, shelled the fort and destroyed the barracks and Government buildings, but did no harm to private dwellings. A British cruiser, with a landing party of Indian troops, captured the Turkish fort at Sheik Said, opposite Perim, at the southern end of the Red Sea. In South-Eastern Arabia our Indian troops had some fighting around Muscat, but this was only indirectly traceable to the war with Turkey. The Sultan of Oman had for two years been at strife with certain of his lieges, and since all men were fighting, the rebels were resolved to follow the fashion.

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[1] *Abbas II.*, p. 20. In the same work will be found an interesting study of the late Khedive.

CHAPTER XL.
ECONOMICS AND LAW.

The Economics of War—The British Situation—Measures to protect the Food Supply—War Risks Insurance—Minimum Prices—Absence of Distress—Measures to protect Credit—Opening of the Stock Exchange—Financial Arrangements with the United States and Russia—British War Loans—Pooling of Allied Resources—Labour Troubles—Economic Condition of France and Russia—German Supplies of Food and Munitions—German War Finance—International Position before the War—Conditional Contraband—Protest of United States—Britain makes Food Contraband—Germany announces "Blockade" of Britain—British Declaration of Blockade—Difficulty of Neutrals' Position—Mr. Balfour's Defence.

If a great war is a packet of surprises for the strategist it is not less so for the economist and the jurist. It is proposed in the present chapter to examine some of the phenomena which appeared in the provinces of the two latter, and the task can scarcely be neglected, for they were vital matters to the civilian part of the nations concerned. War is fought with a weapon of which the steel point is the armies, and the shaft which gives weight to the blow the civilian masses pursuing their ordinary avocations. The lustiest stroke will miscarry if the shaft be rotten.

For a generation economists had prophesied that in a world war the dislocation of credit and the destruction of wealth would be so stupendous that the whole machinery of modern life would come to a standstill. Their prophecies were curiously wrong. Not unnaturally, perhaps, for political economy is a bad ground for forecasts. It is not an exact science, except within limits so narrow as to make it practically unimportant. It selects and abstracts its data, and its rules work strictly only in a rarefied and unnatural world. This war left the economist, if he were pedantically inclined, in a state of bewilderment. Wild heresies were applied, and worked well enough. Deductions, mathematically exact, were falsified. Certain things which by every law should happen were never heard of. The jurist had surprises also, but of a different kind. He saw a stock of laws on which it seemed the world had agreed flung again into the melting-pot. He began to realize the dependence of law upon opinion, its malleability, the delicacy of its sanctions. For him it was a bracing

experience and highly educative. For the narrower kind of economist it was a penance and a confusion.

War both complicates and simplifies the economic situation. The ribs of the state show when the comfortable padding falls off. In examining the economics of the struggle we must first of all make a distinction between a country like Britain, where the normal life still in essentials continued, and a country like Germany, where everything, necessarily, was mobilized for war. Britain had all the world open to her, except the belligerent countries. Her factories were still working largely on private contracts; she was still exporting and importing, and paying for imports by exports. She was still the financial centre of the world, with relations with foreign bourses and banks, financing her Allies and her oversea dominions, with ships on every sea doing the carrying trade of other nations besides herself. Britain's economic problem, therefore, was rather complicated than simplified. She had to keep her ordinary life going, and adopt special measures to repair those parts of the mechanism which had been crippled by war. The same was true of France and Russia in a less degree. The one had universal service and the enemy inside her frontiers; the other had no trade outlets to the west during most of the winter months; but both were in touch with the outer world. Germany and Austria, on the other hand, were in many ways a beleaguered garrison. They could do no trade except with or through their adjacent neutrals, and every day the volume of this must diminish. What imports they got must be paid for by gold or foreign securities, for they had no exports. They must be self-sufficing and self-sustaining, and revert to the economy of the primitive state. Their problem was therefore greatly simplified. All the machinery of foreign bills, and foreign exchanges and foreign debts or credits, had stopped short. They had one great occupation—to provide out of their existing resources sufficient war material and sufficient food for army and people. So long as the nation was agreed, internal payments could be easily regulated, and paper money could be indefinitely created. If Germany was going to win, the highest note circulation would be redeemed with ease. External payments did not trouble her, for there were none that mattered.

Let us imagine a case where a hundred men shut up another hundred in a castle, and sit down to invest it. The besiegers will get their food from a wide neighbourhood, and must pay for it in cash, or get it on credit. They must keep up good relations with the people who sell bread and gunpowder, and be able to send to their homes and fetch what they want. They will live, in short, the ordinary economic life of the rest of the world. But the hundred in the fortress are in a very different case. They cannot get out, and nothing can come in; so they must use the food in the castle larder, and the ammunition in the castle magazine, and make more

if the castle garden is large enough to grow potatoes, and there is any stock of charcoal and saltpetre in the cellars. Their captain will have to take charge of the stores, and dole them out carefully. He will pay his men their wages from the gold he may happen to have with him, or more likely in promissory notes, to be redeemed when they are relieved or hack their way out to their own land. The economic problem which he has to face may be desperate and urgent, but it is simple.

The British situation deserves to be examined with some care, for it represented the extreme antithesis to that of Germany. It developed on lines mainly normal in a world mainly abnormal. But at the beginning, when men's minds were uneasy, certain emergency measures had to be adopted, and throughout the war the State had to use, or promise the use of, its whole credit—that is, every stick and stone in the land—to strengthen weak spots in the line. *Salus populi suprema lex* was definitely our maxim, and the State became Leviathan in a sense undreamed of by Hobbes.

The main tasks of the Government from the economic point of view were three: To insure an adequate supply of food at reasonable prices; to supply an adequate supply of cash and credit—largely a psychological problem, for if people are persuaded that all lawful obligations will be met as usual the battle is more than half won; and to finance the war, which meant not only paying our own bills, but giving certain assistance to our Allies.

The measures to preserve our food supply have been already glanced at. Cargoes were insured at a rate which began at five guineas per cent., and fell in a month to two guineas. After the destruction of the *Emden* the rate fell back to little above that of peace time, and business resumed its ordinary channels. Hulls were insured through associations, the Government taking 80 per cent. of "King's enemy" risks. The report of one of the largest of these—the Liverpool and London War Risks Association—issued on February 12, 1915, described the work done. Up to that date the losses on vessels insured with the Association, during voyages started since the outbreak of war, was over £800,000, and the premiums received, £1,500,000. "From November," said the report, "members have been able in many instances to obtain in the open market rates below those fixed by the State, and therefore the amount insured with the Association has been diminished." Again, a Cabinet Committee fixed maximum prices for certain articles of food, which, after various revisions, were abandoned as business became normal. The cost of living rose during the winter, and there were proposals for a further official price scale, which the Government after consideration rejected. In a speech in February the Prime Minister pointed out that the prices of certain foodstuffs, such as wheat, were fixed not in Britain but in America; that prices had not risen beyond the point

attributable to the increased consumption of food at home owing to the new armies, the closing of the Dardanelles to Russian grain, and the lateness of the Argentine crop. A few minor steps were taken in this matter—such as the not very fortunate Government purchase of sugar, and an attempt by the Board of Agriculture to increase and organize home-grown supplies of foodstuffs.

The second task—to assist credit, and therefore employment—involved a multiplicity of measures, only a few of which can be chronicled here. Distress was anticipated, and the Local Government Board made elaborate preparations for every possible contingency. Local relief committees were organized; £4,000,000 was authorized to be spent on building houses; the law of distress was altered so that landlords could not without special permission issue warrants for arrears of rent; and debtors were put in a favourable position. As it turned out, there was no distress to speak of. In most industries there was a great scarcity of labour, and wages rose. In our ports, especially, the casual labourer became a rare and much desired phenomenon. With several millions withdrawn to the army from trade, the working classes that remained were in a condition of comfort and privilege.

One class of measures was concerned with the actual conduct of the war. The British railways were virtually taken over by the Government, and directed by a committee of general managers, wages being increased partly at Government expense. All armament firms worked exclusively for the Government and for the Allies, and their numbers were largely augmented by enrolling a variety of railway shops, motor-car factories, and engineering works for the same purpose. Most textile factories were busy on Government contracts, and in all areas where manufacturing was done for war purposes recruiting was stopped or curtailed. Squads of dock labourers had to be sent to the French ports to assist in landing men and supplies. But the demand for war munitions and the special measures taken for that end constituted almost the sole direct interference with British trade. Ordinary manufacturers prepared goods for their ordinary markets with no hindrance except an occasional cessation of railway facilities and a great shortage of shipping.

The restoration of financial credit was undertaken with much boldness and success, and a laudable disregard of shibboleths and precedents. The moratorium and the measures to regulate bills of exchange have been described in an earlier chapter. The extravagant public finance of recent years had to some extent weakened our credit, and heroic measures—to be paid for later, no doubt, on the same heroic scale—were necessary. The Stock Exchange reopened in January, after an arrangement had been arrived at that the Banks should not call in their loans to stockbrokers till a year after the declaration of peace. It opened in blinkers, for

severe restrictions were needed to prevent our enemies raising money by selling stocks in London through neutral countries. Speculation was made impossible, for a man could only sell stock which he actually possessed; minimum prices were fixed; all transactions were for cash, and there was no "carrying over." In order to conserve our financial resources, the Treasury, in the same month, announced that no fresh issues of capital would be permitted except with its approval, and that this approval would only be given when the undertaking was deemed desirable in the national interest. For the rest, by January—apart from the deadness of the Stock Exchange—our financial machinery, while working at low power, was working naturally and normally. There was some strain between America and Britain, owing to the beginning of the war coinciding with the usual seasonal indebtedness of the New World to the Old. The New York bankers lodged £20,000,000 in gold at Ottawa on behalf of the Bank of England, and this was used to finance the heavy purchases of war material in the United States, and so redressed the balance. In the same way an attempt was made to restore the financial equilibrium between Russia and Britain, and a credit for Russia was granted in London by an issue by the Bank of England of £10,000,000 Russian Government bills.[1] Speaking generally, the winter showed the great strength and soundness of the British banking system, which had survived a stress which would have shattered the credit of most nations. Incidentally it revealed the enormous power of the joint-stock banks, who had the right to call the tune. Holding £600,000,000 of the people's money, they were the main financiers of British trade.

The third task—to pay our bills and those of some of our Allies—was only begun during the first eight months of war. It may haply be completed in the time of the grandson of the youngest child in Britain to-day. The loan of £350,000,000 raised in November—issued at 95 with interest at 3½, and so virtually a 4 per cent. security—included a loan of thirty millions to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, the loan to Belgium, and a small advance to Serbia. At a conference of the Allied finance ministers held in Paris in February, an arrangement was come to for pooling the Allied resources. Britain, France, and Russia agreed to take over in equal shares advances made to present and future allies, and to make jointly all purchases from neutral countries. It is needless to detail the various types of new taxation introduced in Britain and elsewhere. We were unfortunate enough to enter upon war with our normal war taxes—the income tax and the super-tax—already on a war basis. Britain was spending at the rate of something over £2,000,000 a day. It was estimated by one statistician[2] that a year of war on this scale would cost the British Empire directly and indirectly £1,258,000,000, which represented about one-

fourteenth of the national wealth of Britain, and about one-twentieth of the national wealth of the British Empire.

The economic position at the beginning of the spring of 1915 was that Britain continued her normal activities, slightly depressed in some quarters and enormously increased in others. Her commercial and financial mechanism was intact, and while most of her private industries went on, a considerable section was switched off to purposes directly connected with war. The one serious difficulty appeared in this latter sphere. Germany had calculated on various joints in our harness—civil war in Ireland, an apathetic Government, a people unwilling to recruit, and labour troubles. Only the last gave any colour of truth to her forecast. There seems little doubt but that German agents were at work during the winter in the main armament areas, fomenting imaginary grievances and circulating tales of vast profits made by the employers. During February, in various districts engaged in the manufacture of war material, notably on the Clyde and the Mersey, strikes broke out, in most cases against the wish of the leaders of the Trade Unions concerned. For long discipline had been growing slack—even the self-imposed discipline of the Unions—and employers found too often that an arrangement with the men's representatives was by no means an arrangement with the men.

The British labour troubles gave great joy to the enemy, and much concern to the nation and our Allies; for they hindered the manufacture of munitions, especially shells, on which the life of our armies depended. The troubles were an inevitable consequence of a system of private armament firms working under the same conditions as other businesses. At Creusot the men are soldiers, amenable to military law, and a strike is a mutiny, punishable in time of war with death. Our system allowed a workman, for the sake of another penny an hour, to jeopardize the lives of thousands of his countrymen, and to endanger the future of his country. The blame for this preposterous state of affairs should not, however, be laid only on the workman's shoulders; he in turn was a victim of national supineness, and his case was in some respects a strong one. Very often he had tried to enlist, and had been sent back to make armaments. He had been compelled to work overtime—an unwise step forced by the Government upon employers, for it is well known that protracted overtime weakens the efficiency of the workman, so that he actually produces less than in a normal week. He was tired, sulky, disappointed, and soon he grew overstrained. As he was making high wages he had a certain amount of spare cash, and it is unfortunately true that he often drank more than usual, and his whole nervous system deteriorated. It was easy to find grievances, and he had a good *prima facie* case. Though he was earning big wages, he had to work hard for them,

and he found the cost of living going up; while he believed, with some reason, that his masters were earning profits utterly disproportioned to his increased pay. Again, he saw many of his Trade Union rules infringed owing to the exigencies of war. It did not matter to him that his Union leaders had consented to the change, for the workman as a rule is as suspicious of his leaders as of other people; and he feared that presently he would be swamped with blackleg labour. Remember, too, that for years he had been taught by demagogues that he had rights but no duties, and invited to embrace a policy based on stark selfishness. He was so much better than his mentors that when the crisis came he was ready as a rule to play his part, and enlist with his brothers and cousins. But when he was compelled to continue his ordinary work his sense of the gravity of things seemed to slip away. How could it be otherwise? Almost every newspaper published flaming headlines daily, announcing some gigantic Allied success. He looked at the headlines, and did not read the obscure message from Rome and Athens on which they were founded. When Bill and Jock came back from the front and shook their heads, he could only think that Bill and Jock had had specially bad experiences. Did not every paper tell him that we were winning easily? Did not the wise and good ingeminate "Business as usual," or "Victories as usual"? He believed in both, and business as usual naturally implied strikes as usual.

It was easy for the ordinary man to lose his temper with the strikers; but, in common fairness, it should be recognized that much of their case was sound, and that what was not was mainly the fault of their former teachers. Conscription and military law would have probably been popular in the armament areas, for no sane man likes to be without discipline and leaders. The various steps taken by the Government to meet the situation might be described as tentatives towards this solution. The exceptional nature of the time was emphasized, and guarantees were given that the principles of the Trade Unions should not suffer. The movement towards Government control and the prohibition of alcohol must be left for a later chapter.

The economic condition of France and Russia may be dealt with more briefly, for it was the same as Britain's, with reservations for the effect of a conscript army in withdrawing men from trade, and for their temporary losses of territory. Lille and Lodz in German hands were sections cut off from their industrial life to which we in Britain had no parallel. But for France all her foreign outlets remained, so far as they could be used, and for Russia the East was still open. Both showed astonishing recuperative power, their industries reacting to the stimulus of war. Russia was more

or less self-supporting, save in respect of munitions, and her large gold reserve, but little short of France's and more than half as large again as Germany's, was sufficient to pay for her foreign purchases of war material. She financed the war by the issue of short loans, Treasury bills, and a loan redeemable in forty-nine years. She considerably increased taxation, for she had to make up a deficit in income of more than £84,000,000, caused by the prohibition of the trade in spirits. France after 15th December financed herself chiefly by Treasury bonds, which on 12th March, according to a statement by M. Ribot, had reached a total of nearly £155,000,000. These bonds were rapidly taken up and distributed through all classes, and for them the peasant and the small tradesman brought out his store of gold from the stocking-foot. The revenue, which had fallen heavily down to October, began to pick up with extraordinary rapidity. History has shown that no enemy dares to reckon on France's exhaustion either in men or money.

Germany, as we have seen, was now in the widest sense a beleaguered city, and her economics were the economics of a fortress. By the end of 1914 she could not hope to receive any large quantity of foodstuffs or war munitions from abroad, and by March of the new year all imports ceased except from existing stocks held in Scandinavia, Holland, and Italy. Her problem was simply to organize the distribution of her domestic stocks, and to see that so far as possible they were replenished from home sources. New foodstuffs must be won from the soil, new supplies of chemicals and ore from the mines, as far as was consistent with the preoccupations of war. Her task was one of internal production and administration. The financial side was simple. So long as the nation was confident, the credit of the State could be used indefinitely.

The harvest of 1914 had been a poor one; but at first the food question was little considered, since the public expectation was of an immediate and final victory. Apparently there was some miscalculation as to the amount of corn available, and in the autumn there was a good deal of careless waste. Early in the new year the German Government suddenly realized that the national supplies under this head were running short, and might vanish before the harvest of 1915 reinforced them. Accordingly elaborate provisions were made to husband the stores of flour. Municipalities were given the right to confiscate private stocks, the bakers became Government servants, and bread cards were issued which fixed the amount which the holder was entitled to buy. Bread became dear and bad. All the industries depending on grain were restricted, little beer was brewed, and pigs no longer could be fattened. Millers were compelled by law to mix 30 per cent. of rye flour with

wheat flour before delivery, and the bakers were compelled to sell as wheaten bread a compound of this already blended flour and 20 per cent. of potato starch flour. Rye bread might be 30 per cent. potato.

Such a shortage, however, was a long way removed from famine. Most foodstuffs in Germany were still cheap and plentiful. A dinner in Berlin in January did not cost more than a meal in London; only the bread was indifferent. Luxuries, as in all such cases, were more plentiful and relatively cheaper than necessaries. The future, however, was darkening. The harvest of 1915 must be a bad one, and the most meticulous thrift could not spread out supplies indefinitely. What was felt in January as merely an inconvenience would by July be a pinch, and by the winter an agony.

Most industrial stocks—such as cotton—of course ran short, but they mattered little. The grave question was that of materials which formed the bases for the manufacture of war munitions. Before the war Germany had consumed annually 785,000 tons of saltpetre, 224,000 tons of rubber, 1,100,000 of petroleum, and 224,000 of copper. In the last two cases there was some small local production—about 10 per cent. of the whole. She had also made large importations of nitrates. The Allied blockade cut off much of the saltpetre, all the rubber, and most of the copper, petroleum, and nitrates. War such as Germany waged, with its immense use of artillery and motor transport, was simply impossible without these materials. Some, such as petroleum, could be replaced to a certain extent by substitutes; nitrates could be chemically produced; and the large stocks of copper in private use could be drawn upon for a considerable time. But no substitute could be found for rubber, and this commodity was Germany's sorest need during the early months of 1915. The Allies at this time were perhaps a little inclined to exaggerate Germany's shortage of war material, and to underestimate the ingenuity of German scientists. But the pinch existed, as in the case of food, and in time would become a grave menace.

German finances during the war did not present any great difficulties to a well-disciplined State, provided—and the point is vital—that the people were confident of the ultimate issue, and that panic were avoided. Two credits for £250,000,000 each were voted before Christmas, and early in the new year another £500,000,000 was asked for. The money was raised by loan, and there was no increase of taxation. The Spandau war chest was early in the campaign added to the gold reserve of the Reichsbank, and it was maintained in Germany that these reserves, as late as February 1915, were scarcely touched. This may have been true, for Germany had had little reason, owing to the blockade, to use her gold. At the

beginning of the war she contemplated the raising of a foreign loan, and the American firm of Kuhn, Loeb, and Company was asked to place bonds to the extent of £250,000,000. This was found impossible owing to the refusal of the other New York banks to co-operate, and German war loans became wholly domestic matters. Nominally they were highly successful. They were fully and readily subscribed, and gave the Imperial Treasurer occasion for dithyrambic speeches on the financial resources of his country. This is not the place to recount the details of these curious transactions. By means of credit societies advances in notes were made on every kind of property; these notes were legal tender, and against them the Reichsbank issued its own notes. The general result was economically not very different from what would have been obtained by a large increase of Government notes without gold security. It was a perfectly justifiable policy for a country situated as Germany was. She mobilized the internal credit of the nation as she had mobilized her armies. So long as her people looked for victory, so long they were justified in believing that indemnities and the spoils of conquest would readily liquidate all the obligations which the State had incurred towards them. It was commonly estimated that the struggle was costing Germany in a direct expenditure not far from £3,000,000 a day. Her loss from stoppage of production was greater than that of France and Russia, and far greater than that of Britain. One estimate put the losses under this head for a year's war at £250,000,000 for the British Empire, £400,000,000 for Russia, £625,000,000 for France, and no less than £958,000,000 for Germany.

To sum up these provisional notes, we may say that the Allies, owing to the command of the sea, conducted—under difficulties—their usual economic life; while Germany was almost wholly on a war basis, in spite of the fact that scarcely any German territory was in enemy possession, and large areas of French and Russian soil were in German occupation. Germany was short in some classes of foodstuffs and badly crippled in several forms of war material, but endeavoured to meet the first by a rigorous control of distribution and the second by the use of substitutes. The war finance of all the belligerents was a matter of gigantic loans, but the security differed. With the Allies it was a weakened, but in its main lines a normal, economic life; with Germany it was solely the prospect of victory and the fruits of victory. Defeat for Germany would mean a colossal bankruptcy. She had made all her assets a pawn in the game of war.

