Nelson's History of the War

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NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR

VOLUME IV.

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

Volume IV. The Great Struggle in West Flanders, the Two Attacks on Warsaw, and the Fighting at Sea down to the Battle of the Falkland Islands.

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS

LONDON, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN, AND NEW YORK

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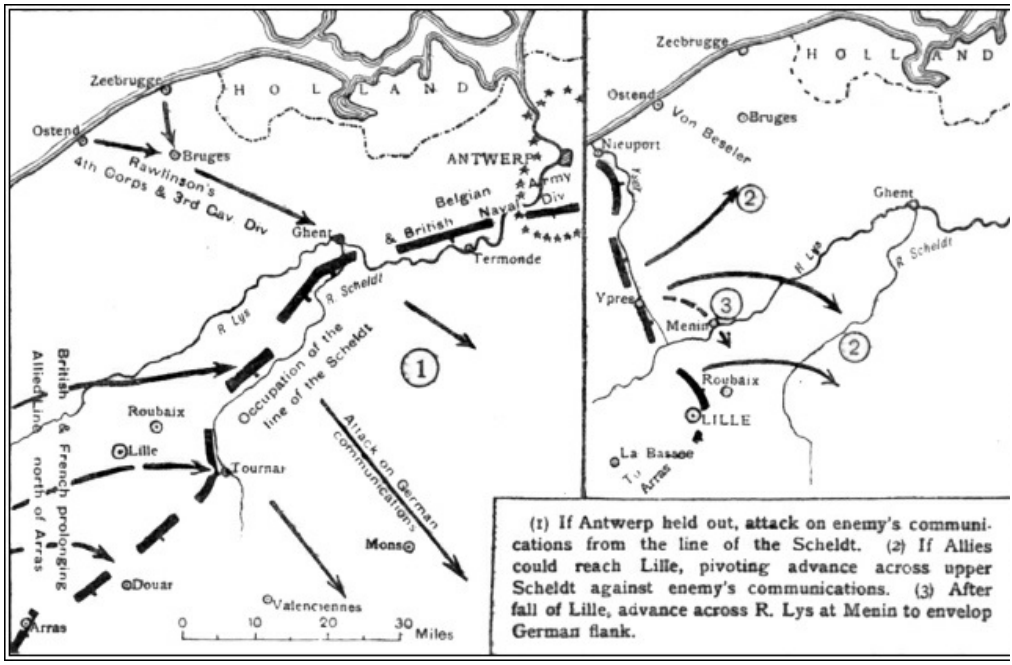
In this war the historian, in whatever part of the arena he moves, is accompanied by mighty shades. In the East, in the woody swamps of Masurenland and the wide levels of Poland, he has Kutusov to attend him, and Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, and the inscrutable face of Napoleon. In the West, looming like clouds through the years, he sees the shapes of Cæsar and Attila and Theodoric and Charlemagne, and, as the centuries pass, a motley host of great captains—Charles of Burgundy, Joan the Maid, Bedford, Talbot and King Harry, Guise and Navarre, Turenne and Condé, the Roi Soleil, Villars, Marlborough and Saxe. Then come the shaggy leaders of the Revolution, and Napoleon again with his twenty marshals, and the pursuing Teutons, Bluecher and Schwarzenberg, and Wellington, holding himself a little aloof from his ill-assorted colleagues. And last, in the clothes almost of our own day, we have the sturdy, bristling figure of Bismarck and the unearthly pallor of Moltke. Of all these we have already trodden the battlefields, and now we return to the campaigning ground of one who ranks only after Cæsar and Napoleon. The cold, beautiful eyes of John Churchill had two centuries ago scanned the meadows of West Flanders, and Marlborough's subtle brain had faced the very problem which was now to meet the Allied generals.

After the crushing defeat of Blenheim, the French Marshal, anxious for the safety of Paris, took to a war of earthworks and entrenchments. He could not save Flanders, but he managed to check the invader in Northern France. But after Oudenarde not all Vauban's fortifications could keep Lille from the Allies, and Villars prepared the great line of trenches from the Scarpe to the Lys, which had for their centre the high ground about La Bassée. What followed is familiar to every student of the history of the British army. Marlborough feinted against the lines, turned eastward, took Tournai, and won the Battle of Malplaquet. Villars replied with a new line of trenches, and, though the Allies took Bethune and Douai, La Bassée itself proved impregnable, and the war of entrenchments moved toward that stalemate which ended three years later with the Peace of Utrecht.[1]

Had Marlborough had a free hand, the turning movement, in which Malplaquet was an incident, might well have brought his armies to the gates of Paris. Villars' qualified success showed the enormous strength of entrenchments in that corner of France which marches with West Flanders. When the Allied generals in the first days of October 1914 considered the situation, the campaign of Marlborough must have occurred to their minds. It was true that the situation was reversed, for it was the entrenching of the invader that they wished to forestall, and they moved from the south, not, as Marlborough had done, from the north. At that time they believed that they had the initiative in their hands, and their aim was to turn the German right, and free Flanders of the invaders. For this purpose—as well as for defence, should their offensive fail—it was necessary to gain the two crucial positions of La Bassée and Lille. The first gave the strongest defence in all the district, and the second was even more vital than in Marlborough's day, for it controlled the junction of six railway lines and a great network of roads, and contained large engineering works and motor factories, as well as the construction shops of the Chemin de Fer du Nord. With Lille as a position in the Allied lines the invasion from the east would be in a doubtful case. The city, which had been defended by General Percin at the beginning of the German sweep from the Sambre, had fallen easily; but since then it and the surrounding country had reverted to the French, and was held at the moment by a division of Territorials. It is reasonable to assume that the occupation of Lille in force was one of the chief tasks entrusted to General Maud'huy when, at the end of September, his new army aligned itself on General de Castelnau's left.

In telling the story of the West Flanders campaign, the hardest and most intricate which the Allies had yet fought, it is necessary to proceed slowly and with circumspection. No rapid summary will enable the reader to understand the

nature of the task which confronted the Allied forces. It is a self-contained campaign, and concerns only three out of the eleven Allied armies—the 8th French Army under d'Urbal, the British army, and the 10th French Army of Maud'huy.[2] Its story is of three successive strategical plans which miscarried, then of three weeks of a desperate defensive which broke the enemy's attack, then of a period of stalemate and the beginning of a counter-offensive. Its main interest is, therefore, tactical, and the material for a full tactical history is still lacking. We know enough, however, to recount the chief heads in the great story. The record naturally divides itself into three parts—the movements which culminated in the positions reached by all three armies on or about the 20th of October; the attacks upon the Allied line on the Yser, at La Bassée, and at Arras; and the main attack delivered at the same time upon the forces holding the salient of Ypres. With the failure of the assault upon Ypres the West Flanders campaign entered upon its second phase.



Sketch map showing the three projects of the Allies for the Flanders operations.

In the first days of October the Allied plan, based on the assumption that Antwerp could be saved, was so to extend their left as to hold the line of the Scheldt from Antwerp to Tournai, continuing south-west by Douai to Arras, and with this as a base to move against the German communications through Mons and Valenciennes. For this purpose the Naval Division was sent to Antwerp, and Sir Henry Rawlinson, with the 7th Division and the 3rd Cavalry Division,

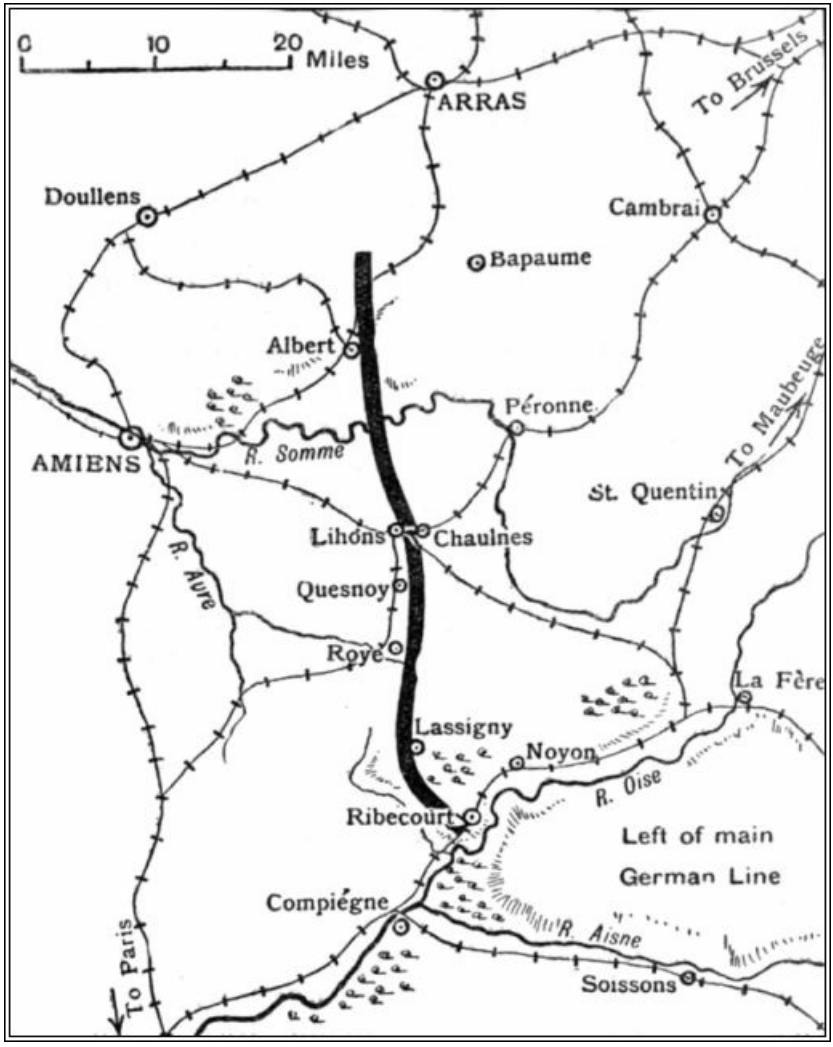
landed at Ostend and Zeebrugge. By 6th October it was seen that Antwerp must fall, and this plan was replaced by a second. The Belgian army, covered by Sir Henry Rawlinson's British force, would retire by Bruges and Ghent to the line of the Yser to protect the Allied left, and meet, along with the new French reinforcements, any coast attack by the German troops released after the fall of Antwerp. Lille and La Bassée must be held by the Allies, and the British, pivoting on the latter place, would swing south-eastward, isolate von Beseler's army, and threaten the north-western communications of the vast German front, which now ran from some where near Tournai southward to the Aisne heights, and then eastward to the Argonne. In the last resort, if the Allies were forestalled in La Bassée and Lille, the strategy of Marlborough might be used, and, instead of a frontal attack, an enveloping movement could be attempted from the line of the Lys against the right flank of the main German armies. For this purpose the town of Menin on the Lys, south-east of Ypres, was essential as a pivot, and we shall see how the loss of this point ruined the last of the three strategical schemes. Clearly the whole of the Allied plan was contingent on the German right not being farther north than, say, Roubaix. General Joffre knew that it was rapidly extending, and it was the business of his whole northern movement to overlap it. Time was, therefore, of the essence of his problem.