The questions of international law which arose in the early months of 1915 were in themselves so curious, and their importance in our relations with America and

other neutrals was so great, that they demand some notice. In order to understand the situation we must realize the international practice at the outbreak of war. We may leave out of account the Declaration of London, for a coach and four had been driven through that unlucky arrangement before August was gone, and a handle was thereby given for Germany's charge that we had been the first to play fast and loose with international arrangements.

Under the ordinary practice enemy's ships were liable to capture and enemy's goods on board to confiscation, neutral goods going free. Neutral ships could sail with impunity to and from enemy ports, and any enemy goods which they carried were exempt from capture unless they happened to be contraband of war. Contraband of war was anything which was of direct use to the enemy's fleets and armies. It included not only weapons and explosives, but materials which were capable of a double use, the latter being called conditional contraband. In the Napoleonic wars conditional contraband was usually things like tar, hemp, and timber; now it is such things as petroleum and copper. If conditional contraband was destined for an enemy port it was liable to capture in a neutral bottom. Food for the civilian population of the enemy was not contraband; it might become so if destined for the enemy's soldiers or sailors, but this destination was obviously almost impossible to prove. Contraband, conditional or otherwise, was liable to seizure if it was assigned to a neutral port but could be shown to be destined for the enemy. These principles were fairly clear, but they involved a large number of questions of fact—such as the real destination of a cargo, and the precise ownership of a hull. Such questions of fact were decided by Prize Courts, which condemned or released the captured vessels submitted to them, and arranged for compensation, sale, and the other consequences of their verdicts. It should be remembered that Prize Courts do not administer the domestic law of the country which appoints them. They sit, in Lord Stowell's famous words, "not to administer occasional and shifting opinion to serve present purposes of particular national interests, but to administer with indifference that justice which the law of nations holds out without distinction to independent states, some happening to be neutral and some to be belligerent."

Now, unfortunately, while there may be agreement in peace on the main international principles, there is apt to be very little unanimity in war, for a Power puts the emphasis differently according as it is a neutral or a belligerent. A great maritime Power like Britain is subject to a special temptation. In her own wars she is apt to ride belligerent rights hard, for she wants to use her naval strength to destroy the enemy. If she is a neutral she will press neutral rights to the furthest point conceivable, for she wants to get the benefit of her big mercantile marine. The United

States, in the Civil War, were rigid sticklers for belligerent rights, while we pled the cause of neutrals. In this war we were all for belligerents, and they were the advocates of neutrals. If the situation had been reversed, and Britain had been neutral, undoubtedly we should have done as America did. There is a human nature in states as in individuals, and human nature is rarely consistent.

The first difficulty arose in connection with conditional contraband, especially copper. Germany needed copper, and she could only get it from foreign countries, notably America. Now, copper if shipped to Hamburg would be clearly contraband, and would be seized; but what if it were shipped to Genoa or Bergen? Suddenly the exports of American copper to Europe began to grow prodigiously. In 1913, from August to December, the imports to Italy had been £15,000,000; in 1914 they were £26,000,000. Scandinavia and Holland for the same period in 1913 had imported £7,000,000; in 1914 the figures were £25,000,000. This looked suspicious enough, for these countries were not in the enjoyment of an industrial boom, and such high copper stocks could only be meant for Germany. Our position was difficult. If we allowed them to land, Germany would get them. If we arrested them on the high seas, we had little or no evidence of a German destination to go on. We could only presume that, in the state of the Dutch, Scandinavian, and Italian copper trade, they must be going to Germany.

We adopted the doctrine of "continuous voyage," against which we had often made outcry in the past, and we pressed it very hard. That doctrine was first heard of in the Seven Years' War, and came to great notoriety during the American Civil War. When the North was blockading the South, Northern warships would discover a British merchantmen bound for Nassau in the Bahamas with a cargo of rifles, or to Matamoros, just across the Rio Grande from Texas, with shells. These were war stores, and of no use to the quiet civilian; and since Mexico and the Bahamas were not at war, the presumption was that the cargoes were destined for the Confederacy. Accordingly these innocent merchantmen were seized and condemned, after some highly interesting decisions by the United States Prize Courts. Britain protested vigorously, especially the lawyers, but the Government happily took no steps. When the Boer War came we showed some disposition to accept the American view; for, since the Transvaal had no sea coast, contraband could only come by a neutral port like Delagoa Bay, and we stopped several vessels on this suspicion. By the present time we had accepted whole-heartedly the American doctrine, and it was for America to repine at the consequences of her teaching. Indeed, we greatly improved on it. The Northern cruisers took only cargoes of absolute contraband where the presumption of enemy destination was unrebuttable. We took cargoes of conditional

contraband, part of which might easily have been used by neutral civilian industries, and we defined conditional contraband in a way which played havoc with that Declaration of London which in early August we proudly declared to be our guide.

The United States made a temperate protest on 28th December, and Sir Edward Grey replied on 7th January with some friendly observations, pleading the *force majeure* of necessity, and on 18th February with a long statement,[3] setting forth the whole British case, referring to American usage in the past, and pointing out that, whatever our restrictions, America was prospering over the business. In this statement he outlined a far more startling departure from international practice than the seizure of American copper, and on 1st March a Declaration of the British Government expounded the new policy.

Dec. 28.

Feb 18.

On 26th January the German Government had announced the future control of all foodstuffs, including imports from overseas. This abolished the distinction between food destined for the civil population and that for the armed forces. "Experience shows," ran Sir Edward Grey's statement, "that the power to requisition will be used to the fullest extent in order to make sure that the wants of the military are supplied, and however much goods may be imported for civil use it is by the military that they will be consumed if military exigencies require it, especially now that the German Government have taken control of all the foodstuffs in the country." In these circumstances it was natural that Britain should treat as contraband of war all food cargoes for Germany, and for a neutral port if their ultimate destination was patent.

Jan. 26.

Germany replied by announcing a blockade of Britain as from 18th February. British vessels or neutral vessels in British waters would be sunk by submarines without notice, and without any provision for the safety of crew and passengers. This threat was put into action, and on 1st March came the Declaration by Britain of a counter blockade. The Declaration deserves to be quoted in full:—

Feb. 18.

> "Germany has declared that the English Channel, the north and west coasts of France, and the waters round the British Isles are a 'war area,' and has officially notified that 'all enemy ships found in that area will be destroyed, and that neutral vessels may be exposed to danger.' This is in effect a claim to torpedo at sight, without regard to the safety of the crew or passengers, any merchant vessel under any flag. As it is not in the power of the German Admiralty to maintain any surface craft in these

waters, this attack can only be delivered by submarine agency. The law and custom of nations in regard to attacks on commerce have always presumed that the first duty of the captor of a merchant vessel is to bring it before a prize court, where it may be tried, where the regularity of the capture may be challenged, and where neutrals may recover their cargoes. The sinking of prizes is in itself a questionable act, to be resorted to only in extraordinary circumstances and after provision has been made for the safety of all the crew or passengers (if there are passengers on board). The responsibility for discriminating between neutral and enemy vessels, and between neutral and enemy cargo, obviously rests with the attacking ship, whose duty it is to verify the status and character of the vessel and cargo, and to preserve all papers before sinking or even capturing it. So also is the humane duty of providing for the safety of the crews of merchant vessels, whether neutral or enemy, an obligation upon every belligerent. It is upon this basis that all previous discussions of the law for regulating warfare at sea have proceeded.

"A German submarine, however, fulfils none of these obligations. She enjoys no local command of the waters in which she operates. She does not take her captures within the jurisdiction of a prize court. She carries no prize crew which she can put on board a prize. She uses no effective means of discriminating between a neutral and an enemy vessel. She does not receive on board for safety the crew of the vessel she sinks. Her methods of warfare are therefore entirely outside the scope of any of the international instruments regulating operations against commerce in time of war. The German declaration substitutes indiscriminate destruction for regulated capture.

"Germany is adopting these methods against peaceful traders and non-combatant crews with the avowed object of preventing commodities of all kinds (including food for the civil population) from reaching or leaving the British Isles or Northern France. Her opponents are, therefore, driven to frame retaliatory measures in order in their turn to prevent commodities of any kind from reaching or leaving Germany. These measures will, however, be enforced by the British and French Governments without risk to neutral ships or to neutral or non-combatant life, and in strict observance of the dictates of humanity.

"The British and French Governments will therefore hold themselves free to detain and take into port ships carrying goods of presumed enemy

destination, ownership, or origin. It is not intended to confiscate such vessels or cargoes unless they would otherwise be liable to condemnation. The treatment of vessels and cargoes which have sailed before this date will not be affected."

Obviously the measure did not fulfil the conditions of a technical blockade, and the Government did not claim it as such. A complete effective blockade of Germany was impossible. We did not control the Baltic, and Sweden and Norway would therefore be in a different position from a neutral like America. Further, most of the German imports went through neutral ports, and to meet this difficulty we had gone far beyond the ordinary blockade. We had proclaimed the right to "detain and take into port ships carrying goods of presumed enemy destination, ownership, or origin." This was not the old "conditional contraband" and "continuous voyage" question about which we had been arguing with America before Christmas. It was a claim to capture enemy merchandise of the most innocent kind, even when carried in neutral bottoms—a wholesale rejection of the Declaration of Paris. Further, instead of presuming cargoes of conditional contraband to have an innocent destination unless a guilty was proved, we were compelled to presume guilt unless innocence was clearly made out, and the bias of presumption leaned heavily against the possibility of innocence.

These measures, which involved a very comprehensive rewriting of international law, were avowedly "reprisals"[4] against Germany. Germany had crashed through the whole system like Alnaschar's basket. Her methods of waging war, her treatment of civilian inhabitants in France and Belgium, her conduct towards prisoners, her laying of mines on the high seas, her sinking of merchant vessels and crews, her bombardment of unfortified towns—the roll was damning enough to justify any reprisals. But the British measure bore heavily upon innocent neutrals, and it is well to recognize the very grave inconvenience to which a Power like America was put. She did not know where she stood, and it is greatly to her credit that she recognized the novel situation created by German modes of warfare, and did not quibble about the letter of the law. The Allied Governments admitted the difficulty, and did not propose to confiscate the vessels and cargoes detained, unless they were confiscable on the normal grounds of contraband. Whether damages should be paid for detention, or the goods bought by Britain, was left presumably to the Prize Courts and the executive officers. Germany in her blockade proposed to sink neutral ships and sacrifice non-combatant lives. The British blockade involved no more than detention. The latter was therefore much less than a blockade, which gives the

captor the right to confiscate any blockade-runners. As our blockade was technically incomplete, so the penalties we exacted were technically inadequate.

It is difficult to see what other course was possible, and the British Government are to be congratulated on having framed a novel measure to meet novel conditions, and on having declined, in the Prime Minister's words, "to be strangled in a network of juridical niceties." Germany was out of court, and, apart from the justification afforded by her recent conduct, the principles on which Britain acted had been approved by Bismarck, Caprivi, and von Bernhardi. To neutrals, who had a real grievance, we defended our action on the ground of sheer necessity—a necessity which may override the technical provisions but not the eternal principles of international equity. If your opponent breaks the rules of the game it is impossible to remain bound by them without giving him an undue advantage, but an honourable man will not lower himself by adopting the baser kind of trick. We proclaimed a blockade which was not formally perfect according to the text-books, though it was not unlike that proclaimed by the United States in 1861; we justified its formal imperfections by the fact that we were fighting with an enemy who owned no allegiance to any law. Mr. Balfour, on 29th March, published a defence of our action, to which it is hard to see an answer.

> "But after all it is the equity of the Allied case rather than the law which mainly interests the thinking public in America and elsewhere. The question which presses most insistently for an answer is not directly connected with legal definitions of blockade, but with problems of international morality. There are German thinkers of distinction who deny that any such morality exists; but this happily is not a doctrine which has any chance of acceptance among English-speaking peoples. What then does international morality require of one belligerent when the other belligerent tramples international law in the dust?
>
> "To some persons the answer to this question seems easy. Why, they ask, should the crime of one party modify the policy of the other? International rules should be obeyed by both sides, but their repudiation by one side leaves the obligation of the other unimpaired.
>
> "Such an answer, however, confounds international morality with international law; and though doubtless the two are closely related they are not identical. The obligation of the first is absolute, that of the second is conditional; and one of its conditions is reciprocity.
>
> "If any feel inclined to quarrel with the word 'conditional' let them

consider what would happen if ordinary law were deprived of all its sanctions, if the State lost all power to enforce obligations, to protect the innocent, or to punish the guilty. A community so situated might prosper so long as there was a general agreement to obey the laws and the agreement were maintained. But if the criminals broke it whenever it suited them, ought the innocent tamely to submit? Ought they to entrust their security to police who could afford no protection, and to courts which could inflict no penalties? Ought they, in short, to behave precisely as they would if social conditions were normal? Few, I believe, would think so.

"Now, the relation between States under international law most closely resembles the relation between individuals in such a community as I have described. International law has no sanctions; no penalties are inflicted on those who violate its rules; and if a State makes use of forbidden weapons the neutrals, who blame its policy, do nothing to protect its victims. Nor is this surprising. In the present unorganized condition of international relations it could not well be otherwise. But let them remember that impotence, like power, has duties as well as privileges; and if they cannot enforce the law on those who violate both its spirit and its letter let them not make haste to criticize belligerents who may thereby be compelled in self-defence to violate its letter, while carefully regarding its spirit. For otherwise the injury to the future development of international law may be serious indeed. If the rules of warfare are to bind one belligerent and leave the other free, they cease to mitigate suffering; they only load the dice in favour of the unscrupulous; and those countries will most readily agree to changes in the law of nations who do not mean to be bound by them.

"But though, as I think, international law can hardly be literally obeyed unless both sides are prepared to obey it, we must not conclude that the absence of reciprocity justifies the injured party in acting as if international law and international morality had thereby been abrogated. This would be a monstrous doctrine. The Germans, who began the war by tearing up a treaty, continued it by inflicting the worst horrors of war upon a people they had sworn to defend. Could we therefore argue that because the obligations of international law are reciprocal, the Allies, when the opportunity occurs, would be justified in plundering private property, shooting innocent civilians, outraging women, and wantonly destroying

works of art? Could they rightly do to Germany all that Germany has done to Belgium?

"Assuredly not. I preach no such doctrine. These things were brutal and barbarous before the law of nations took formal shape; they would remain brutal and barbarous if the law of nations fell into desuetude. Germany would indeed have no right to complain of retaliation in kind; but this would not justify us in descending to her level. The policy which I am defending has no resemblance to this. It violates no deep ethical instincts; it is in harmony with the spirit of international law; it is more regardful of neutral interests than the accepted rules of blockade; nor is the injury which it is designed to inflict on the enemy of a different character from that inflicted by an ordinary blockade. And, lastly, it is a reply to an attack which is not only illegal, but immoral; and if some reply be legitimate and necessary, can a better one be devised?"

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[1] The exchange began by being enormously against Petrograd, owing to the difficulties of exporting goods from Russia. This made it practically impossible for Russian houses to liquidate their indebtedness to London. In the same way the exchange went heavily against Paris, owing to French purchases in Britain. The exchange was generally in favour of London, except in the United States, where the balance was considerably in favour of New York.

[2] Mr. Edgar Crammond in a paper read to the Royal Statistical Society on March 16, 1915.

[3] See Appendix III.

[4] "Reprisals" is a technical term in international law, and has been defined as "retaliation to force an enemy guilty of a certain act of illegitimate warfare to comply with the laws of war."—Oppenheim, II., p. 41. The main rules connected with them are: (1) that they should not be disproportionate to the offence committed by the enemy; and (2) they must respect the laws of humanity and morality.

CHAPTER XLI.
THE WAR OF ATTRITION IN THE WEST.

Meaning of "Stalemate" and a "War of Attrition"—Germany's Difficulties—Her Reserves—Her Losses—The Allied Line in the West—Fighting on the Yser—Fighting at Ypres and St. Eloi—The Struggle for the Brickfield at Cuinchy—Death of Brigadier-General Gough—The Fight at Soissons—The War in Champagne—The Argonne—The Salient at St. Mihiel—The War in the Vosges—Topography of Alsace—Capture of Steinbach—Attempt against Mulhouse—Loss of Hartmannsweilerkopf—Summary of Ten Weeks.

In January one of the German comic papers published a cartoon in which two French staff officers were depicted measuring the day's advance with a footrule, in order to make up their report. Readers of the French *communiqués*, who learned that after a sanguinary contest the line had advanced fifty metres or so, might be pardoned for wondering if the ground were not dearly bought. If we are to understand the Allied strategy in the West at the beginning of 1915 we must be very clear about the meaning of two much misused terms, "stalemate" and "attrition."

It is correct in a sense to say that the war in the West, after the German failure before Ypres, relapsed into a stalemate. The offensive had been foiled, and could not be renewed yet awhile; while the Allies, still outnumbered and out-gunned, were not ready for any general counter-attack. But it was not such a stalemate as happened frequently in the Middle Ages, when two mercenary armies, wearied and evenly matched, and with no inducement to force a decision, sat down and looked at one another. The Allied purpose was far better served by waiting than by movement. France and Britain had not their reserves ready either of men or material, but every day brought them nearer. Every day complicated Germany's problem, both with regard to the Eastern front and to the siege instituted by the Allied fleets. Our tactics were Fabian tactics—*cunctando restituere rem*—and our inaction was in itself a form of offensive. We must increase and Germany must decrease.

But there was a positive side to our policy. By frequent local attacks we kept the edge of our temper keen; we prevented Germany from concentrating in force against any part of our line; we detained troops which might otherwise have been sent to reinforce von Hindenburg; and we still further weakened the German man-power,

since by the nature of Germany's methods her losses were more considerable than ours. That is the meaning of a war of attrition. One side wears down the other by attacks where the casualties are disproportionate, either absolutely, or relatively to the total available man-power. There must be this balance in favour of the attacker; otherwise the attrition is pointless, since both suffer alike.

It will be well to pause for a moment and consider the difficulty of Germany's problem in the first weeks of 1915. Having staked heavily on the first throw, she was handicapped for all subsequent movements. An official French calculation put her armies on both fronts at the beginning of January at 4,000,000 men, and her gross available reserves at 3,200,000. Deducting the old and unfit, there remained just 2,000,000 for the whole campaign of 1915. Of these, 800,000 odd were immediately available, 500,000 would be ready in April, and the remaining 700,000 during the second half of the year. Most of these reserves would be of inferior quality, and there would have to be a wholesale improvisation of officers, for the losses in officers had exceeded half the effectives. The net loss in the German armies per month was in the neighbourhood of 260,000, so the reserves of 1915 could not fill the gaps in the line. In January, therefore, Germany, according to this calculation, might be said to have reached her maximum of possible effort. This estimate was beyond doubt much too favourable to the Allies, but it was reasonable to assume from the facts at our disposal that from some time in the early summer Germany would require her reserves to replace her normal wastage, and would not be able to increase her field strength. On the other hand, the Allies were still far from their climax. The new British armies had been in training since September, and would be available in the spring. At least three new French armies were in process of formation. The Russian third and fourth millions, which had been held up owing to lack of equipment, were believed to be ready for the field in April. Moreover, guns and ammunition were being manufactured by the Allies to an extent which at that time was thought impossible for Germany. All these reserves and supplies would not be forthcoming in January, probably not in March; but they might appear in April, and by the early summer they would be a certainty. It seemed therefore Germany's interest to strike a blow early in the year if she still hoped for victory.

The general expectation was that the blow would fall in the West. The East had already proved a thankless fighting ground, where victory led to no conclusive results. As we shall see in the next chapters, that expectation was falsified. Germany drew one first line corps from the West, created five new formations, and launched her forces in a violent assault upon the Russian flanks. Why the decision was made we do not know. Perhaps it was that Poland and East Prussia were suddenly bound

in frost, while the Flanders fields were still drenched with rain. Or Count Tisza and the Hungarians may have grown restive, and demanded some security against a Russian descent from the Carpathians. Or von Hindenburg, still a popular idol, may have demanded the *beau rôle*.

Here we are concerned with the five hundred miles of the Allied line in the West, held as to one-tenth by the British, and for the rest by the Belgians and the French. Our purpose was to be ready for any German attack; but to forestall it, if possible, by constantly worrying portions of the German front, and so compel them to counter-attack and prevent them massing too great forces against any one point. In this offensive-defensive we were greatly assisted by the weather, which was mainly rain and sleet, and in the Vosges and the Argonne a heavy snowfall. Of great advantage, too, was the enemy's temporary weakening in artillery, for in artillery attack lay our chief danger. The furious expenditure of ammunition in the early stages of the campaign had had its natural results. The rifling of the guns was wearing out, and huge quantities of both field and heavy artillery were sent back to Germany to be repaired. Batteries were reduced from six to four guns, and the number of batteries was decreased. Old-fashioned 9 cm. pieces replaced the standard 77 mm. Shells ran short, and many of those used were of inferior quality; in January the French estimated that two-thirds of those which were fired did not burst. Sometimes when shrapnel fell the explosion scarcely broke the envelope, and in some cases it was loaded with bits of glass.

This phase of the war in the West—small attacks followed by counter-attacks—lasted well into March, and went, on the whole, strongly in the Allies' favour. Our line, it will be remembered, ran from Nieuport generally west of the Yser, along the Ypres Canal, in a salient in front of Ypres, behind Messines to just east of Armentières; then west of Neuve Chapelle to Givenchy, across the La Bassée Canal, east of Vermelles, west of Lens, to just east of Arras. From Arras it ran by Albert and Noyon to Soissons, east along the Aisne to just north of Rheims, from Rheims by Vienne to Varennes, thence, making a wide curve round Verdun, to the west bank of the Meuse opposite St. Mihiel, and so to Pont-à-Mousson on the Moselle. Thence it passed east of Lunéville to just east of St. Dié, ten miles inside the frontier. It reached the crest of the Vosges about the Col du Bonhomme, and then ran in German territory to Belfort and the Swiss border. We shall glance at the movements along this front from left to right, for, though they made little difference to the contours of the line as represented on the map, they had a very real influence on the campaign. It will be a chronicle of small things—a sandhill won east of Nieuport, a trench or two at Ypres, a corner of a brickfield at La Bassée, a few hundred yards

near Arras, a farm on the Oise, a mile in Northern Champagne, a coppice in the Argonne, a hillock on the Meuse, part of a wood on the Moselle, some of the high glens in the Vosges, and a village or two in Alsace. But these minute advances meant the loss of many German lives, the wastage of the now scanty reserves of German ammunition, and the pinning down to their trenches of over two million German troops.

At the beginning of the new year the Belgian-French forces on the Yser held the bridge-head at Nieuport, and the whole western bank of the river, their position being behind the flooded area. Dixmude was in German hands, and south of Dixmude the line ran along the Ypres Canal, mostly to the east of it, and including what was left of the village of Bixschoote. The fighting during January was mainly artillery bombardments—Nieuport, St. Georges, Ramscapelle, Pervyse, and even Furnes, being the objects of the German gunners. The heavy rains increased the strength of the defence, and the only possibility of an advance lay east from Nieuport. The Allies during the first three weeks made some slight progress around Lombaertzyde, in the flat marshy meadows lying south of the canal which runs east inside the line of the dunes. Progress, however, could not be maintained in this direction until something was done to weaken the position of the German right on the dunes themselves, a position which allowed them to shell Nieuport with impunity and command a considerable section of the Lower Yser. On 28th January, at nine o'clock in the morning, the Allied left delivered an attack against the Great Dune, just east of Nieuport. Three companies were engaged in a feinting movement along the low ground, while one company attacked the Great Dune. The advance had been well prepared by artillery, and every yard had been carefully reconnoitred. It reached without difficulty the first line of German trenches, which were found to be unoccupied and full of water. That part which moved along the highway came under an enfilading fire, and was forced back and entrenched itself. The section attacking the Great Dune had a stirring day. It reached the summit, and got into the German trenches on the south-east side, where it managed to remain in spite of counter-attacks till supports arrived. The success was of some importance, since it gave us a good fire position from which to command the east bank of the Yser, and its possession was a protection to the left wing of the Yser defence against the German cannonade. Thereafter the campaign languished, and during February and March there was little but artillery duels.

Jan. 28.

Going south, we may note an attack on 25th January on our trenches east of Ypres, which was broken up by our artillery. There were other attacks on this

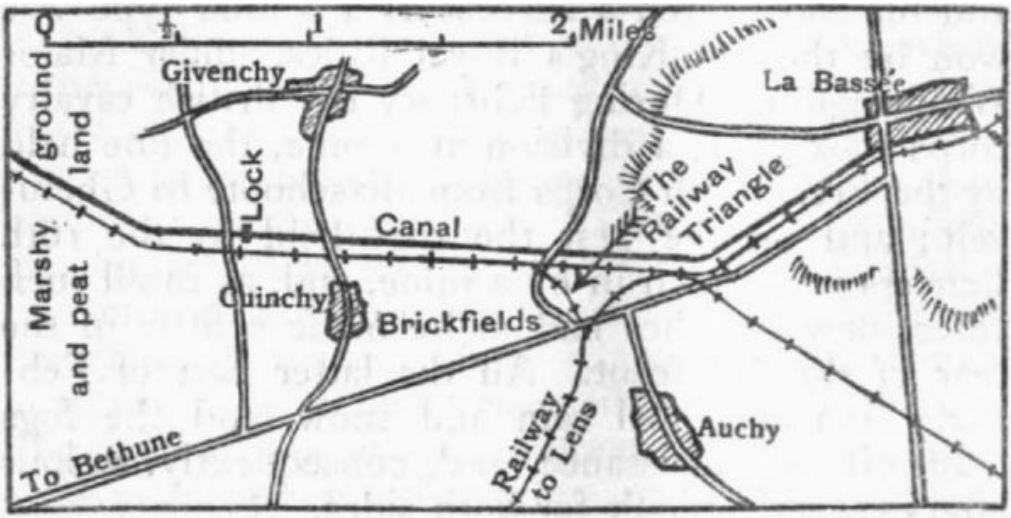
section on the 18th and 19th of February, when some trenches were taken by the enemy, and speedily retaken. On the 21st one of our trenches was blown up by a German mine, but we made a new line and held it. A week before, between St. Eloi and the canal, in the section held by the 27th Division, two portions of trench were lost, and retaken next morning. On the 28th, in the same neighbourhood, Princess Patricia's Regiment of Canadian Light Infantry distinguished themselves in a brilliant little sortie led by Lieutenants Crabbe and Papineau, which cleared out a German trench and took a number of prisoners; and on 2nd March a success of a similar type was won by the 4th King's Royal Rifles, under Major Widdrington. During February the British cavalry corps took over, a division at a time, the line held by the French 9th Corps from Bixschoote to Gheluvelt; and on the 21st the part held by the 16th Lancers was blown in by a mine, and, as in all such cases, new trenches had to be made a little in the rear of the old front. All the latter part of February was continual rain and snow, and the fogs made air reconnaissance, and, consequently, serious attacks, very difficult for both sides.

Jan. 25.

Feb. 18-19.

Feb. 14-March 2.

The heaviest fighting in the British section of the front took place on the extreme right, in the La Bassée neighbourhood, when Germany was about to celebrate her Emperor's birthday. This complicated struggle deserves notice in detail, and for this purpose we must realize the configuration of the country just south of Givenchy. Half a mile due south of that village is the Bethune-La Bassée Canal, in which at this point there is an important lock. Along the south bank of the canal runs a railway with an arch through which goes the road to the hamlet of Cuinchy. Three-quarters of a mile south of the railway is the Bethune-La Bassée highway, on which Cuinchy lies. East of Cuinchy there is a railway triangle formed by the Bethune-La Bassée line and the line to Lens, which joins the first in two loops. The front north of the canal was held by the British 3rd Brigade, under Brigadier-General Butler. South of the canal, linking up with the left of Maud'huy's army, was the 1st Brigade, under Brigadier-General Lowther. It held a sharp salient, with its left on the canal, its centre pushed forward towards the railway triangle, and its right on the Bethune-La Bassée road. All the ground was a brickfield, with old kilns and smoke stacks; and in the second line, which had been prepared a few hundred yards behind, a "keep" had been constructed about the centre.



Sketch map to illustrate the fighting near La Bassée of the 1st Corps, Jan. 25-26, 1915.

On 24th January there was a good deal of shelling of this section, apparently with the intention of smashing the canal lock, and so flooding our trenches. About six on the morning of the 25th a German deserter came in, who warned our men that they would be attacked in half an hour. We had grown accustomed to disbelieve such tales, but this man spoke the truth. The line of the 1st Brigade was held at that moment by two companies of the 1st Scots Guards and two of the 1st Coldstream. Punctually to the moment came the attack. Our trenches in the salient—our weakest portion—were blown in at once, and our line was broken. The London Scottish and the 1st Camerons were ordered up to hold the second line, with the remainder of the Coldstream and Scots Guards in support. But the Germans established themselves among the brick stacks and in our communication trenches on both sides of the "keep," and even to the west of it.

Jan. 25.

At one o'clock a counter-attack was organized to relieve the strain on the second line. The 1st Black Watch, part of the Camerons, and the 2nd King's Royal Rifles undertook it, and, so far as the flanks were concerned, succeeded. But the Black Watch in the centre were held up, and lost heavily in men and officers. The 2nd Sussex—like the King's Royal Rifles from the 2nd Brigade—were now sent forward, and the struggle lasted through the night. By the morning of the 26th we had won sufficient ground to establish a fairly straight line from the railway culvert through the "keep" to the highroad. The French left was now in advance of the 1st Brigade, and in a position of some

Jan. 26.

danger had the Germans persevered in the attack. Their efforts, however, slackened, and during the day it was possible for the 2nd Brigade under Brigadier-General Westmacott to relieve the 1st Brigade.

At the same time a fight, equally severe, was going on north of this section between the canal and Givenchy. Early on the morning of the 25th Bethune was shelled from long range, and there was a heavy bombardment of the line held by the 3rd Brigade. At 8.15 the German infantry advanced, and was met by our artillery fire, which unluckily was hampered by the interruption of telephonic communications between observers and batteries. We succeeded, however, in deflecting the enemy's course, and bunching him up towards the north. He broke into the centre of the village of Givenchy, while he attacked repeatedly the salient to the north-east around the point called French Farm. The latter assault failed, and the attack on Givenchy was repulsed by a counter-attack of the 2nd Welsh, the 1st South Wales Borderers, and a company of the Black Watch, which, after an hour of street fighting, re-established our original line by midday. According to the official "Eye-witness," our men in many cases fought with bayonets in their hands, and even knocked out many Germans with their fists. A story is told of one man who broke into a house held by eight Germans, bayoneted four, and captured the rest, while he continued to suck at a clay pipe. If the man was a Welshman he had a score to pay off. A few days before a voice from the German trenches opposite the Welsh had asked, "Are there any men from Swansea there?" Several had answered "Yes," upon which he flung a hand grenade among them, shouting, "Take that, you blighters, and divide it among you!" The only other difficulty in this section was that the 2nd Munster Fusiliers,[1] holding the extreme right next the canal, had to fall back to conform to the retirement of the 1st Brigade. After dark they moved forward again, and occupied their old line.

Jan. 25.

The struggle continued for ten days more. On the 29th part of the 14th German Corps again attacked the brickfield, now held by the 2nd Brigade, and made an attempt on the "keep" with scaling ladders. They were beaten off with severe losses by the Sussex and Northamptons. Cavan's 4th Brigade had now been brought up to the Cuinchy neighbourhood, and on 1st February, very early in the morning, the 2nd Coldstream had to fall back from their trenches. A counter-attack of combined Coldstream and Irish Guards failed to dislodge the enemy. About ten in the forenoon, after a heavy artillery preparation, a brilliant attack with the bayonet was made by fifty men of the 2nd Coldstream and thirty men of the Irish Guards, followed by a party of Royal Engineers with sandbags and wire.

Jan. 29.

Feb. 1.

Here the Victoria Cross was won by Lance-Corporal Michael O'Leary of the Irish Guards for an act of conspicuous gallantry. To quote the official summary: "When forming one of the storming party which advanced against the enemy's barricades, he rushed to the front and himself killed five Germans who were holding the first barricade, after which he attacked a second barricade about sixty yards farther on, which he captured, after killing three of the enemy and making prisoners of two more. Lance-Corporal O'Leary thus practically captured the enemy's position by himself, and prevented the rest of the attacking party from being fired upon." The Guards retook all the lost ground and captured two machine guns. This action was another feather in the cap of the incomparable 4th Brigade.

Feb. 6.

On 6th February the Irish Guards and the 3rd Coldstream took a brickfield east of Cuinchy, on the La Bassée road, compelling the enemy to evacuate a number of trenches and brickstacks, and leave behind him quantities of rifles and equipment. Next day the Germans tried to recover the place, but our gunners were too much for them, and succeeded in destroying one of their heavy batteries. The actions we have chronicled were typical of many dozen lesser ones. The one feature to note is that they were all legitimate incidents in a war of attrition. Whether we or the Germans attacked, the losses of the latter were by far the greater. Meanwhile we were slowly perfecting our artillery, and preparing the way for that more elaborate movement at Neuve Chapelle which will be the subject of a later chapter.

Feb. 20.

Our gravest loss during those weeks was a brilliant soldier, killed not in action but by a blind casualty. On the 20th of February Brigadier-General J. E. Gough, V.C., Sir Douglas Haig's most trusted staff officer, was hit by a ricochet bullet while inspecting the trenches of the Fourth Corps, and died two days later. "I have always regarded General Gough," Sir John French wrote, "as one of our most promising leaders of the future." To his friends he seemed destined for the highest command, for to notable gifts of character and great knowledge and judgment he joined that *flair* and instinct for military operations which is the secret of the genius for war.

In the section from La Bassée to Compiègne there was much fighting, especially in the neighbourhood of Lens, Arras, and Roye, but no conspicuous action can be chronicled. Going south along the front, the next large movement was that at Soissons, which began on 8th January. The French held here the line to which they had been forced back about the end of September, when Maunoury's attack on the plateau failed. That is to say, they held Soissons itself, which lies on both banks of

the Aisne, and the flat lands to the north up to the slope of the hills. At the foot of the slope lie two little hamlets—Cuffies, due north of Soissons, where the highroad to La Fère begins to climb up the plateau, and Crouy, a mile to the east, where run the railway and the highway to Laon. Between Cuffies and Crouy is a spur of the plateau, marked 132 metres in the French Staff map, and to the south-east of Crouy, overlooking the Aisne, is the spur marked 151. On 8th January the French held Cuffies, Crouy, and a line east by Bucy to Missy, where the hills come close to the river. They had three bridges to serve their front in this section—the important bridge at Soissons, now fully repaired, a wooden bridge at Venizel, and another at Missy.

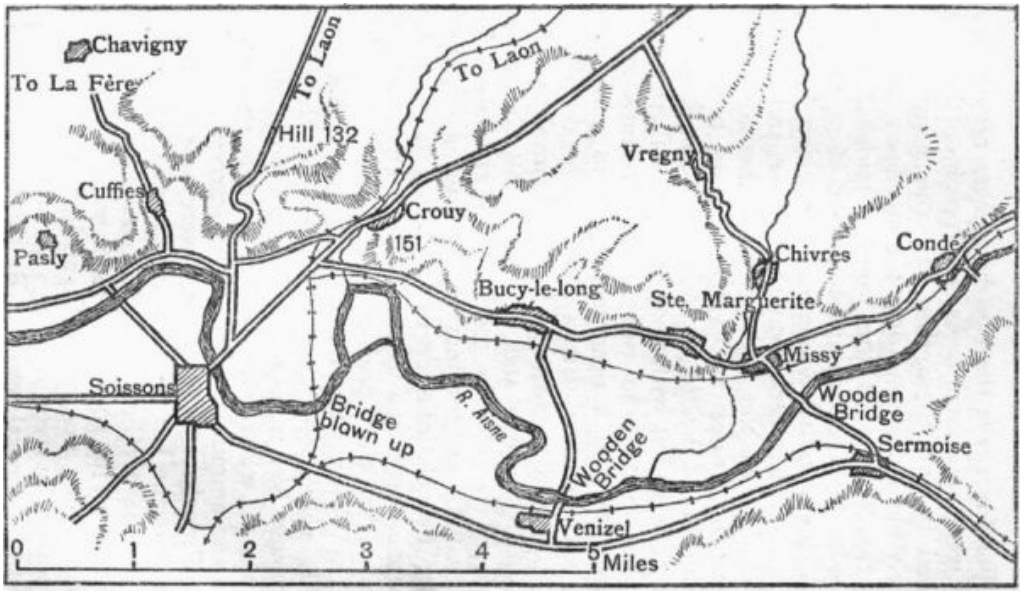
On 8th January the French at Soissons—they formed Maunoury's extreme right, and were no more than a depleted division of about 12,000 men—were ordered to attack Hill 132. The reason of the order was the same as had inspired the British advance from Givenchy on 25th December. The Germans were believed to be weak at this point, and the chance seemed good to make a dent in their line. The possession of Hill 132 would give the French a gun position which would command a road to Laon—one of the feeders of the famous Ladies' Road which the British learned to know so well in September—and make their hold on the villages secure.

Jan. 8.

The attack on Friday, the 8th, prospered. The French, in drenching rain which made the steep slope difficult for guns, pushed up the 300 feet of the spur, carried three lines of German trenches on a front a mile wide, and won the flat top of Hill 132. At the same time another section, moving from Bucy, carried Hill 151, which gave them a supporting artillery position in the right rear of Hill 132. On Saturday the Germans counter-attacked, but failed to shake them on the heights, though they prevented any debouchment from Crouy along the northern highroad. On Sunday nothing happened, but on Monday about noon the counter-attack came in immense force. No less than two German corps were moved against the weak French division, which had behind it only its scanty divisional reserves. The reason of the delay in the German reinforcements was probably that they had to be brought from some distance. One corps, we know, were Brandenburgers, who were with von Buelow in front of Arras.

Jan. 9.

Jan. 11.



Scene of the Battle near Soissons (Jan. 1915).

For four days the rain had never ceased, and it still went on raining. As the French on the heights looked behind them they saw the Aisne growing hourly higher, lipping over the meadows, and washing the footway of the wooden bridges. On the Tuesday the Germans pressed hard along the front, while they shelled Soissons, from which Maunoury had sent away the women and children. In the early evening the floods broke down the bridge at Venizel. Some time in the darkness the bridge at Missy followed, and the French were left with no access for artillery supplies to their centre and right. They counter-attacked from Crouy in a desperate effort to win ground, but were held and driven back, and on the Wednesday morning found themselves off the slopes and down on the Crouy-Missy road. The batteries on Hill 151 extricated themselves with extraordinary skill, waiting till the retiring French infantry were among them, and the Germans only five hundred yards off, before they relinquished their position.

Jan. 12.

Jan. 13.

On Wednesday the position was this: The whole valley floor was flooded, but the French engineers had managed to make a pontoon bridge at Missy, which was strong enough to transport men and ammunition, but could scarcely carry guns. The French right and centre were now in the river flats, but the left was still clinging to Hill 132 and the village of Cuffies. The position could not be maintained, for 40,000 Germans were massed against 12,000 men, and no fresh artillery supplies could get

across the river in time. Accordingly Maunoury ordered a general retreat. By the Wednesday evening Hill 132 was abandoned, and the French left was south of Cuffies. On Thursday the whole line fell back across the river. The guns of the left got safely to Soissons, but the guns of the right had largely to be abandoned, after being rendered useless, for they could not cross the crazy pontoon at Missy, and many of the guns of the centre seem to have stuck in the wet chalk. The battery from Hill 151, which was handled exceptionally well, got clear away. The gunners man-handled the guns down the slope, limbered up at its foot, and by some miracle got them over the pontoon.

Jan. 14.

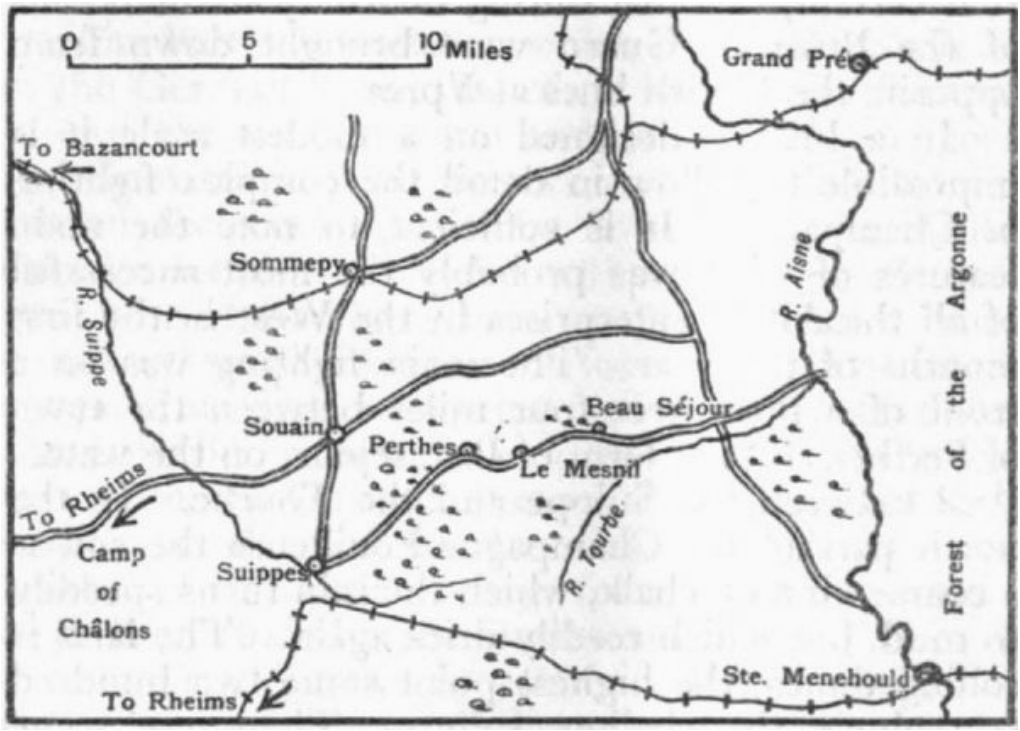
By Thursday evening the Germans had advanced their line a mile on a front of three miles, and held the bank of the Aisne for a mile east of Soissons as far as Missy, driving a broad and shallow wedge into the French front. The position in this section was very much what it had been on the 13th of September, before the Allies attempted the crossing of the river. The French had lost about half their strength, a little over 5,000, and perhaps a score of field guns. Von Kluck had made a good beginning, the Emperor was with him, and on the Tuesday he made a great effort to take Soissons. If he could do that, he would have won a railway junction and the best bridge on the Aisne, and would be able to compel a general French retirement south of the river.

Maunoury, however, had no difficulty in sending reserves to the threatened point, for Soissons was free from the embarrassments of the flooded area to the east. The German advance was checked in the village of St. Paul. The fighting was the usual German attack in massed formation, and the issue was never in doubt. They won the village, but were speedily driven back by the French artillery, and they lost more heavily than the French had lost in the struggle for the heights. That day marked the limit of the counter-offensive. Von Kluck had to be content with his winnings, for he could not add to them.

The Battle of Soissons, which was made much of in the German Press, was of no lasting significance. It cost the French 5,000 and some guns; it cost the Germans at least 10,000, and but slightly improved their position. The flooding of the Aisne was the decisive factor, for without that the French retreat need not have been so costly. As it was, it was no small achievement for a weak division to escape from two army corps across acres of flood and a swollen river. In some quarters it was noted as a proof of German strategical skill that the big attack was delayed till the Aisne had risen to its height. But the real reason for the delay seems to have been that the reinforcements, coming from a distance, could arrive no sooner. The achievement was due to coincidence rather than calculation.

Continuing along the front, the next theatre of active operations was in Northern Champagne, where General Langle de Cary faced General von Einem. The 4th French Army in the beginning of January was four corps strong, including the 2nd, 12th, and 17th Corps of the first line. About the middle of the month it received two fresh corps from the new formations which were now approaching completion. General von Einem had in January four corps, and he received at least one and a half corps by way of reinforcements during the fighting of February. These corps it is not yet possible to identify, but among the first-line troops there seems to have been the 6th Corps (Silesia), which had suffered so heavily in the Eastern fighting, and the 8th Corps (Rhineland), which was part of the Crown Prince's army. It is certain, too, that during February six battalions of the Prussian Guard were brought down from opposite the British lines at Ypres.

In a history designed on a modest scale it is impossible to follow in detail the complex fighting in Champagne. It is sufficient to note the main features of what was probably the most successful of all the Allied enterprises in the West in the first months of the year. The main fighting was on a front of a little over four miles between the town of Perthes and the farm of Beauséjour, on the watershed between the Suippe and the Tourbe. In the north part of the Champagne-Pouilleuse the soil is a coarse kind of chalk, which the rain turns speedily to mud, but which readily dries again. The land is rolling dunes, the highest point some two hundred feet above the shallow valleys. There are some scattered farms and straggling villages, the roads are few and bad, and nothing breaks the monotony but plantations of firs, which at the most grow to some twenty-five feet in height. As we have seen, the country had long been the Aldershot or Salisbury Plain of France, the great training ground for troops, and every position had been studied in the annual manœuvres. The French line was well served by the lateral railway which runs from Rheims by Ste. Menehould to Verdun, while the German lines had behind them the minor line from Bazancourt to Grand Pré in the Argonne. The direct French objective was to push back the enemy three miles, and so threaten his lateral communications. But the ultimate objects of the offensive here were the same as those elsewhere—to wear him down, to compel him to waste men and ammunition, and to detain as large a number of troops as possible which might otherwise be sent to reinforce von Hindenburg in the critical struggle now developing on the Niemen and the Narev.



Scene of the Fighting in Champagne.

The French position at the beginning of January ran through the town of Souain, south of Perthes, and south of the farm of Beauséjour. During January there were several small advances. Perthes and a hill north of Perthes were won, the best gun position in the neighbourhood. The country was suitable for movements even in bad weather, for the ground did not get water-logged, and this was one of the reasons for General Joffre's decision to press an advance here. Moreover, the soil made good trenches, and this was pre-eminently a war of entrenchments.

The general advance began on 16th February. It was of the now familiar type—a violent artillery bombardment of the German positions, followed by an infantry charge. The Germans held a strong position north of Beauséjour, on a ridge between two little glens, which they had turned into a kind of fortress. Between 25th and 27th February there was heavy fighting here, and the place was eventually carried by the French Colonial troops.[2] For the rest, the front advanced very slowly, on an average about five yards a day for the month during which the struggle lasted. First one and then another of the little woods and ridges were carried, but by 24th March, when General Joffre reviewed the

Feb. 16.

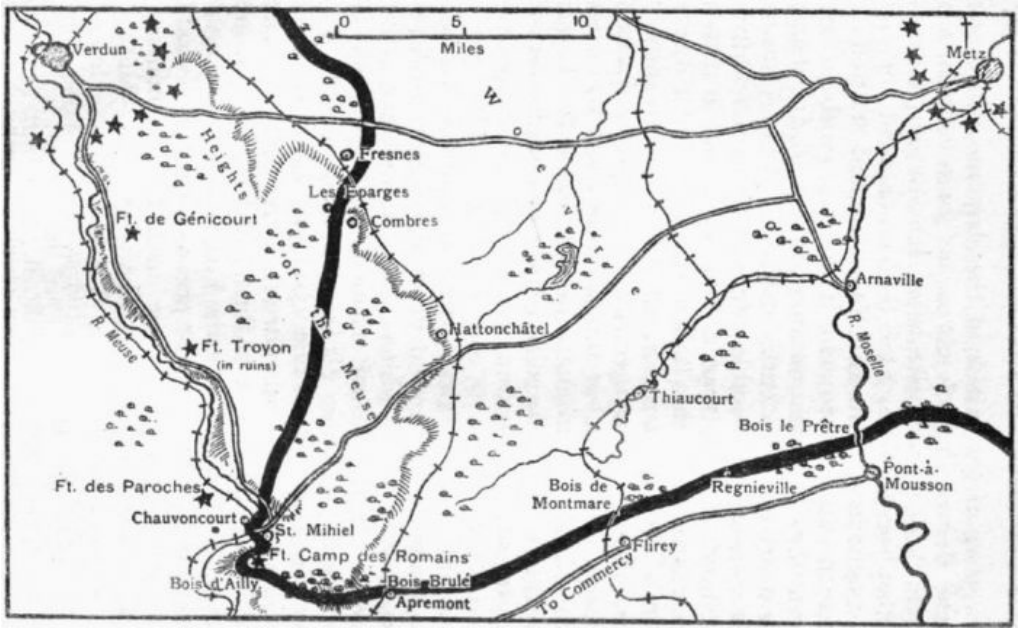
Feb. 25-27.

troops of the 4th Army, a point had not yet been won which enabled the French to threaten seriously the Bazancourt-Grand Pré railway. But in Champagne especially the result was not to be measured by the length of the advance, but by the effect upon the enemy's strength. Five and a half German corps were in action, and suffered severely. Von Einem had been compelled to call for reserves which would otherwise have gone East or remained in Flanders, and the Russian stand on the Narev and the later British success at Neuve Chapelle were the direct consequences of the battle among the Champagne dunes. The German losses were out of all proportion to those of the French. Ten thousand German dead were buried, 2,000 prisoners were taken, and two of the Guard regiments were almost annihilated. The German Staff declared that the army of von Einem contained only two weak divisions, but the identification of the dead showed that they came from more than five corps. Further, the German Staff admitted that their losses in Champagne were more than in the Battle of the Mazurian Lakes, where they had some fourteen army corps engaged.

March 24.

The heavy fighting in Champagne meant the slackening of the attack in the Argonne, since one of the Crown Prince's corps had been lent to von Einem. There was the usual see-saw of positions in that forest fighting. The French held the hill road between Vienne and Varennes, and resisted all German attempts to win it; while, on the other hand, they achieved nothing against the German headquarters at Varennes itself. Early in January there was a considerable advance in the La Grurie wood, where more than a mile of German trenches was captured by the Italian regiment under Lieutenant-Colonel Garibaldi, whose brother Constantine fell in the engagement. There were various German successes, but this woodland war had now relapsed into a genuine stalemate, since the larger strategical game was directed to east and west of the Argonne plateau.

The real strategical point in the whole front was the country between Verdun and Pont-à-Mousson—between the Meuse and the Moselle. But here it was no war of attrition, but a preparation for a great offensive. It was the road to Metz, the way into German Lorraine. General Dubail was now in charge of the group of armies between Compiègne and Belfort, and General Putz had succeeded to the command of the army of the Vosges. The examination of the ground and the preliminaries of February and March had better be undertaken when we come to deal with the April movements. Here it is sufficient to note that Verdun was no longer threatened. Sarrail's 3rd Army had taken the offensive, and was pushing to the east across the Meuse to occupy the heights overlooking the Woëvre.



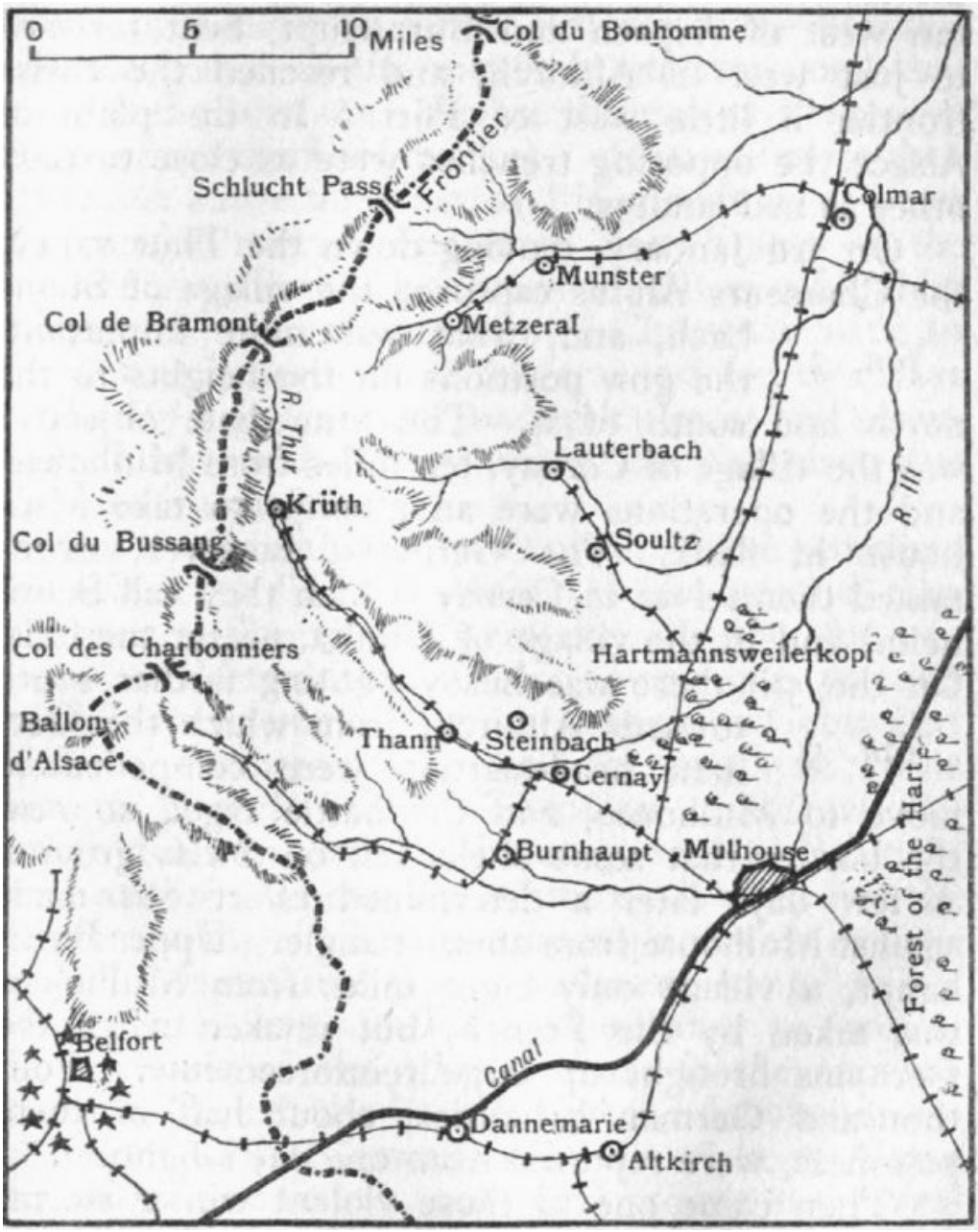
The Fighting between the Meuse and the Moselle.

During February there was some fierce fighting around the village of Les Eparges, which was taken by the French along with part of the neighbouring heights. At the same time a movement from Toul down the Moselle won the bulk of the Bois le Prêtre north of Pont-à-Mousson, and thence began a general advance northwards from the high plateau road which links Pont-à-Mousson to Commercy. This meant that the German wedge at St. Mihiel was being pressed terribly thin, and that its communications were gravely threatened.

The campaign in Alsace was also something more than a war of attrition—something more in the nature of a reconnaissance and a winning of vantage points for the coming advance. But incidentally it served the purpose of attracting German troops from elsewhere on the front. The configuration of Alsace is the key to the French plan. The Vosges descend steeply to the valley floor of the Ill, and the edge of the plain is as clean cut as the borders of a garden bed. It is a geographical type which recalls the Bavarian Alps as they abut on the Bavarian plateau north of Partenkirchen. The Vosges are wooded to their summits, and deep cut by numerous long glens which run up to the watershed. They throw off various sentinel spurs which, like the parent *massif*, are steep, slabby, and densely wooded. The Ill flows north from the Jura past Altkirch and Mulhouse to the Rhine, receiving the streams from the Vosges glens. The first is the Doller, descending from the Ballon d'Alsace.

Then comes the Thur, coming from the Col de Bussang, and passing Thann, Steinbach, and Cernay. A German military railway runs up the whole length of its valley to Kruth at the head. Farther north the Fecht flows from the direction of the Schlucht Pass by Munster and Colmar. These mountain glens are all of one type, and between them lie high wooded *massifs* of from 3,000 to 4,000 feet high. The plain of the Ill is open and largely wooded. Between Cernay and Mulhouse lies the Forest of Nonnenbruch, and between Mulhouse and the Rhine the Forest of Hartz. From the edge of the hills to the Rhine is eighteen miles, and Mulhouse, the capital of the district and an important industrial town, stands half way.

There was some fighting close on the frontier of Switzerland at the base of the Jura, but it was unimportant. The real area of operations was north of the Rhone-Rhine canal, where the French advanced upon Mulhouse by two separate routes. At the beginning of the year their line reached the crest of the Vosges at the Col du Bonhomme. Farther north, the Pass of Saales and the Col de Sainte Marie were in German hands, but from the Col du Bonhomme their line was well inside the German frontier. From the Schlucht Pass they had advanced six miles down the valley of the Fecht, and were on the heights above Munster. All the Gebweiler and Molkenrain summits were theirs, and they had established an advance post on the spur of Hartmannsweilerkopf which dominated the junction of the Thur and the Ill. But the Thur valley was their main line of operations. On the French side of the Col de Bussang a military line runs from Epinal past Remiremont—the old headquarters of the Chasseurs—almost to the crest of the range, and with this as their line of supply they had descended the Thur and taken the town of Thann. South of that point their line ran west of Aspach and Burnhaupt, bent forward to just west of Altkirch, and reached the Swiss frontier a little west of Pfirt. In the plain of Alsace the opposing trenches were as close to each other as in Flanders.



Scene of the Fighting in the Southern Vosges.

On 3rd January, moving down the Thur valley, the Chasseurs Alpins captured the village of Steinbach, and, what was more important, the gun positions on the heights to the north and south of it. The immediate

Jan. 3.

objective was the village of Cernay, ten miles from Mulhouse, and the operations were an attempt to take Mulhouse in flank. The Germans, however, maintained themselves in Cernay (which they call Sennheim) and in the village of Uffoltz, nearer the hills. On the 5th there was heavy fighting farther south towards Altkirch, from which the German headquarters were compelled to move to Mulhouse, and the battle raged so near the border that some shells fell on Swiss ground. A few days later a determined effort was made against Mulhouse from another angle. Upper Burnhaupt, a village only eight miles from Mulhouse, was taken by the French, but retaken when the Germans brought up large reinforcements. Four thousand German casualties, about half of them prisoners, were reported from one day's fighting.

Jan. 5.

Then came one of those violent winter storms which the Vosges know well. For the better part of a fortnight snow fell incessantly, and the upper glens were choked with drifts. When the sky cleared the Chasseurs went out on skis and performed some audacious reconnaissances. But the weather stopped serious campaigning, in the lowlands as well as on the hills, for the stiff clay of the Ill valley and the spates of the mountain streams combined to flood the bottoms. Before the end of the month Hartmannsweilerkopf was lost. It stands more than 2,000 feet above the plain, and is one tangle of pines and vitrified rocks. The small French post on the summit was attacked on January 19th in a blinding snowstorm. Four companies or Chasseurs made an attempt to relieve the defenders, and for two days conducted a gallant fight among icy rocks and snow-laden brushwood. They failed, and the place was captured on the 21st.

For two months the position in Alsace remained the same, the French holding to the ground they had won. The results were considerable, for, except for Hartmannsweilerkopf, every gun position on the slopes was held from Aspach to Gebweiler, and the southern passes and the southern crests were in French hands. The Gap of Belfort, the Ballon d'Alsace road, the Bussang, and the Schlucht were at their disposal for a future advance, and the debouchments of all the southern glens were in their control. It is true that a mountain range is not dominated so as to facilitate an advance so long as the lowlands on the other side are in the enemy's hands. Though the French held the debouchments of the glens, the Germans held the plain of Alsace and its railway system, and could oppose any movement from the valley mouths. But one conspicuous advantage the French gained from their control of the Southern Vosges: in any advance through the Gap of Belfort their left flank would be secure.

The ten weeks of this war of attrition in the West served its purpose. From the

North Sea to Verdun it kept the enemy on the stretch, bit deeply into his strength of men and material, and prevented him from sending troops to complicate Russia's difficult task in East Prussia. During this time there was no German attempt at a strong offensive, the fight at Soissons being no more than a local counter-attack. The efforts in the Woëvre and in Alsace fulfilled the same purpose, but they did something more. They won positions which were of inestimable value when, with new troops and full equipment, France was ready for the great advance. The smith files laboriously at the iron rod, but the moment comes when he lays down his file, puts forth his strength, and snaps it asunder.

Meantime in the Eastern theatre Germany had taken the offensive. The third of the hammer blows at Warsaw had begun. Once more in the frozen bogs of East Prussia a desperate struggle was in progress, for von Hindenburg was fain to strike before Russia, wearied with the winter war, had got those supplies of arms without which her numbers profited her nothing. We must turn to that heroic stand on the Niemen and Narev which was to the campaign in the East what Ypres was to the Allies in the West.

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[1] This battalion, it will be remembered, had been nearly all captured or killed on the night of 26th August in the retreat from Mons. It had been reconstituted by drafts, and took its place in the line towards the end of November.

[2] The French "Armée Coloniale"—also known as "Les Marsouins," "Les Coloniaux," and "L'Infanterie de Marine"—needs a word of explanation. It is a long-service professional army, very much like the British. In peace time it is under the Colonial Office, and is quite independent of the French regular army. It is recruited in France, and consists of seven artillery regiments (three of them stationed in France) and nineteen infantry regiments (twelve of which have their depôts in France). These regiments are composed of white French citizens, and not of subjects from the "régiments indigènes" of the different colonies, nor from the Zouaves or the Turcos, who are infantry of the regular army. The "Armée Coloniale" has very clearly-marked traditions. The men are not conscripts, but long-service volunteers, who enlist for a minimum of five years, and often

remain for fifteen years, and are liable for service anywhere in the world. Interchanges of officers between it and the regular army are very rare, as the “Africans” are jealous of their special traditions and privileges. The infantry uniform is dark blue coat and trousers, black képi with a red anchor, and yellow epaulettes. This red anchor occasionally leads to their being confused by foreigners with the Fusiliers Marins, which are the equivalent of our British Marines.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.
THE WINTER FIGHTING IN FLANDERS.

SIR JOHN FRENCH'S FIFTH DISPATCH.

The following dispatch was received on February 12 by the Secretary of State for War from the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief. The British Army in the Field:—

General Headquarters, February 2, 1915.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to forward a further report on the operations of the Army under my command.

I. In the period under review the salient feature was the presence of His Majesty the King in the Field. His Majesty arrived at Headquarters on the 30th November, and left on the 5th December.

At a time when the strength and endurance of the troops had been tried to the utmost throughout the long and arduous Battle of Ypres-Armentières, the presence of His Majesty in their midst was of the greatest possible help and encouragement.

His Majesty visited all parts of the extensive area of operations and held numerous inspections of the troops behind the line of trenches.

On the 16th November Lieutenant His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, K.G., Grenadier Guards, joined my Staff as Aide-de-Camp.

II. Since the date of my last report the operations of the Army under my command have been subject almost entirely to the limitations of weather.

History teaches us that the course of campaigns in Europe which have been actively prosecuted during the months of December and January have been largely influenced by weather conditions. It should, however, be thoroughly understood throughout the country that the most recent development of armaments and the latest methods of conducting warfare have added greatly to the difficulties and drawbacks of a vigorous winter campaign.

To cause anything more than a waste of ammunition long-range artillery fire requires constant and accurate observation; but this most necessary condition is rendered impossible of attainment in the midst of continual fog and mist.

Again, armies have now grown accustomed to rely largely on aircraft reconnaissance for accurate information of the enemy; but the effective performance

of this service is materially influenced by wind and weather.

The deadly accuracy, range and quick-firing capabilities of the modern rifle and machine gun require that a fire-swept zone be crossed in the shortest possible space of time by attacking troops. But if men are detained under the enemy's fire by the difficulty of emerging from a water-logged trench, and by the necessity of passing over ground knee-deep in holding mud and slush, such attacks become practically prohibitive owing to the losses they entail.

During the exigencies of the heavy fighting which ended in the last week of November the French and British Forces had become somewhat mixed up, entailing a certain amount of difficulty in matters of supply and in securing unity of command.

By the end of November I was able to concentrate the Army under my command in one area, and, by holding a shorter line, to establish effective reserves.

By the beginning of December there was a considerable falling off in the volume of artillery fire directed against our front by the enemy. Reconnaissance and reports showed that a certain amount of artillery had been withdrawn. We judged that the cavalry in our front, with the exception of one Division of the Guard, had disappeared.

There did not, however, appear to have been any great diminution in the numbers of infantry holding the trenches.

MINOR OPERATIONS.

III. Although both artillery and rifle fire were exchanged with the enemy every day, and sniping went on more or less continuously during the hours of daylight, the operations which call for special record or comment are comparatively few.

During the last week in November some successful minor night operations were carried out in the 4th Corps.

On the night of the 23rd-24th November a small party of the 2nd Lincolnshire Regiment, under Lieutenant E. H. Impey, cleared three of the enemy's advanced trenches opposite the 25th Brigade and withdrew without loss.

On the night of the 24th-25th Captain J. R. Minshull Ford, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and Lieutenant E. L. Morris, Royal Engineers, with 15 men of the Royal Engineers and Royal Welsh Fusiliers, successfully mined and blew up a group of farms immediately in front of the German trenches on the Touquet-Bridoux Road which had been used by German snipers.

On the night of the 26th-27th November a small party of the 2nd Scots Guards, under Lieutenant Sir E. H. W. Hulse, Bt., rushed the trenches opposite the 20th

Brigade; and after pouring a heavy fire into them returned with useful information as to the strength of the Germans and the position of machine guns.

The trenches opposite the 25th Brigade were rushed the same night by a patrol of the 2nd Rifle Brigade, under Lieutenant E. Durham.

On the 23rd November the 112th Regiment of the 14th German Army Corps succeeded in capturing some 800 yards of the trenches held by the Indian Corps, but the General Officer Commanding the Meerut Division organized a powerful counter-attack, which lasted throughout the night. At daybreak on the 24th November the line was entirely re-established.

The operation was a costly one, involving many casualties, but the enemy suffered far more heavily.

We captured over 100 prisoners, including 3 officers, as well as 3 machine guns and 2 trench mortars.

On December 7th the concentration of the Indian Corps was completed by the arrival of the Sirhind Brigade from Egypt.

On December 9th the enemy attempted to commence a strong attack against the 3rd Corps, particularly in front of the trenches held by the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the Middlesex Regiment.

They were driven back with heavy loss, and did not renew the attempt. Our casualties were very slight.

PETIT BOIS AND MAEDELSTEED.

During the early days of December certain indications along the whole front of the Allied Line induced the French Commanders and myself to believe that the enemy had withdrawn considerable forces from the Western Theatre.

Arrangements were made with the Commander of the 8th French Army for an attack to be commenced on the morning of December 14th.

Operations began at 7 a.m. by a combined heavy artillery bombardment by the two French and the 2nd British Corps.

The British objectives were the Petit Bois and the Maedelsteed Spur, lying respectively to the west and south-west of the village of Wytschaete.

At 7.45 a.m. the Royal Scots, with great dash, rushed forward and attacked the former, while the Gordon Highlanders attacked the latter place.

The Royal Scots, commanded by Major F. J. Duncan, D.S.O., in face of a terrible machine-gun and rifle fire, carried the German trench on the west edge of the Petit Bois, capturing two machine guns and 53 prisoners, including one officer.

The Gordon Highlanders, with great gallantry, advanced up the Maedelsteed Spur, forcing the enemy to evacuate their front trench. They were, however, losing heavily, and found themselves unable to get any further. At nightfall they were obliged to fall back to their original position.

Captain C. Boddam-Whetham and Lieutenant W. F. R. Dobie showed splendid dash, and with a few men entered the enemy's leading trenches; but they were all either killed or captured.

Lieutenant G. R. V. Hume-Gore and Lieutenant W. H. Paterson also distinguished themselves by their gallant leading.

Although not successful, the operation was most creditable to the fighting spirit of the Gordon Highlanders, most ably commanded by Major A. W. F. Baird, D.S.O.

As the 32nd French Division on the left had been unable to make any progress, the further advance of our infantry into the Wytschaete Wood was not practicable.

Possession of the western edge of the Petit Bois was, however, retained.

The ground was devoid of cover and so water-logged that a rapid advance was impossible, the men sinking deep in the mud at every step they took.

The artillery throughout the day was very skilfully handled by the C.R.A.'s. of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Divisions: Major-General F. D. V. Wing, C.B., Brigadier-General G. F. Milne, C.B., D.S.O., and Brigadier-General J. E. W. Headlam, C.B., D.S.O.

The casualties during the day were about 17 officers and 407 other ranks. The losses of the enemy were very considerable, large numbers of dead being found in the Petit Bois and also in the communicating trenches in front of the Gordon Highlanders, in one of which a hundred were counted by a night patrol.

On this day the artillery of the 4th Division, 3rd Corps, was used in support of the attack, under orders of the General Officer Commanding 2nd Corps.

The remainder of the 3rd Corps made demonstrations against the enemy with a view to preventing him from detaching troops to the area of operations of the 2nd Corps.

From the 15th to the 17th December the offensive operations which were commenced on the 14th were continued, but were confined chiefly to artillery bombardment.

The infantry advance against Wytschaete Wood was not practicable until the French on our left could make some progress to afford protection to that flank.

On the 17th it was agreed that the plan of attack as arranged should be modified; but I was requested to continue demonstrations along my line in order to

assist and support certain French operations which were being conducted elsewhere.

THE FIGHT AT GIVENCHY.

IV. In his desire to act with energy up to his instructions to demonstrate and occupy the enemy, the General Officer Commanding the Indian Corps decided to take the advantage of what appeared to him a favourable opportunity to launch attacks against the advanced trenches in his front on the 18th and 19th December.

The attack of the Meerut Division on the left was made on the morning of the 19th with energy and determination, and was at first attended with considerable success, the enemy's advanced trenches being captured. Later on, however, a counter-attack drove them back to their original position with considerable loss.

The attack of the Lahore Division commenced at 4.30 a.m. It was carried out by two companies each of the 1st Highland Light Infantry and the 1st Battalion, 4th Gurkha Rifles, of the Sirhind Brigade, under Lieutenant-Colonel R. W. H. Ronaldson. This attack was completely successful, two lines of the enemy's trenches being captured with little loss.

Before daylight the captured trenches were filled with as many men as they would hold. The front was very restricted, communication to the rear impossible.

At daybreak it was found that the position was practically untenable. Both flanks were in the air, and a supporting attack, which was late in starting, and, therefore, conducted during daylight, failed, although attempted with the greatest gallantry and resolution.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ronaldson held on till dusk, when the whole of the captured trenches had to be evacuated, and the detachment fell back to its original line.

By the night of the 19th December nearly all the ground gained during the day had been lost.

From daylight on the 20th December the enemy commenced a heavy fire from artillery and trench mortars on the whole front of the Indian Corps. This was followed by infantry attacks, which were in especial force against Givenchy, and between that place and La Quinque Rue.

At about 10 a.m. the enemy succeeded in driving back the Sirhind Brigade and capturing a considerable part of Givenchy, but the 57th Rifles and 9th Bhopals, north of the canal, and the Connaught Rangers, south of it, stood firm.

The 15th Sikhs of the Divisional Reserve were already supporting the Sirhind Brigade. On the news of the retirement of the latter being received, the 47th Sikhs

were also sent up to reinforce General Brunker. The 1st Manchester Regiment, 4th Suffolk Regiment, and two battalions of French Territorials under General Carnegy were ordered to launch a vigorous counter-attack from Pont Fixe through Givenchy to retake by a flank attack the trenches lost by the Sirhind Brigade.

Orders were sent to General Carnegy to divert his attack on Givenchy village, and to re-establish the situation there.

A battalion of the 58th French Division was sent to Annequin in support.

About 5 p.m. a gallant attack by the 1st Manchester Regiment and one company of the 4th Suffolk Regiment had captured Givenchy, and had cleared the enemy out of the two lines of trenches to the north-east. To the east of the village the 9th Bhopal Infantry and 57th Rifles had maintained their positions, but the enemy were still in possession of our trenches to the north of the village.

General Macbean, with the Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade, 2nd Battalion 8th Gurkha Rifles, and the 47th Sikhs, was sent up to support General Brunker, who at 2 p.m. directed General Macbean to move to a position of readiness in the second line trenches from Maris northward, and to counter-attack vigorously if opportunity offered.

Some considerable delay appears to have occurred, and it was not until 1 a.m. on the 21st that the 47th Sikhs and the 7th Dragoon Guards, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. Lempriere, D.S.O., of the latter regiment, were launched in counter-attack.

They reached the enemy's trenches, but were driven out by enfilade fire, their gallant Commander being killed.

The main attack by the remainder of General Macbean's force, with the remnants of Lieutenant-Colonel Lempriere's detachment (which had again been rallied), was finally pushed in at about 4.30 a.m., and also failed.

In the northern section of the defensive line the retirement of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Gurkha Rifles, at about 10 a.m. on the 20th, had left the flank of the 1st Seaforth Highlanders, on the extreme right of the Meerut Division line, much exposed. This battalion was left shortly afterwards completely in the air by the retirement of the Sirhind Brigade.

The 58th Rifles, therefore, were ordered to support the left of the Seaforth Highlanders, to fill the gap created by the retirement of the Gurkhas.

INDIANS RELIEVED BY THE FIRST CORPS.

During the whole of the afternoon strenuous efforts were made by the Seaforth

Highlanders to clear the trenches to their right and left. The 1st Battalion, 9th Gurkha Rifles, reinforced the 2nd Gurkhas near the orchard where the Germans were in occupation of the trenches abandoned by the latter regiment. The Garhwal Brigade was being very heavily attacked, and their trenches and loopholes were much damaged; but the brigade continued to hold its front and attack, connecting with the 6th Jats on the left of the Dehra Dun Brigade.

No advance in force was made by the enemy, but the troops were pinned to their ground by heavy artillery fire, the Seaforth Highlanders especially suffering heavily.

Shortly before nightfall the 2nd Royal Highlanders on the right of the Seaforth Highlanders had succeeded in establishing touch with the Sirhind Brigade; and the continuous line (though dented near the orchard) existed throughout the Meerut Division.

Early in the afternoon of December 20th orders were sent to the 1st Corps, which was then in general army reserve, to send an infantry brigade to support the Indian Corps.

The 1st Brigade was ordered to Bethune, and reached that place at midnight on 20th-21st December. Later in the day Sir Douglas Haig was ordered to move the whole of the 1st Division in support of the Indian Corps.

The 3rd Brigade reached Bethune between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. on the 21st, and on the same date the 2nd Brigade arrived at Lacon at 1 p.m.

The 1st Brigade was directed on Givenchy, *via* Pont Fixe, and the 3rd Brigade, through Gorre, on the trenches evacuated by the Sirhind Brigade.

The 2nd Brigade was directed to support; the Dehra Dun Brigade being placed at the disposal of the General Officer Commanding Meerut Division.

At 1 p.m. the General Officer Commanding 1st Division directed the 1st Brigade in attack from the west of Givenchy in a north-easterly direction, and the 3rd Brigade from Festubert in an east-north-easterly direction, the object being to pass the position originally held by us and to capture the German trenches 300 yards to the east of it.

By 5 p.m. the 1st Brigade had obtained a hold in Givenchy and the ground south as far as the canal, and the 3rd Brigade had progressed to a point half a mile west of Festubert.

By nightfall the 1st South Wales Borderers and the 2nd Welsh Regiment of the 3rd Brigade had made a lodgment in the original trenches to the north-east of Festubert, the 1st Gloucestershire Regiment continuing the line southward along the track east of Festubert.

The 1st Brigade had established itself on the east side of Givenchy.

By 3 p.m. the 3rd Brigade was concentrated at Le Touret, and was ordered to retake the trenches which had been lost by the Dehra Dun Brigade.

By 10 p.m. the support trenches west of the orchard had been carried, but the original fire trenches had been so completely destroyed that they could not be occupied.

This operation was performed by the 1st Loyal North Lancashire Regiment and the 1st Northamptonshire Regiment, supported by the 2nd King's Royal Rifle Corps, in reserve.

Throughout this day the units of the Indian Corps rendered all the assistance and support they could in view of their exhausted condition.

At 1 p.m. on the 22nd Sir Douglas Haig took over command from Sir James Willcocks. The situation in the front line was then approximately as follows:—

> South of the La Bassée Canal the Connaught Rangers of the Ferozepore Brigade had not been attacked. North of the canal a short length of our original line was still held by the 9th Bhopals and the 57th Rifles of the same brigade. Connecting with the latter was the 1st Brigade holding the village of Givenchy and its eastern and northern approaches. On the left of the 1st Brigade was the 3rd Brigade. Touch had been lost between the left of the former and the right of the latter. The 3rd Brigade held a line along, and in places advanced to, the east of the Festubert Road. Its left was in communication with the right of the Meerut Division line, where troops of the 2nd Brigade had just relieved the 1st Seaforth Highlanders. To the north, units of the 2nd Brigade held an indented line west of the orchard, connecting with half of the 2nd Royal Highlanders, half of the 41st Dogras, and the 1st Battalion, 9th Gurkha Rifles. From this point to the north the 6th Jats and the whole of the Garhwal Brigade occupied the original line which they had held from the commencement of the operations.

The relief of most units of the southern sector was effected on the night of 22nd December. The Meerut Division remained under the orders of the 1st Corps, and was not completely withdrawn until the 27th December.

In the evening the position at Givenchy was practically re-established, and the 3rd Brigade had reoccupied the old line of trenches.

During the 23rd the enemy's activities ceased, and the whole position was

restored to very much its original condition.

In my last dispatch I had occasion to mention the prompt and ready help I received from the Lahore Division, under the command of Major-General H. B. B. Watkis, C.B., which was thrown into action immediately on arrival, when the British Forces were very hard pressed during the battle of Ypres-Armentières.

The Indian troops have fought with the utmost steadfastness and gallantry whenever they have been called upon.

Weather conditions were abnormally bad, the snow and floods precluding any active operations during the first three weeks of January.

THE JANUARY ATTACKS.

V. At 7.30 a.m. on the 25th January the enemy began to shell Bethune, and at 8 a.m. a strong hostile infantry attack developed south of the canal, preceded by a heavy bombardment of artillery, minenwerfers and, possibly, the explosion of mines, though the latter is doubtful.

The British line south of the canal formed a pronounced salient from the canal on the left, thence running forward toward the railway triangle and back to the main La Bassée-Bethune road, where it joined the French. This line was occupied by half a battalion of the Scots Guards, and half a battalion of the Coldstream Guards, of the 1st Infantry Brigade. The trenches in the salient were blown in almost at once; and the enemy's attack penetrated this line. Our troops retired to a partially prepared second line, running approximately due north and south from the canal to the road, some 500 yards west of the railway triangle. This second line had been strengthened by the construction of a keep half way between the canal and the road. Here the other two half battalions of the above-mentioned regiments were in support.

These supports held up the enemy, who, however, managed to establish himself in the brick stacks and some communication trenches between the keep, the road, and the canal—and even beyond and west of the keep on either side of it.

The London Scottish had in the meantime been sent up in support, and a counter-attack was organized with the 1st Royal Highlanders, part of the 1st Cameron Highlanders, and the 2nd King's Royal Rifle Corps, the latter regiment having been sent forward from the Divisional Reserve.

The counter-attack was delayed in order to synchronize with a counter-attack north of the canal which was arranged for 1 p.m.

At 1 p.m. these troops moved forward, their flanks making good progress near the road and the canal, but their centre being held up. The 2nd Royal Sussex

Regiment was then sent forward, late in the afternoon, to reinforce. The result was that the Germans were driven back far enough to enable a somewhat broken line to be taken up, running from the culvert on the railway, almost due south to the keep, and thence south-east to the main road.

The French left near the road had also been attacked and driven back a little, but not to so great an extent as the British right. Consequently, the French left was in advance of the British right and exposed to a possible flank attack from the north.

The Germans did not, however, persevere further in their attack.

The above-mentioned line was strengthened during the night, and the 1st Guards Brigade, which had suffered severely, was withdrawn into reserve and replaced by the 2nd Infantry Brigade.

While this was taking place another, and equally severe, attack was delivered north of the canal against the village of Givenchy.

STREET FIGHTING.

At 8.15 a.m., after a heavy artillery bombardment with high explosive shells, the enemy's infantry advanced under the effective fire of our artillery, which, however, was hampered by the constant interruption of telephonic communication between the observers and batteries. Nevertheless, our artillery fire, combined with that of the infantry in the fire trenches, had the effect of driving the enemy from his original direction of advance, with the result that his troops crowded together on the north-east corner of the village and broke through into the centre of the village as far as the keep, which had been previously put in a state of defence. The Germans had lost heavily, and a well-timed local counter-attack, delivered by the reserves of the 2nd Welsh Regiment and 1st South Wales Borderers, and by a company of the 1st Royal Highlanders (lent by the 1st Brigade as a working party—this company was at work on the keep at the time), was completely successful, with the result that, after about an hour's street fighting, all who had broken into the village were either captured or killed, and the original line round the village was re-established by noon.

South of the village, however, and close to the canal, the right of the 2nd Royal Munster Fusiliers fell back in conformity with the troops south of the canal; but after dark that regiment moved forward and occupied the old line.

During the course of the attack on Givenchy the enemy made five assaults on the salient at the north-east of the village about French Farm, but was repulsed every time with heavy loss.

VI. On the morning of the 29th January attacks were made on the right of the

1st Corps, south of the canal in the neighbourhood of La Bassée.

The enemy (part of the 14th German Corps), after a severe shelling, made a violent attack with scaling ladders on the keep, also to the north and south of it. In the keep and on the north side the Sussex Regiment held the enemy off, inflicting on him serious losses. On the south side the hostile infantry succeeded in reaching the Northamptonshire Regiment's trenches, but were immediately counter-attacked and all killed. Our artillery co-operated well with the infantry in repelling the attack.

In this action our casualties were inconsiderable, but the enemy lost severely, more than 200 of his killed alone being left in front of our position.

VII. On the 1st February a fine piece of work was carried out by the 4th Brigade in the neighbourhood of Cuinchy.

Some of the 2nd Coldstream Guards were driven from their trenches at 2.30 a.m., but made a stand some twenty yards east of them in a position which they held till morning.

A counter-attack, launched at 3.15 a.m. by one company of the Irish Guards and half a company of the 2nd Coldstream Guards, proved unsuccessful, owing to heavy rifle fire from the east and south.

At 10.5 a.m., acting under orders of the 1st Division, a heavy bombardment was opened on the lost ground for ten minutes; and this was followed immediately by an assault by about 50 men of the 2nd Coldstream Guards with bayonets, led by Captain A. Leigh Bennett, followed by 30 men of the Irish Guards, led by Second Lieutenant F. F. Graham, also with bayonets. These were followed by a party of Royal Engineers with sand bags and wire.

All the ground which had been lost was brilliantly retaken; the 2nd Coldstream Guards also taking another German trench and capturing two machine guns.

Thirty-two prisoners fell into our hands.

The General Officer Commanding 1st Division describes the preparation by the artillery as "splendid, the high explosive shells dropping in the exact spot with absolute precision."

In forwarding his report on this engagement the General Officer Commanding First Army writes as follows:—

> Special credit is due—
>
> (i) To Major-General Haking, Commanding 1st Division for the prompt manner in which he arranged this counter-attack and for the general plan of action, which was crowned with success.
>
> (ii) To the General Officer Commanding the 4th Brigade (Lord

Cavan) for the thorough manner in which he carried out the orders of the General Officer Commanding the Division.

(iii) To the regimental officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the 2nd Coldstream Guards and Irish Guards, who, with indomitable pluck, stormed two sets of barricades, captured three German trenches, two machine guns, and killed or made prisoners many of the enemy.

OUR AIRMEN'S SUPERIORITY.

VIII. During the period under report the Royal Flying Corps has again performed splendid service.

Although the weather was almost uniformly bad and the machines suffered from constant exposure, there have been only thirteen days on which no actual reconnaissance has been effected. Approximately one hundred thousand miles have been flown.

In addition to the daily and constant work of reconnaissance and co-operation with the artillery, a number of aerial combats have been fought, raids carried out, detrainments harassed, parks and petrol depots bombed, &c.

Various successful bomb-dropping raids have been carried out, usually against the enemy's aircraft material. The principle of attacking hostile aircraft whenever and wherever seen (unless highly important information is being delivered) has been adhered to, and has resulted in the moral fact that enemy machines invariably beat immediate retreat when chased.

Five German aeroplanes are known to have been brought to the ground, and it would appear probable that others, though they have managed to reach their own lines, have done so in a considerably damaged condition.

GOOD WORK BY TERRITORIALS.

IX. In my dispatch of 20th November, 1914, I referred to the reinforcements of Territorial Troops which I had received, and I mentioned several units which had already been employed in the fighting line.

In the positions which I held for some years before the outbreak of this war I was brought into close contact with the Territorial Force, and I found every reason to hope and believe that, when the hour of trial arrived, they would justify every hope and trust which was placed in them.

The Lords Lieutenant of Counties and the Associations which worked under them bestowed a vast amount of labour and energy on the organization of the

Territorial Force; and I trust it may be some recompense to them to know that I, and the principal Commanders serving under me, consider that the Territorial Force has far more than justified the most sanguine hopes that any of us ventured to entertain of their value and use in the field. Commanders of Cavalry Divisions are unstinted in their praise of the manner in which the Yeomanry regiments attached to their brigades have done their duty, both in and out of action. The service of Divisional Cavalry is now almost entirely performed by Yeomanry, and Divisional Commanders report that they are very efficient.

Army Corps Commanders are loud in their praise of the Territorial Battalions which form part of nearly all the brigades at the front in the first line, and more than one of them have told me that these battalions are fast approaching—if they have not already reached—the standard of efficiency of Regular Infantry.

OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS.

I wish to add a word about the Officers Training Corps. The presence of the Artists' Rifles (28th Battalion, The London Regiment) with the Army in France enabled me also to test the value of this organization.

Having had some experience in peace of the working of the Officers Training Corps, I determined to turn the Artists' Rifles (which formed part of the Officers Training Corps in peace time) to its legitimate use. I therefore established the battalion as a Training Corps for Officers in the field.

The cadets pass through a course, which includes some thoroughly practical training as all cadets do a tour of 48 hours in the trenches, and afterwards write a report on what they see and notice. They also visit an observation post of a battery or group of batteries, and spend some hours there.

A Commandant has been appointed, and he arranges and supervises the work, sets schemes for practice, administers the school, delivers lectures, and reports on the candidates.

The cadets are instructed in all branches of military training suitable for platoon commanders.

Machine-gun tactics, a knowledge of which is so necessary for all junior officers, is a special feature of the course of instruction.

When first started the school was able to turn out officers at the rate of 75 a month. This has since been increased to 100.

Reports received from Divisional and Army Corps Commanders on officers who have been trained at the school are most satisfactory.

TEMPER OF BRITISH TROOPS.

X. Since the date of my last report I have been able to make a close personal inspection of all the units in the command. I was most favourably impressed by all I saw.

The troops composing the Army in France have been subjected to as severe a trial as it is possible to impose upon any body of men. The desperate fighting described in my last dispatch had hardly been brought to a conclusion when they were called upon to face the rigours and hardships of a winter campaign. Frost and snow have alternated with periods of continuous rain.

The men have been called upon to stand for many hours together almost up to their waists in bitterly cold water, only separated by one or two hundred yards from a most vigilant enemy.

Although every measure which science and medical knowledge could suggest to mitigate these hardships was employed, the sufferings of the men have been very great.

In spite of all this they presented, at the inspections to which I have referred, a most soldier-like, splendid, though somewhat war-worn appearance. Their spirit remains high and confident; their general health is excellent, and their condition most satisfactory.

I regard it as most unfortunate that circumstances have prevented any account of many splendid instances of courage and endurance, in the face of almost unparalleled hardship and fatigue in war, coming regularly to the knowledge of the public.

Reinforcements have arrived from England with remarkable promptitude and rapidity. They have been speedily drafted into the ranks, and most of the units I inspected were nearly complete when I saw them. In appearance and quality the drafts sent out have exceeded my most sanguine expectations, and I consider the Army in France is much indebted to the Adjutant-General's Department at the War Office for the efficient manner in which its requirements have been met in this most essential respect.

With regard to these inspections, I may mention in particular the fine appearance presented by the 27th and 28th Divisions, composed principally of battalions which had come from India. Included in the former division was the Princess Patricia's Royal Canadian Regiment. They are a magnificent set of men, and have since done excellent work in the trenches.

It was some three weeks after the events recorded in paragraph 4 that I made my inspection of the Indian Corps, under Sir James Willcocks. The appearance they

presented was most satisfactory, and fully confirmed my first opinion that the Indian troops only required rest, and a little acclimatizing, to bring out all their fine inherent fighting qualities.

I saw the whole of the Indian Cavalry Corps, under Lieutenant-General Rimington, on a mounted parade soon after their arrival. They are a magnificent body of Cavalry, and will, I feel sure, give the best possible account of themselves when called upon.

In the meantime, at their own particular request, they have taken their turn in the trenches and performed most useful and valuable service.

THE CHAPLAINS.

XI. The Rt. Rev. Bishop Taylor Smith, C.V.O., D.D., Chaplain-General to the Forces, arrived at my Headquarters on 6th January, on a tour of inspection throughout the command.

The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster has also visited most of the Irish Regiments at the front and the principal centres on the line of communications.

In a quiet and unostentatious manner the chaplains of all denominations have worked with devotion and energy in their respective spheres.

The number with the forces in the field at the commencement of the war was comparatively small, but towards the end of last year the Rev. J. M. Simms, D.D., K.H.C., Principal Chaplain, assisted by his Secretary, the Rev. W. Drury, reorganized the branch, and placed the spiritual welfare of the soldier on a more satisfactory footing. It is hoped that the further increase of personnel may be found possible.

I cannot speak too highly of the devoted manner in which all chaplains, whether with the troops in the trenches or in attendance on the sick and wounded in casualty clearing stations and hospitals on the line of communications, have worked throughout the campaign.

THE MEDICAL SERVICE.

Since the commencement of hostilities the work of the Royal Army Medical Corps has been carried out with untiring zeal, skill and devotion. Whether at the front under conditions such as obtained during the fighting on the Aisne, when casualties were heavy and accommodation for their reception had to be improvised, or on the line of communications where an average of some 11,000 patients have been daily under treatment, the organization of the Medical Services has always

been equal to the demands made upon it.

The careful system of sanitation introduced into the Army has, with the assistance of other measures, kept the troops free from any epidemic, in support of which it is to be noticed that since the commencement of the war some 500 cases only of enteric have occurred.

The organization for the first time in war of Motor Ambulance Convoys is due to the initiative and organizing powers of Surgeon-General T. J. O'Donnell, D.S.O., ably assisted by Major P. Evans, Royal Army Medical Corps.

Two of these convoys, composed entirely of Red Cross Society personnel, have done excellent work under the superintendence of Regular Medical Officers.

Twelve Hospital Trains ply between the front and the various bases. I have visited several of the trains when halted in stations, and have found them conducted with great comfort and efficiency.

During the more recent phase of the campaign the creation of Rest Depots at the front has materially reduced the wastage of men to the line of communications.

Since the latter part of October, 1914, the whole of the medical arrangements have been in the hands of Surgeon-General Sir A. T. Sloggett, C.M.G., K.H.S., under whom Surgeon-General T. P. Woodhouse and Surgeon-General T. J. O'Donnell have been responsible for the organization on the line of communications and at the front respectively.

EFFICIENCY OF ENGINEERS.

XII. The exceptional and peculiar conditions brought about by the weather have caused large demands to be made upon the resources and skill of the Royal Engineers.

Every kind of expedient has had to be thought out and adopted to keep the lines of trenches and defence work effective.

The Royal Engineers have shown themselves as capable of overcoming the ravages caused by violent rain and floods as they have been throughout in neutralizing the effect of the enemy's artillery.

In this connection I wish particularly to mention the excellent services performed by my Chief Engineer, Brigadier-General G. H. Fowke, who has been indefatigable in supervising all such work. His ingenuity and skill have been most valuable in the local construction of the various expedients which experience has shown to be necessary in prolonged trench warfare.

XIII. I have no reason to modify in any material degree my views of the general

military situation, as expressed in my dispatch of November 20th, 1914.

XIV. I have once more gratefully to acknowledge the valuable help and support I have received throughout this period from General Foch, General d'Urbal, and General Maud'huy of the French Army.

I have the honour to be,
Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,
J. P. D. FRENCH,
Field-Marshal,
Commanding-in-Chief
The British Army in the Field.

APPENDIX II.
THE BATTLE OF THE 24TH OF JANUARY.

ADMIRAL BEATTY'S DISPATCH.

Admiralty, March 3, 1915.

The following dispatch has been received from Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty, K.C.B., M.V.O., D.S.O., commanding the First Battle-Cruiser Squadron, reporting the action in the North Sea on Sunday, the 24th of January, 1915:—

H.M.S. *Princess Royal*, February 2, 1915.

SIR,—

I have the honour to report that at daybreak on 24th January, 1915, the following vessels were patrolling in company.

The Battle Cruisers *Lion*, Captain Alfred E. M. Chatfield, C.V.O., flying my flag; *Princess Royal*, Captain Osmond de B. Brock, Aide-de-Camp; *Tiger*, Captain Henry B. Pelly, M.V.O.; *New Zealand*, Captain Lionel Halsey, C.M.G., Aide-de-Camp, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir Archibald Moore, K.C.B., C.V.O.; and *Indomitable*, Captain Francis W. Kennedy.

The Light Cruisers *Southampton*, flying the broad pennant of Commodore William E. Goodenough, M.V.O.; *Nottingham*, Captain Charles B. Miller; *Birmingham*, Captain Arthur A. M. Duff; and *Lowestoft*, Captain Theobald W. B. Kennedy, were disposed on my port beam.

Commodore (T) Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt, C.B., in *Arethusa*, *Aurora*, Captain Wilmot S. Nicholson, *Undaunted*, Captain Francis G. St. John, M.V.O., *Arethusa* and the Destroyer Flotillas were ahead.

At 7.25 a.m. the flash of guns was observed S.S.E. Shortly afterwards a report reached me from *Aurora* that she was engaged with enemy's ships. I immediately altered course to S.S.E., increased to 22 knots, and ordered the Light Cruisers and Flotillas to chase S.S.E., to get in touch and report movements of enemy.

This order was acted upon with great promptitude; indeed my wishes had already been forestalled by the respective Senior Officers, and reports almost immediately followed from *Southampton*, *Arethusa*, and *Aurora* as to the position and composition of the enemy, which consisted of 3 Battle Cruisers and *Blücher*, 6 Light Cruisers, and a number of Destroyers, steering N.W. The enemy had altered course to S.E. From now onwards the Light Cruisers maintained touch with the

enemy, and kept me fully informed as to their movements.

The Battle Cruisers worked up to full speed, steering to the southward. The wind at the time was N.E., light, with extreme visibility. At 7.30 a.m. the enemy were sighted on port bow steaming fast, steering approximately S.E., distant 14 miles.

Owing to the prompt reports received we had attained our position on the quarter of the enemy, and so altered course to S.E. parallel to them, and settled down to a long stern chase, gradually increasing our speed until we reached 28.5 knots. Great credit is due to the Engineer Staffs of *New Zealand* and *Indomitable* —these ships greatly exceeded their normal speed.

At 8.52 a.m., as we had closed to within 20,000 yards of the rear ship, the Battle Cruisers manœuvred to keep on a line of bearing so that guns would bear, and *Lion* fired a single shot, which fell short. The enemy at this time were in single line ahead, with Light Cruisers ahead and a large number of Destroyers on their starboard beam.

Single shots were fired at intervals to test the range, and at 9.9 a.m. *Lion* made her first hit on the *Blücher*, No. 4 in the line. The *Tiger* opened fire at 9.20 a.m. on the rear ship, the *Lion* shifted to No. 3 in the line, at 18,000 yards, this ship being hit by several salvos. The enemy returned our fire at 9.14 a.m. *Princess Royal*, on coming into range, opened fire on *Blücher*, the range of the leading ship being 17,500 yards, at 9.35 a.m. *New Zealand* was within range of *Blücher*, which had dropped somewhat astern, and opened fire on her. *Princess Royal* shifted to the third ship in the line, inflicting considerable damage on her.

Our flotilla cruisers and destroyers had gradually dropped from a position broad on our beam to our port quarter, so as not to foul our range with their smoke; but the enemy's destroyers threatening attack, the *Meteor* and M Division passed ahead of us, Captain the Hon. H. Meade, D.S.O., handling this Division with conspicuous ability.

About 9.45 a.m. the situation was as follows:—*Blücher*, the fourth in their line, already showed signs of having suffered severely from gun-fire; their leading ship and No. 3 were also on fire. *Lion* was engaging No. 1, *Princess Royal* No. 3, *New Zealand* No. 4, while the *Tiger*, who was second in our line, fired first at their No. 1, and when interfered with by smoke, at their No. 4.

The enemy's destroyers emitted vast columns of smoke to screen their battle cruisers, and under cover of this the latter now appeared to have altered course to the northward to increase their distance, and certainly the rear ships hauled out on the port quarter of their leader, thereby increasing their distance from our line. The battle cruisers, therefore, were ordered to form a line of bearing N.N.W., and

proceed at their utmost speed.

Their destroyers then showed evident signs of an attempt to attack. *Lion* and *Tiger* opened fire on them, and caused them to retire and resume their original course.

The Light Cruisers maintained an excellent position on the port quarter of the enemy's line, enabling them to observe and keep touch, or attack any vessel that might fall out of the line.

At 10.48 a.m., the *Blücher*, which had dropped considerably astern of the enemy's line, hauled out to port, steering north with a heavy list, on fire, and apparently in a defeated condition. I consequently ordered *Indomitable* to attack enemy breaking northward.

At 10.54 a.m. submarines were reported on the starboard bow, and I personally observed the wash of a periscope two points on our starboard bow. I immediately turned to port.

At 11.3 a.m. an injury to the *Lion* being reported as incapable of immediate repair, I directed *Lion* to shape course N.W. At 11.20 a.m. I called the *Attack* alongside, shifting my flag to her at about 11.35 a.m. I proceeded at utmost speed to rejoin the Squadron, and met them at noon retiring N.N.W.

I boarded and hoisted my flag in *Princess Royal* at about 12.20 p.m., when Captain Brock acquainted me of what had occurred since the *Lion* fell out of the line —namely, that *Blücher* had been sunk and that the enemy Battle Cruisers had continued their course to the eastward in a considerably damaged condition. He also informed me that a Zeppelin and a seaplane had endeavoured to drop bombs on the vessels which went to the rescue of the survivors of *Blücher*.

The good seamanship of Lieut.-Commander Cyril Callaghan, H.M.S. *Attack*, in placing his vessel alongside the *Lion* and subsequently the *Princess Royal*, enabled the transfer of flag to be made in the shortest possible time.

At 2 p.m. I closed *Lion* and received a report that the *starboard* engine was giving trouble owing to priming, and at 3.38 p.m. I ordered *Indomitable* to take her in tow, which was accomplished by 5 p.m.

The greatest credit is due to the Captains of *Indomitable* and *Lion* for the seamanlike manner in which the *Lion* was taken in tow under difficult circumstances.

The excellent steaming of the ships engaged in the operation was a conspicuous feature.

I attach an appendix giving the names of various officers and men who specially distinguished themselves.

Where all did well it is difficult to single out Officers and Men for special

mention, and as *Lion* and *Tiger* were the only ships hit by the enemy, the majority of those I mention belong to those ships.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your Obedient Servant,
(Signed) DAVID BEATTY,
Vice-Admiral.

APPENDIX III.
DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR AT SEA.

I.

On December 28, 1914, the United States Government addressed a Note to Britain on the treatment of American commerce by the British Fleet. On January 7, 1915, Sir Edward Grey addressed to the American Ambassador in London a provisional reply. The complete British Note was issued on 10th February, and is here reprinted:—

SIR EDWARD GREY TO THE HON. W. PAGE.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 10, 1915*.

SIR,

Your Excellency has already received the preliminary answer, which I handed to you on the 7th January, in reply to your note of the 28th December on the subject of the seizures and detentions of American cargoes destined for neutral European ports.

Since that date I have had further opportunity of examining into the trade statistics of the United States as embodied in the Customs returns, in order to see whether the belligerent action of Great Britain has been in any way the cause of the trade depression which your Excellency describes as existing in the United States, and also whether the seizures of vessels or cargoes which have been made by the British Navy have inflicted any loss on American owners for which our existing machinery provides no means of redress. In setting out the results of my investigation I think it well to take the opportunity of giving a general review of the methods employed by his Majesty's Government to intercept contraband trade with the enemy, of their consistency with the admitted right of a belligerent to intercept such trade, and also of the extent to which they have endeavoured to meet the representations and complaints from time to time addressed to them on behalf of the United States Government.

Towards the close of your note of the 28th December your

Excellency described the situation produced by the action of Great Britain as a pitiful one to the commercial interests of the United States, and said that many of the great industries of the country were suffering because their products were denied long-established markets in neutral European countries contiguous to the nations at war.

It is unfortunately true that in these days, when trade and finance are cosmopolitan, any war—particularly a war of any magnitude—must result in a grievous dislocation of commerce, including that of the nations which take no part in the war. Your Excellency will realize that in this tremendous struggle, for the outbreak of which Great Britain is in no way responsible, it is impossible for the trade of any country to escape all injury and loss, but for such his Majesty's Government are not to blame.

INTERFERENCE WITH TRADE.

I do not understand the paragraph which I have quoted from your Excellency's note as referring to these indirect consequences of the state of war, but to the more proximate and direct effect of our belligerent action in dealing with neutral ships and cargoes on the high seas. Such action has been limited to vessels on their way to enemy ports or ports in neutral countries adjacent to the theatre of war, because it is only through such ports that the enemy introduces the supplies which he requires for carrying on the war.

In my earlier note I set out the number of ships which had sailed from the United States for Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Italy, and I there stated that only eight of the 773 had been placed in the Prize Court, and that only 45 had been temporarily detained to enable particular consignments of cargo to be discharged for the purpose of Prize Court proceedings. To measure the effect of such naval action it is necessary to take into consideration the general statistics of the export trade of the United States during the months preceding the outbreak of war and those since the outbreak.

Taking the figures in millions of dollars, the exports of merchandise from the United States for the seven months of January to July, 1914, inclusive, were 1,201, as compared with 1,327 in the corresponding months of 1913, a drop of 126 millions of dollars.

For the months of August, September, October, and November, that

is to say, for the four months of the war preceding the delivery of your Excellency's note, the figures of the exports of merchandise were (again in millions of dollars) 667, as compared with 923 in the corresponding months of 1913, a drop of 256 millions of dollars.

If, however, the single article of cotton be eliminated from the comparison, the figures show a very different result. Thus the exports of all articles of merchandise other than cotton from the United States during the first seven months of 1914 were 966 millions of dollars, as against 1,127 millions in 1913, a drop of 161 millions of dollars, or 14½ per cent. On the other hand, the exports of the same articles during the months August to November amounted to 608 millions of dollars as compared with 630 millions in 1913, a drop of only 22 millions, or less than 4 per cent.

DECREASE IN COTTON EXPORTS.

It is therefore clear that, if cotton be excluded, the effect of the war has been not to increase but practically to arrest the decline of American exports which was in progress earlier in the year. In fact, any decrease in American exports which is attributable to the war is essentially due to cotton. Cotton is an article which cannot possibly have been affected by the exercise of our belligerent rights, for, as your Excellency is aware, it has not been declared by his Majesty's Government to be contraband of war, and the rules under which we are at present conducting our belligerent operations give us no power in the absence of a blockade to seize or interfere with it when on its way to a belligerent country in neutral ships. Consequently no cotton has been touched.

Into the causes of the decrease in the exports of cotton I do not feel that there is any need for me to enter, because, whatever may have been the cause, it is not to be found in the exercise of the belligerent rights of visit, search, and capture, or in our general right when at war to intercept the contraband trade of our enemy. Imports of cotton to the United Kingdom fell as heavily as those to other countries. No place felt the outbreak of war more acutely than the cotton districts of Lancashire, where for a time an immense number of spindles were idle. Though this condition has now to a large extent passed away, the consumption of the raw material in Great Britain was temporarily much diminished. The same

is no doubt true of France.

The general result is to show convincingly that the naval operations of Great Britain are not the cause of any diminution in the volume of American exports, and that if the commerce of the United States is in the unfavourable condition which your Excellency describes, the cause ought in fairness to be sought elsewhere than in the activities of his Majesty's naval forces.

I may add that the circular issued by the Department of Commerce at Washington on the 23rd January admits a marked improvement in the foreign trade of the United States which we have noted with great satisfaction. The first paragraph of the circular is worth quoting verbatim:—

> A marked improvement in our foreign trade is indicated by the latest reports issued by the Department of Commerce through its Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, sales of foodstuffs and certain lines of manufactures having been unusually large in November, the latest period for which detailed information is at hand. In that month exports aggregated 206,000,000 dollars, or double the total for August last, when, by reason of the outbreak of war, our foreign trade fell to the lowest level reached in many years. In December there was further improvement, the month's exports being valued at 246,000,000 dollars, compared with 233,000,000 in December 1913, and within 4,000,000 of the high record established in December 1912.

A FIVE MONTHS' REVIEW.

A better view of the situation is obtained by looking at the figures month by month. The exports of merchandise for the last five months have been (in millions of dollars):—

August	110
September	156
October	194
November	205
December	246

The outbreak of war produced in the United States, as it did in all neutral countries, an acute but temporary disturbance of trade. Since that time there seems to have been a steady recovery, for to-day the exports from the United States stand at a higher figure than on the same date last year.

Before passing away from the statistics of trade, and in order to demonstrate still more clearly if necessary that the naval operations of Great Britain and her Allies have had no detrimental effect on the volume of trade between the United States and neutral countries, it is worth while to analyse the figures of the exports to Europe since the outbreak of hostilities. For this purpose the European countries ought to be grouped under three heads:—Great Britain and those fighting with her, neutral countries, and enemy countries. It is, however, impossible for me to group the countries in this way satisfactorily, as the figures relating to the export trade of the United States with each country have not yet been published. In the preliminary statement of the export trade of the United States with foreign countries only principal countries are shown, and various countries which are tabulated separately in the more detailed monthly summary of commerce and finance are omitted. Those omitted include not only the Scandinavian countries, the exports to which are of peculiar importance in dealing with this question, but also Austria.

So far as it is possible to distribute the figures under the headings which I have indicated above (all the figures being given in thousands of dollars), the results are as follows:—

> Total exports to Europe from the 1st August to the 30th November, 413,995, as against 597,342 in 1913. Of these, Great Britain and her Allies took 288,312, as against 316,805 in 1913. Germany and Belgium took 1,881, as against 177,136 in 1913; whereas neutral countries (among which Austria-Hungary is unavoidably included) took 123,802, as against 103,401 in 1913.

The general complaint in your Excellency's note was that the action of Great Britain was affecting adversely the trade of the United States with neutral countries. The naval operations of Great Britain certainly do not interfere with commerce from the United States on its way to the United

Kingdom and the Allied countries, and yet the exports to Great Britain and her Allies during those four months diminished to the extent of over 28,000,000 dollars, whereas those to neutral countries and Austria increased by over 20,000,000 dollars.

The inference may fairly be drawn from these figures, all of which are taken from the official returns published by the United States Government, that not only has the trade of the United States with the neutral countries in Europe been maintained as compared with previous years, but also that a substantial part of this trade was, in fact, trade intended for the enemy countries going through neutral ports by routes to which it was previously unaccustomed.

One of the many inconveniences to which this great war is exposing the commerce of all neutral countries is undoubtedly the serious shortage in shipping available for ocean transport, and the consequential result of excessive freights.

DETENTION OF NEUTRAL SHIPS.

It cannot fairly be said that this shortage is caused by Great Britain's interference with neutral ships. At the present time there are only seven neutral vessels awaiting adjudication in the Prize Courts in this country, and three in those in the British Dominions. As your Excellency is aware, I have already instructed our Ambassador at Washington to remind the parties who are interested in these vessels that it is open to them to apply to the Court for the release of these ships on bail, and if an application of this sort is made by them it is not likely to be opposed by the Crown. There is therefore no reason why such an application should not be favourably entertained by the Court, and, if acceded to, all these vessels will again be available for the carriage of commerce. Only one neutral vessel is now detained in this country in addition to those awaiting adjudication in the Prize Court.

Every effort has been made in cases in which it has been found necessary to institute proceedings against portions of the cargo to secure the speedy discharge of the cargo and the release of the ship, so as to enable it to resume work. Great Britain is suffering from the shortage of shipping and the rise in freights as acutely as, if not more than, other nations, and his Majesty's Government have taken every step that they

could consistently with their belligerent interests to increase the tonnage available for the transport of sea-borne commerce. The enemy ships which have been condemned in the Prize Courts in this country are being sold as rapidly as possible in order that they may become available for use; and those which have been condemned in the Prize Courts oversea are being brought to this country in order that they may be disposed of here, and again placed in active employment.

The difficulties have been accentuated by the unforeseen consequences of the convention which was signed at The Hague in 1907 relative to the status of enemy merchant vessels at the outbreak of war. This convention was a well-intentioned effort to diminish the losses which war must impose upon innocent persons, and provided that enemy merchant ships seized by a belligerent in whose ports they lay at the outbreak of war should not be condemned, but should merely be detained for the period of the war, unless they were liberated in the days of grace. We could come to no arrangement with the German Government for the reciprocal grant of days of grace, and the German merchant vessels lying in British ports when the war broke out have therefore been sentenced to detention in lieu of condemnation. The normal result would have been still further to reduce the volume of shipping available for the commerce of the world. To ease the situation, however, his Majesty's Government are resorting to the power of requisitioning which is given by the convention, so that these ships may again be placed in active service.

DESTRUCTION BY MINES.

Your Excellency will see therefore that his Majesty's Government are doing all in their power to increase the volume of shipping available. I hope it will be realized that the detention of neutral ships by his Majesty's Government with a view to the capture of contraband trade on its way to the enemy has not contributed nearly so much to the shortage of shipping as has the destruction of neutral vessels by submarine mines indiscriminately laid by the enemy on the high seas, many miles from the coast, in the track of merchant vessels. Up till now twenty-five neutral vessels have been reported as destroyed by mines on the high seas; quite apart from all questions of the breach of treaties and the destruction of life, there is far more reason for protest on the score of belligerent

interference with innocent neutral trade through the mines scattered by the enemy than through the British exercise of the right of seizing contraband.

I trust that what I have said above will be sufficient to convince your Excellency's Government that the complaints that the naval policy of Great Britain has interfered with the shipments of American products to long-established markets in neutral European countries is founded on a misconception.

In justice to the peoples of both countries, I feel that this opportunity should be taken to explain the lines on which his Majesty's Government have been acting hitherto, so as to show that the line they have followed is in no way inconsistent with the general fundamental principle of international law, and to indicate the care with which they have endeavoured to meet the representations which have been made by the United States Government from time to time during the war on these questions.

No one in these days will dispute the general proposition that a belligerent is entitled to capture contraband goods on their way to the enemy; that right has now become consecrated by long usage and general acquiescence. Though the right is ancient, the means of exercising it alter and develop with the changes in the methods and machinery of commerce. A century ago the difficulties of land transport rendered it impracticable for the belligerent to obtain supplies of sea-borne goods through a neighbouring neutral country. Consequently the belligerent actions of his opponents neither required nor justified any interference with shipments on their way to a neutral port. This principle was recognized and acted on in the decisions in which Lord Stowell laid down the lines on which captures of such goods should be dealt with.

The advent of steam power has rendered it as easy for a belligerent to supply himself through the ports of a neutral contiguous country as through his own, and has therefore rendered it impossible for his opponent to refrain from interfering with commerce intended for the enemy merely because it is on its way to a neutral port.

AMERICAN USAGE RECALLED.

No better instance of the necessity of countering new devices for dispatching contraband goods to an enemy by new methods of applying

the fundamental principle of the right to capture such contraband can be given than the steps which the Government of the United States found it necessary to take during the American Civil War. It was at that time that the doctrine of continuous voyage was first applied to the capture of contraband, that is to say, it was then for the first time that a belligerent found himself obliged to capture contraband goods on their way to the enemy, even though at the time of capture they were *en route* for a neutral port from which they were intended subsequently to continue their journey. The policy then followed by the United States Government was not inconsistent with the general principles already sanctioned by international law, and met with no protest from his Majesty's Government, though it was upon British cargoes and upon British ships that the losses and the inconvenience due to this new development of the application of the old rule of international law principally fell. The criticisms which have been directed against the steps then taken by the United States came, and come, from those who saw in the methods employed in Napoleonic times for the prevention of contraband a limitation upon the right itself, and failed to see that in Napoleonic times goods on their way to a neutral port were immune from capture, not because the immediate destination conferred a privilege, but because capture under such circumstances was unnecessary.

The facilities which the introduction of steamers and railways have given to a belligerent to introduce contraband goods through neutral ports have imposed upon his opponent the additional difficulty, when endeavouring to intercept such trade, of distinguishing between the goods which are really destined for the commerce of that neutral country and the goods which are on their way to the enemy. It is one of the many difficulties with which the United States Government found themselves confronted in the days of the Civil War, and I cannot do better than quote the words which Mr. Seward, who was then Secretary of State, used in the course of the diplomatic discussion arising out of the capture of some goods on their way to Matamoros which were believed to be for the insurgents:—

> Neutrals engaged in honest trade with Matamoros must expect to experience inconvenience from the existing blockade of Brownsville and the adjacent coast of Texas. While this

Government unfeignedly regrets this inconvenience, it cannot relinquish any of its belligerent rights to favour contraband trade with insurgent territory. By insisting upon those rights, however, it is sure that that necessity for their exercise at all, which must be deplored by every friendly commercial Power, will the more speedily be terminated.

BELLIGERENTS' DIFFICULTIES.

The opportunities now enjoyed by a belligerent for obtaining supplies through neutral ports are far greater than they were fifty years ago, and the geographical conditions of the present struggle lend additional assistance to the enemy in carrying out such importation. We are faced with the problem of intercepting such supplies when arranged with all the advantages that flow from elaborate organization and unstinted expenditure. If our belligerent rights are to be maintained, it is of the first importance for us to distinguish between what is really *bona fide* trade intended for the neutral country concerned and the trade intended for the enemy country. Every effort is made by organizers of this trade to conceal the true destination, and if the innocent neutral trade is to be distinguished from the enemy trade it is essential that his Majesty's Government should be entitled to make, and should make, careful inquiry with regard to the destination of particular shipments of goods even at the risk of some slight delay to the parties interested. If such inquiries were not made, either the exercise of our belligerent rights would have to be abandoned, tending to the prolongation of this war and the increase of the loss and suffering which it is entailing upon the whole world, or else it would be necessary to indulge in indiscriminate captures of neutral goods and their detention throughout all the period of the resulting Prize Court proceedings. Under the system now adopted it has been found possible to release without delay, and consequently without appreciable loss to the parties interested, all the goods of which the destination is shown as the result of the inquiries to be innocent.

It may well be that the system of making such inquiries is to a certain extent a new introduction, in that it has been practised to a far greater extent than in previous wars; but if it is correctly described as a new departure, it is a departure which is wholly to the advantage of neutrals,

and which has been made for the purpose of relieving them so far as possible from loss and inconvenience.

A CONTESTED PRINCIPLE.

There was a passage in a note which the State Department addressed to the British Ambassador at Washington on 7th November to which I think it may be well to refer:—

> In the opinion of this Government, the belligerent right of visit and search requires that the search should be made on the high seas at the time of the visit, and that the conclusion of the search should rest upon the evidence found on the ship under investigation, and not upon circumstances ascertained from external sources.

The principle here enunciated appears to me to be inconsistent with the practice in these matters of the United States Government, as well as of the British Government. It certainly was not the rule upon which the United States Government acted either during the Civil War or during the Spanish-American War, nor has it ever been the practice of the British Government, nor, so far as I am aware, of any other Government which has had to carry on a great naval war; as a principle I think it is impossible in modern times. The necessity for giving the belligerent captor full liberty to establish by all the evidence at his disposal the enemy destination with which the goods were shipped was recognized in all the leading decisions in the Prize Courts of the United States during the Civil War.

No clearer instance could be given than the reporter's statement of the case of the *Bermuda* (3 Wallace, 514):—

> The final destination of the cargo in this particular voyage was left so skilfully open . . . that it was not quite easy to prove, with that certainty which American Courts require, the intention which it seemed plain must have really existed. Thus to prove it required that truth should be collated from a variety of sources, darkened and disguised; from others opened as the cause advanced, and by accident only; from coincidences undesigned, and facts that were circumstantial. Collocations

and comparisons, in short, brought largely their collective force in aid of evidence that was more direct.

It is not impossible that the course of the present struggle will show the necessity for belligerent action to be taken in various ways which may at first sight be regarded as a departure from old practice. In my note of the 7th January, I dealt at some length with the question of the necessity of taking vessels into port for the purposes of carrying out an effective search, where search was necessary; to that subject I feel that I need not again recur.

DEFENCE OF BRITISH PRACTICE.

The growth in the size of steamships necessitates in many cases that the vessel should go into calm water, in order that even the right of visit, as apart from the right of search, should be exercised. In modern times a steamer is capable of pursuing her voyage irrespective of the conditions of the weather. Many of the neutral merchantmen which our naval officers are called upon to visit at sea are encountered by our cruisers in places and under conditions which render the launching of a boat impossible. The conditions during winter in the North Atlantic frequently render it impracticable for days together for a naval officer to board a vessel on her way to Scandinavian countries. If a belligerent is to be denied the right of taking a neutral merchantman, met with under such conditions, into calm water in order that the visiting officer may go aboard, the right of visit and of search would become a nullity.

The present conflict is not the first in which the necessity has arisen; as long ago as the Civil War the United States found it necessary to take vessels to United States ports in order to determine whether the circumstances justified their detention.

The same need arose during the Russo-Japanese War, and also during the second Balkan War, when it sometimes happened that British vessels were made to deviate from their course and follow the cruisers to some spot where the right of visit and of search could be more conveniently carried out. In both cases this exercise of belligerent rights, although questioned at first by his Majesty's Government, was ultimately acquiesced in.

No Power in these days can afford during a great war to forgo the

exercise of the right of visit and search. Vessels which are apparently harmless merchantmen can be used for carrying and laying mines, and even fitted to discharge torpedoes. Supplies for submarines can without difficulty be concealed under other cargo. The only protection against these risks is to visit and search thoroughly every vessel appearing in the zone of operations, and if the circumstances are such as to render it impossible to carry it out at the spot where the vessel was met with, the only practicable course is to take the ship to some more convenient locality for the purpose. To do so is not to be looked upon as a new belligerent right, but as an adaptation of the existing right to the modern conditions of commerce. Like all belligerent rights it must be exercised with due regard for neutral interests, and it would be unreasonable to expect a neutral vessel to make long deviations from her course for this purpose. It is for this reason that we have done all we can to encourage neutral merchantmen, on their way to ports contiguous to the enemy country, to visit some British port lying on their line of route in order that the necessary examination of the ship's papers, and, if required, of the cargo, can be made under conditions of convenience to the ship herself. The alternative would be to keep a vessel which the naval officers desired to board waiting, it might be for days together, until the weather conditions enabled the visit to be carried out at sea.

REDRESS OF NEUTRALS' GRIEVANCES.

No war has yet been waged in which neutral individuals have not occasionally suffered from unjustified belligerent action; no neutral nation has experienced this fact more frequently in the past than Great Britain. The only method by which it is possible to harmonize belligerent action with the rights of neutrals is for the belligerent nation to provide some adequate machinery by which in any such case the facts can be investigated and appropriate redress can be obtained by the neutral individual. In this country such machinery is provided by the powers which are given to the Prize Court to deal not only with captures, but also with claims for compensation. Order V., Rule 2, of the British Prize Court Rules provides that where a ship has been captured as prize, but has been subsequently released by the captors, or has by loss, destruction, or otherwise ceased to be detained by them, without proceedings for

condemnation having been taken, any person interested in the ship (which by Order I., Rule 2, includes goods) wishing to make a claim for costs and damages in respect thereof shall issue a writ as provided by Order II. A writ so issued will initiate a proceeding, which will follow its ordinary course in the Prize Court.

This rule gives the Prize Court ample jurisdiction to deal with any claim for compensation by a neutral arising from the interference with a ship or goods by our naval forces. The best evidence that can be given of the discrimination and the moderation with which our naval officers have carried out their duties is to be found in the fact that up to this time no proceedings for the recovery of compensation have been initiated under the rule which I have quoted.

RECOURSE TO DIPLOMACY DEPRECATED.

It is the common experience of every war that neutrals whose attempts to engage in suspicious trading are frustrated by a belligerent are wont to have recourse to their Government to urge that diplomatic remonstrances should be made on their behalf, and that redress should be obtained for them in this way. When an effective mode of redress is open to them in the Courts of a civilized country by which they can obtain adequate satisfaction for any invasion of their rights which is contrary to the law of nations, the only course which is consistent with sound principle is that they should be referred to that mode of redress, and that no diplomatic action should be taken until their legal remedies have been exhausted, and they are in a position to show *prima facie* denial of justice.

The course adopted by his Majesty's Government during the American Civil War was in strict accordance with this principle. In spite of remonstrances from many quarters, they placed full reliance on the American Prize Courts to grant redress to the parties interested in cases of alleged wrongful capture by American ships of war, and put forward no claims until the opportunities for redress in those Courts had been exhausted. The same course was adopted in the Spanish-American War, when all British subjects who complained of captures or detentions of their ships were referred to the Prize Courts for relief.

Before leaving this subject may I remind your Excellency of the fact

that at your request you are now supplied immediately by this Department with particulars of every ship under American colours which is detained, and of every shipment of cargo in which an American citizen appears to be the party interested? Not only is the fact of detention notified to your Excellency, but so far as is practicable the grounds upon which the vessel or cargo has been detained are also communicated to you; a concession which enables any United States citizen to take steps at once to protect his interests.

His Majesty's Government have also done all that lies in their power to ensure rapid action when ships are reported in British ports. They realize that the ship and cargo owners may reasonably expect an immediate decision to be taken as to whether the ship may be allowed to proceed, and whether her cargo or any part of it must be discharged and put into the Prize Court. Realizing that the ordinary methods of inter-Departmental correspondence might cause delays which could be obviated by another method of procedure, they established several months ago a special Committee, on which all the Departments concerned are represented. This Committee sits daily, and is provided with a special clerical staff. As soon as a ship reaches port full particulars are telegraphed to London, and the case is dealt with at the next meeting of the Committee, immediate steps being taken to carry out the action decided upon. By the adoption of this procedure it has been found possible to reduce to a minimum the delays to which neutral shipping is exposed by the exercise of belligerent rights, and by the necessity, imposed by modern conditions, of examining with care the destination of contraband articles.

CONDITIONAL CONTRABAND.

Particular attention is directed in your Excellency's Note to the policy we are pursuing with regard to conditional contraband, especially foodstuffs, and it is there stated that a number of American cargoes have been seized without, so far as your Excellency's Government are informed, our being in possession of facts which warranted a reasonable belief that the shipments had in reality a belligerent destination, and in spite of the presumption of innocent use due to their being destined to neutral territory. The Note does not specify any particular seizures as those which

formed the basis of this complaint, and I am therefore not aware whether the passage refers to cargoes which were detained before or since the Order in Council of the 29th October was issued.

Your Excellency will, no doubt, remember that soon after the outbreak of war an Order of his Majesty in Council was issued under which no distinction was drawn in the application of the doctrine of continuous voyage between absolute contraband and conditional contraband, and which also imposed upon the neutral owner of contraband somewhat drastic conditions as to the burden of proof of the guilt or innocence of the shipment.

The principle that the burden of proof should always be imposed upon the captor has usually been admitted as a theory. In practice, however, it has almost always been otherwise, and any student of the Prize Court decisions of the past or even of modern wars will find that goods seldom escape condemnation unless their owner was in a position to prove that their destination was innocent. An attempt was made some few years ago, in the unratified Declaration of London, to formulate some definite rules upon this subject, but time alone can show whether the rules there laid down will stand the test of modern warfare.

RELAXED RULES.

The rules which his Majesty's Government published in the Order in Council of the 20th August, 1914, were criticized by the United States Government as contrary to the generally recognized principles of international law, and as inflicting unnecessary hardship upon neutral commerce, and your Excellency will remember the prolonged discussions which took place between us throughout the month of October with a view to finding some new formulæ which should enable us to restrict supplies to the enemy forces, and to prevent the supply to the enemy of materials essential for the making of munitions of war, while inflicting the minimum of injury and interference with neutral commerce. It was with this object that the Order in Council of the 29th October was issued, under the provisions of which a far greater measure of immunity is conferred upon neutral commerce. In that Order the principle of non-interference with conditional contraband on its way to a neutral port is in large measure admitted; only in three cases is the right to seize maintained, and

in all those cases the opportunity is given to the claimant of the goods to establish their innocence.

Two of those cases are where the ship's papers afford no information as to the person for whom the goods are intended. It is only reasonable that a belligerent should be entitled to regard as suspicious cases where the shippers of the goods do not choose to disclose the name of the individual who is to receive them. The third case is that of goods addressed to a person in the enemy territory. In the peculiar circumstances of the present struggle, where the forces of the enemy comprise so large a proportion of the population, and where there is so little evidence of shipments on private as distinguished from Government account, it is most reasonable that the burden of proof should rest upon the claimant.

QUESTION OF FOODSTUFFS.

The most difficult questions in connexion with conditional contraband arise with reference to the shipment of foodstuffs. No country has maintained more stoutly than Great Britain in modern times the principle that a belligerent should abstain from interference with the foodstuffs intended for the civil population. The circumstances of the present struggle are causing his Majesty's Government some anxiety as to whether the existing rules with regard to conditional contraband, framed as they were with the object of protecting so far as possible the supplies which were intended for the civil population, are effective for the purpose, or suitable to the conditions present. The principle which I have indicated above is one which his Majesty's Government have constantly had to uphold against the opposition of continental Powers. In the absence of some certainty that the rule would be respected by both parties to this conflict, we feel great doubt whether it should be regarded as an established principle of international law.

Your Excellency will, no doubt, remember that in 1885, at the time when his Majesty's Government were discussing with the French Government this question of the right to declare foodstuffs not intended for the military forces to be contraband, and when public attention had been drawn to the matter, the Kiel Chamber of Commerce applied to the German Government for a statement of the latter's views on the subject.

Prince Bismarck's answer was as follows:—

> In answer to their representation of the 1st instant, I reply to the Chamber of Commerce that any disadvantage our commercial and carrying interests may suffer by the treatment of rice as contraband of war does not justify our opposing a measure which it has been thought fit to take in carrying on a foreign war. Every war is a calamity which entails evil consequences not only on the combatants, but also on neutrals. These evils may easily be increased by the interference of a neutral Power with the way in which a third carries on the war, to the disadvantage of the subjects of the interfering Power, and by this means German commerce might be weighted with far heavier losses than a transitory prohibition of the rice trade in Chinese waters. *The measure in question has for its object the shortening of the war by increasing the difficulties of the enemy, and is a justifiable step in war if impartially enforced against all neutral ships.*

His Majesty's Government are disposed to think that the same view is still maintained by the German Government.

GERMAN CONTROL OF FOOD.

Another circumstance which is now coming to light is that an elaborate machinery has been organized by the enemy for the supply of foodstuffs for the use of the German army from overseas. Under these circumstances it would be absurd to give any definite pledge that in cases where the supplies can be proved to be for the use of the enemy forces they should be given complete immunity by the simple expedient of dispatching them to an agent in a neutral port.

The reason for drawing a distinction between foodstuffs intended for the civil population and those for the armed forces or enemy Government disappears when the distinction between the civil population and the armed forces itself disappears. In any country in which there exists such a tremendous organization for war as now obtains in Germany there is no clear division between those whom the Government is responsible for feeding and those whom it is not. Experience shows that the power to

requisition will be used to the fullest extent in order to make sure that the wants of the military are supplied, and however much goods may be imported for civil use it is by the military that they will be consumed if military exigencies require it, especially now that the German Government have taken control of all the foodstuffs in the country.

EXPORTS TO NEUTRALS.

I do not wish to overburden this note with statistics, but in proof of my statement as to the unprecedented extent to which supplies are reaching neutral ports, I should like to instance the figures of the exports of certain meat products to Denmark during the months of September and October. Denmark is a country which in normal times imports a certain quantity of such products, but exports still more. In 1913, during the above two months, the United States exports of lard to Denmark were *nil*, as compared with 22,652,598 lb. in the same two months of 1914. The corresponding figures with regard to bacon were: 1913, *nil*; 1914, 1,022,195 lb.; canned beef, 1913, *nil*; 1914, 151,200 lb.; pickled and cured beef, 1913, 42,901 lb.; 1914, 156,143 lb.; pickled pork, 1913, *nil*; 1914, 812,872 lb.

In the same two months the United States exported to Denmark 280,176 gallons of mineral lubricating oil in 1914, as compared with 179,252 in 1913; to Norway, 335,468 gallons in 1914, as against 151,179 gallons in 1913; to Sweden, 896,193 gallons in 1914, as against 385,476 gallons in 1913.

I have already mentioned the framing of the Order in Council of the 29th October, and the transmission to your Excellency of particulars of ships and cargoes seized as instances of the efforts which we have made throughout the course of this war to meet all reasonable complaints made on behalf of American citizens, and in my note of the 7th January I alluded to the decision of our Prize Court in the case of the *Miramichi*, as evidencing the liberal principles adopted towards neutral commerce.

RELEASE OF CARGOES.

I should also like to refer to the steps which we took at the beginning of the war to ensure the speedy release of cargo claimed by neutrals on board enemy ships which were captured or detained at the outbreak of

war. Under our Prize Court rules release of such goods can be obtained without the necessity of entering a claim in the Prize Court if the documents of title are produced to the officer representing his Majesty's Government, and the title to the goods is established to his satisfaction. It was shortly found, however, that this procedure did not provide for the case where the available evidence was so scanty that the officer representing the Crown was not justified in consenting to a release. In order, therefore, to ameliorate the situation we established a special Committee, with full powers to authorize the release of goods without insisting on full evidence of title being produced. This Committee dealt with the utmost expedition with a large number of claims. In the great majority of cases the goods claimed were released at once. In addition to the cases dealt with by this Committee a very large amount of cargo was released at once by the Procurator-General on production of documents. Claimants therefore obtained their goods without the necessity of applying to the Prize Court and of incurring the expense involved in retaining lawyers, and without the risk, which was in some cases a considerable one, of the goods being eventually held to be enemy property and condemned. We have reason to know that our action in this matter was highly appreciated by many American citizens.

TRANSFER TO NEUTRAL FLAG.

Another instance of the efforts which his Majesty's Government have made to deal as leniently as possible with neutral interests may be found in the policy which we have followed with regard to the transfer to a neutral flag of enemy ships belonging to companies which were incorporated in the enemy country, but all of whose shareholders were neutral. The rules applied by the British and by the American Prize Courts have always treated the flag as conclusive in favour of the captors in spite of neutral proprietary interests (see the case of the *Pedro*, 175 U.S. 354). In several cases, however, we have consented to waive our belligerent right to treat as enemy vessels ships belonging to companies incorporated in Germany which were subsidiary to and owned by American corporations. The only condition which we have imposed is that these vessels should take no further part in trade with the enemy country.

CONSIDERATION OF NEUTRALS.

I have given these indications of the policy which we have followed, because I cannot help feeling that if the facts were more fully known as to the efforts which we have made to avoid inflicting any avoidable injury on neutral interests, many of the complaints which have been received by the Administration in Washington, and which led to the protest which your Excellency handed to me on the 29th December, would never have been made. My hope is that when the facts which I have set out above are realized, and when it is seen that our naval operations have not diminished trade with neutral countries, and that the lines on which we have acted are consistent with the fundamental principles of international law, it will be apparent to the Government and people of the United States that his Majesty's Government have hitherto endeavoured to exercise their belligerent rights with every possible consideration for the interests of neutrals.

It will still be our endeavour to avoid injury and loss to neutrals, but the announcement by the German Government of their intention to sink merchant vessels and their cargoes without verification of their nationality or character, and without making any provision for the safety of non-combatant crews or giving them a chance of saving their lives, has made it necessary for his Majesty's Government to consider what measures they should adopt to protect their interests. It is impossible for one belligerent to depart from rules and precedents and for the other to remain bound by them.

I have, etc.,
E. Grey.

II.

The Declaration by the British Government, which Sir Edward Grey adumbrated in the above dispatch, is quoted on page 163 of this volume. On 9th March the American Ambassador raised various questions concerning this Declaration.

Mr. Page to Sir Edward Grey.

Received March 9.

With regard to the recent communications received by my Government from His Britannic Majesty's Government and that of France

concerning restraints upon commerce with Germany, I have received instructions to address to you certain inquiries with a view to a more complete elucidation of the situation which has arisen from the action contemplated by the Governments of the two allied countries.

My Government finds itself in some difficulty in determining its attitude towards the British and French declarations of intended retaliation upon commerce with Germany by reason of the nature of the proposed measures in their relation to the commerce of neutral countries.

While it appears that the intention is to interfere with and take into custody all ships, both outgoing and incoming, engaged in trade with Germany, which, in effect, seems to constitute a blockade of German ports, there is no assertion of the rule of blockade permitting the condemnation, regardless of the character of its cargo, of any ship which attempts to enter or leave a German port. In the language of the declaration—"The British and French Governments will therefore hold themselves free to detain and take into port ships carrying goods of presumed enemy destination, ownership, or origin. It is not intended to confiscate such vessels or cargoes unless they would otherwise be liable to condemnation."

The former sentence above quoted claims a right pertaining only to a state of blockade, while the latter sentence proposes a treatment of ships and cargoes as if no blockade existed. The two together present a proposed course of action previously unknown to international law, and neutrals have in consequence no standard by which to measure their rights or to avoid danger to their ships and cargoes. It seems to the Government of the United States that the paradoxical situation thus created should be altered, and that the declaring Powers ought to make a definite assertion as to whether they rely upon the rules governing a blockade, or the rules applicable when no blockade exists.

The declaration presents other perplexities. The latter of the two sentences above quoted indicates that the rules of contraband are to be applied to cargoes detained. The existing rule covering non-contraband articles carried in neutral bottoms is that the cargoes be released and the ships allowed to proceed. This rule cannot, under the other sentence quoted, be applied as to destination, and the question then arises as to what is to be done with a cargo of non-contraband goods which might be detained under the declaration. The same question may be asked as to

cargoes of conditional contraband.

The foregoing comments apply to cargoes destined for German ports. Cargoes issuing from them present another problem under the terms of the declaration.

Pursuant to the rules governing enemy exports, the only goods subject to seizure and condemnation are those owned by enemy subjects, carried in enemy bottoms, and yet under the declaration it is proposed to seize and take into port all goods of enemy "ownership and origin." A particular significance attaches to the word "origin." The origin of goods in neutral ships destined to neutral territory is not and never has been a ground for forfeiture except in cases where a blockade is declared and not maintained. To what then would the seizure under the present declaration amount except to delay the delivery of the goods? The declaration does not indicate what disposition would be made of such cargoes owned by a neutral; and another question arises in the case of enemy ownership as to what rule should then come into play. If another rule is to be applied, upon what principle of international law would it rest, and upon what rules, if no blockade is declared and maintained, could the cargo of a neutral ship issuing from a German port be condemned? If it is not to be condemned, what legal course exists but to release it?

My Government is fully alive to the possibility that the methods of modern naval warfare, particularly in the use of the submarine for both defensive and offensive operations, may make the former means of maintaining a blockade a physical impossibility; but it nevertheless feels that the point of the desirability of limiting "the radius of activity" can be urged with great force, especially so if this action by the belligerents can be construed to be a blockade. A very complicated situation would undoubtedly be created if, for example, an American vessel laden with cargo of German origin should escape the British patrol in European waters only to be held up by a cruiser off New York and taken into Halifax.

I have the honour to add, for your information, that a communication similar to the above has been addressed to the Government of the French Republic.

On 15th March Sir Edward Grey replied:—

Foreign Office, March 15, 1915.

1. His Majesty's Government have had under careful consideration the inquiries which, under instructions from your Government, your Excellency addressed to me on the 8th instant regarding the scope and mode of application of the measures, foreshadowed in the British and French declarations of the 1st March, for restricting the trade of Germany. Your Excellency explained, and illustrated by reference to certain contingencies, the difficulty of the United States Government in adopting a definite attitude towards these measures, by reason of uncertainty regarding their bearing upon the commerce of neutral countries.

2. I can at once assure your Excellency that, subject to the paramount necessity of restricting German trade, His Majesty's Government have made it their first aim to minimize inconvenience to neutral commerce. From the accompanying copy of the Order in Council, which is to be published to-day, you will observe that a wide discretion is afforded to the Prize Court in dealing with the trade of neutrals in such manner as may in the circumstances be deemed just, and that full provision is made to facilitate claims by persons interested in any goods placed in the custody of the marshal of the Prize Court, under the Order. I apprehend that the perplexities to which your Excellency refers will for the most part be dissipated by the perusal of this document, and that it is only necessary for me to add certain explanatory observations.

3. The effect of the Order in Council is to confer certain powers upon the executive officers of His Majesty's Government. The extent to which those powers will be actually exercised, and the degree of severity with which the measures of blockade authorized will be put into operation, are matters which will depend on the administrative orders issued by the Government and the decisions of the authorities specially charged with the duty of dealing with individual ships and cargoes, according to the merits of each case. The United States Government may rest assured that the instructions to be issued by His Majesty's Government to the fleet, and to the customs officials and executive committees concerned, will impress upon them the duty of acting with the utmost dispatch consistent with the object in view, and of showing in every case such consideration for neutrals as may be compatible with that object, which is, succinctly stated, to establish a blockade to prevent vessels from carrying goods for, or coming from, Germany.

4. His Majesty's Government have felt most reluctant at the moment of initiating a policy of blockade to exact from neutral ships all the penalties attaching to a breach of blockade. In their desire to alleviate the burden which the existence of a state of war at sea must inevitably impose on neutral sea-borne commerce, they declare their intention to refrain altogether from the exercise of the right to confiscate ships or cargoes which belligerents have always claimed in respect of breaches of blockade. They restrict their claim to the stopping of cargoes destined for or coming from the enemy's territory.

5. As regards cotton, full particulars of the arrangements contemplated have already been explained. It will be admitted that every possible regard has been had to the legitimate interests of the American cotton trade.

6. Finally, in reply to the penultimate paragraph of your Excellency's note, I have the honour to state that it is not intended to interfère with neutral vessels carrying enemy cargo of non-contraband nature outside European waters, including the Mediterranean.

III.

On 22nd February the United States Government addressed an Identic Note to Britain and Germany, suggesting a compromise:—

MR. PAGE TO SIR EDWARD GREY.

Received February 22.

Pursuant to instructions from my Government, I have the honour to submit for your consideration the following communication which I have just received by telegraph from the Secretary of State, dated at Washington on the 20th instant, with the information that it forms the text of an identic note to the Government of His Britannic Majesty and that of Germany. I have been in some uncertainty as to the reading of some of its passages on account of omissions in the encyphering of the telegram or mistakes in its transmission; but in view of the desirability of laying the matter before you immediately, and since these passages do not appear to affect the general sense of the note, I have not waited to obtain an authoritative correction. I shall not fail, however, to furnish you with a

corrected copy with the least possible delay.

"In view of the correspondence which has passed between this Government and Great Britain and Germany respectively relative to the declaration of a war zone by the German Admiralty, and the use of neutral flags by British merchant vessels, this Government ventures to express the hope that the two belligerent Governments may, through reciprocal concessions, find a basis for agreement which will relieve neutral vessels engaged in peaceful commerce from the great dangers which they will incur on the high seas adjacent to the coasts of the belligerents.

"The Government of the United States respectfully suggests that an agreement in terms like the following might be entered into. This suggestion is not to be regarded as in any sense a proposal made by this Government, for it of course fully recognizes that it is not its privilege to propose terms of agreement between Great Britain and Germany, even though the matter be one in which it and the people of the United States are directly and deeply interested. It is merely venturing to take the liberty which may be accorded a sincere friend desirous of embarrassing neither nation involved, and of serving, if it may, the common interests of humanity.

"The course outlined is offered in the hope that it may draw forth the views and elicit the suggestions of the British Government on a matter of capital interest to the whole world.

"Germany and Great Britain to agree:—

"First. That neither will sow any floating mines, whether upon the high seas or in territorial waters; that neither will plant in the high seas anchored mines except within cannon range of harbours for defensive purposes only; and that all mines shall bear the stamp of the Government planting them, and be so constructed as to become harmless if separated from their moorings.

"Second. That neither will use submarines to attack merchant vessels of any nationality except to enforce the right of visit and search.

"Third. That each will require their respective merchant vessels not to use neutral flags for the purpose of disguise or *ruse de guerre*.

"Germany to agree that all importations of food or foodstuffs from the United States (and from such other neutral countries as may ask it) into Germany shall be consigned to agencies to be designated by the United States Government; that these American agencies shall have entire charge and control, without interference on the part of the German Government, of the receipt and distribution of such importations, and shall distribute these solely to retail dealers bearing licences from the German Government entitling them to receive and furnish such food and foodstuffs to non-combatants only; that any violation of the terms of the retailers' licences shall work a forfeiture of their rights to receive such food and food supplies for this purpose; and that such food and food supplies will not be requisitioned by the German Government for any purpose whatsoever or be diverted to the use of the embarcation [*sic*] forces of Germany.

"Great Britain to agree that food and food supplies will not be placed upon absolute contraband list, and that shipments of such commodities will not be interfered with or detained by British authorities if consigned to agencies designated by the United States Government in Germany for the receipt and distribution of such cargoes to licensed German retailers for distribution solely to the non-combatant population.

"In submitting this proposed basis of agreement this Government does not wish to be understood as admitting or denying any belligerent or neutral right established by principles of international law, but would consider the agreement, if acceptable to the interested Powers, a *modus vivendi*, based upon expediency rather than legal right, and as not binding upon the United States either in its present form or in a modified form until accepted by this Government."

On 15th March Sir Edward Grey issued the following Memorandum in reply to the American Note:—

On the 22nd February last I received a communication from your Excellency of the identic note addressed to His Majesty's Government and to Germany respecting an agreement on certain points as to the conduct of the war at sea.

The reply of the German Government to this note has been published, and it is not understood from the reply that the German Government are prepared to abandon the practice of sinking British merchant vessels by submarines; and it is evident from their reply that they will not abandon the use of mines for offensive purposes on the high seas, as contrasted with the use of mines for defensive purposes only within cannon range of their own harbours, as suggested by the Government of the United States.

This being so, it might appear unnecessary for the British Government to make any further reply than to take note of the German answer. We desire, however, to take the opportunity of making a fuller statement of the whole position, and of our feeling with regard to it.

We recognize with sympathy the desire of the Government of the United States to see the European War conducted in accordance with the previously recognized rules of international law and the dictates of humanity. It is thus that the British forces have conducted the war, and we are not aware that these forces, either naval or military, can have laid to their charge any improper proceedings, either in the conduct of hostilities or in the treatment of prisoners or wounded.

On the German side it has been very different:—

1. The treatment of civilian inhabitants in Belgium and the north of France has been made public by the Belgian and French Governments, and by those who have had experience of it at first hand. Modern history affords no precedent for the sufferings that have been inflicted on the defenceless and non-combatant population in the territory that has been in German military occupation. Even the food of the population was confiscated, until, in Belgium, an International Commission, largely influenced by American generosity, and conducted under American auspices, came to the relief of the population, and secured from the German Government a promise to spare what food was still left in the country, though the Germans still continue to make levies in money upon the defenceless population for the support of the German army.

2. We have from time to time received most terrible accounts of the barbarous treatment to which British officers and soldiers have been exposed after they have been taken prisoner, while being conveyed to German prison camps. One or two instances have already been given to the United States Government, founded upon authentic and first-hand evidence which is beyond doubt. Some evidence has been received of the hardships to which British prisoners of war are subjected in the prison camps, contrasting, we believe, most unfavourably with the treatment of German prisoners in this country. We have proposed, with the consent of the United States Government, that a commission of United States officers should be permitted in each country to inspect the treatment of prisoners of war. The United States Government have been unable to obtain any reply from the German Government to this proposal, and we remain in continuing anxiety and apprehension as to the treatment of British prisoners of war in Germany.

3. At the very outset of war a German minelayer was discovered laying a minefield on the high seas. Further minefields have been laid from time to time without warning, and, so far as we know, are still being laid on the high seas, and many neutral as well as British vessels have been sunk by them.

4. At various times during the war German submarines have stopped and sunk British merchant vessels, thus making the sinking of merchant vessels a general practice, though it was admitted previously, if at all, only as an exception; the general rule, to which the British Government have adhered, being that merchant vessels, if captured, must be taken before a Prize Court. In one case, already quoted in a note to the United States Government, a neutral vessel carrying foodstuffs to an unfortified town in Great Britain has been sunk. Another case is now reported, in which a German armed cruiser has sunk an American vessel, the *William P. Frye*, carrying a cargo of wheat from Seattle to Queenstown. In both cases the cargoes were presumably destined for the civil population. Even the cargoes, in such circumstances, should not have been condemned without the decision of a Prize Court, much less should the vessels have been sunk. It is to be noted that both these cases occurred before the detention by the British authorities of the *Wilhelmina* and her cargo of foodstuffs, which the German Government allege is the justification for their own action. The Germans have announced their intention of sinking British

merchant vessels by torpedo without notice and without any provision for the safety of the crew. They have already carried out this intention in the case of neutral as well as of British vessels, and a number of non-combatant and innocent lives on British vessels, unarmed and defenceless, have been destroyed in this way.

5. Unfortified, open, and defenceless towns, such as Scarborough, Yarmouth, and Whitby, have been deliberately and wantonly bombarded by German ships of war, causing in some cases considerable loss of civilian life, including women and children.

6. German aircraft have dropped bombs on the East Coast of England, where there were no military or strategic points to be attacked.

On the other hand, I am aware of but two criticisms that have been made on British action in all these respects:—

1. It is said that the British naval authorities also have laid some anchored mines on the high seas. They have done so; but the mines were anchored and so constructed that they would be harmless if they went adrift, and no mines whatever were laid by the British naval authorities till many weeks after the Germans had made a regular practice of laying mines on the high seas.

2. It is said that the British Government have departed from the view of international law, which they had previously maintained, that foodstuffs destined for the civil population should never be interfered with; this charge being founded on the submission to a Prize Court of the cargo of the *Wilhelmina*. The special considerations affecting this cargo have already been presented in a Memorandum to the United States Government, and I need not repeat them here. Inasmuch as the stoppage of all foodstuffs is an admitted consequence of blockade, it is obvious that there can be no universal rule, based on considerations of morality and humanity, which is contrary to this practice. The right to stop foodstuffs destined for the civil population must, therefore, in any case be admitted if an effective "cordon" controlling intercourse with the enemy is drawn, announced, and maintained. Moreover, independently of rights, arising from belligerent action in the nature of blockade, some other nations, differing from the opinion of the Government of the United States and Great Britain, have held that to stop the food of the civil population is a natural and legitimate method of bringing pressure to bear on an enemy country, as it is upon the defence of a besieged town. It is also upheld on

the authority of both Prince Bismarck and Count Caprivi, and therefore presumably is not repugnant to German morality. The following are the quotations from Prince Bismarck and Count Caprivi on this point:—

Prince Bismarck, in answering in 1885 an application from the Kiel Chamber of Commerce for a statement of the view of the German Government on the question of the right to declare as contraband foodstuffs that were not intended for military forces, said: "I reply to the Chamber of Commerce that any disadvantage our commercial and carrying interests may suffer by the treatment of rice as contraband of war does not justify our opposing a measure which it has been thought fit to take in carrying on a foreign war. Every war is a calamity which entails evil consequences not only on the combatants but also on neutrals. These evils may easily be increased by the interference of a neutral Power with the way in which a third carries on the war, to the disadvantage of the subjects of the interfering Power, and by this means German commerce might be weighted with far heavier losses than a transitory prohibition of the rice trade in Chinese waters. The measure in question has for its object the shortening of the war by increasing the difficulties of the enemy, and is a justifiable step in war if impartially enforced against all neutral ships."

Count Caprivi, during a discussion in the German Reichstag on the 4th March, 1892, on the subject of the importance of international protection for private property at sea, made the following statements: "A country may be dependent for her food or for her raw produce upon her trade, in fact, it may be absolutely necessary to destroy the enemy's trade." "The private introduction of provisions into Paris was prohibited during the siege, and in the same way a nation would be justified in preventing the import of food and raw produce."

The Government of Great Britain have now frankly declared, in concert with the Government of France, their intention to meet the German attempt to stop all supplies of every kind from leaving or entering British or French ports by themselves stopping supplies going to or from Germany. For this end, the British fleet has instituted a blockade, effectively controlling by cruiser "cordon" all passage to and from Germany by sea. The difference between the two policies is, however, that, while our object is the same as that of Germany, we propose to attain it without sacrificing neutral ships or non-combatant lives, or

inflicting upon neutrals the damage that must be entailed when a vessel and its cargo are sunk without notice, examination, or trial.

I must emphasize again that this measure is a natural and necessary consequence of the unprecedented methods, repugnant to all law and morality, which have been described above, which Germany began to adopt at the very outset of the war, and the effects of which have been constantly accumulating.

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TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.
Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.
Inconsistency in accents has been retained.
Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.
Some photographs have been enhanced to be more legible.

[The end of *Nelson's History of the War Volume V* by John Buchan]