The strategy was well conceived. If it succeeded, the Allies might be in the position to strike a decisive blow. If it failed, then the situation would be no worse. It is true that the extension of the lines to the sea would prevent any attack upon the German communications, which would now be sheltered behind a ring-fence of arms. But, on the other hand, it would prevent any German enveloping movement, and pin down the enemy to a slow war of positions, and, since time was all on the side of the Allies, he would be driven to a stalemate, which would militate disastrously against his ultimate success.

The Germans, it is now plain, were well informed from the start as to the Allied movement, and clearly divined General Joffre's intentions. By the end of September they had begun the transference of first -line corps from the southern part of their front. They had excellent railways behind them for this purpose, and, since they held the interior lines, most of their corps had a shorter distance to travel than those of the Allies. But in the case of the Bavarians around Metz the change took some time, and so it fell out that the more northerly parts of the line were not manned till the Allies were almost in position. Against this drawback, however, the Germans had one great advantage. They had a fairly fresh army released from Antwerp, which could occupy the coast end, and they had through North Belgium a straight line from Northern Germany for the dispatch of newly-formed corps. They had quantities of cavalry, which had been

of no use in the Aisne battle, to harass the left flank of the Allied turning movement, and to occupy points of vantage till their infantry came up. But it was an anxious moment for the German Staff. For them, not less than for the Allies, it was a race to the salt water. To the Allies' scheme they sought to oppose a counter-offensive which should give them Calais and the Channel ports, and the Seine valley for an advance to Paris. To succeed they must be first through the sally-port between La Bassée and the sea. If the British forestalled them, von Beseler would be cut off, and the German front would be bent round into a square, with the Allies operating against three sides of it. The forty miles between Lille and Nieuport became suddenly the Thermopylæ of the war.

On 8th October General Foch, who had been appointed to a general command over all the Allied troops north of Noyon, was at Doullens, a town some twenty miles north of Amiens. There he was visited by Sir John French, who arranged with him a plan of operations. In all likelihood the Germans would attack the points of junction of the Allied armies—always the weak spots in a front, and it was necessary to determine these points with great care. The road between Bethune and Lille was fixed as the dividing line between the British command and Maud'huy's army. If an advance were possible it would be eastward, when the British right and the French left would be directed upon Lille. To the north it was arranged that the British Second Corps should take its place on Maud'huy's left, with the cavalry protecting its left till the Third Corps came into line. The cavalry would perform the same task for the Third Corps till the First Corps arrived in position. Nothing was decided about the future of Sir Henry Rawlinson's 7th Division and General Byng's 3rd Cavalry Division, which were covering the Belgian retreat from Antwerp, and might be expected in a week from the direction of Courtrai.



De Castelnau's operations in the valleys of the Oise and Somme.

(The black line shows approximately his front at the end of September.)

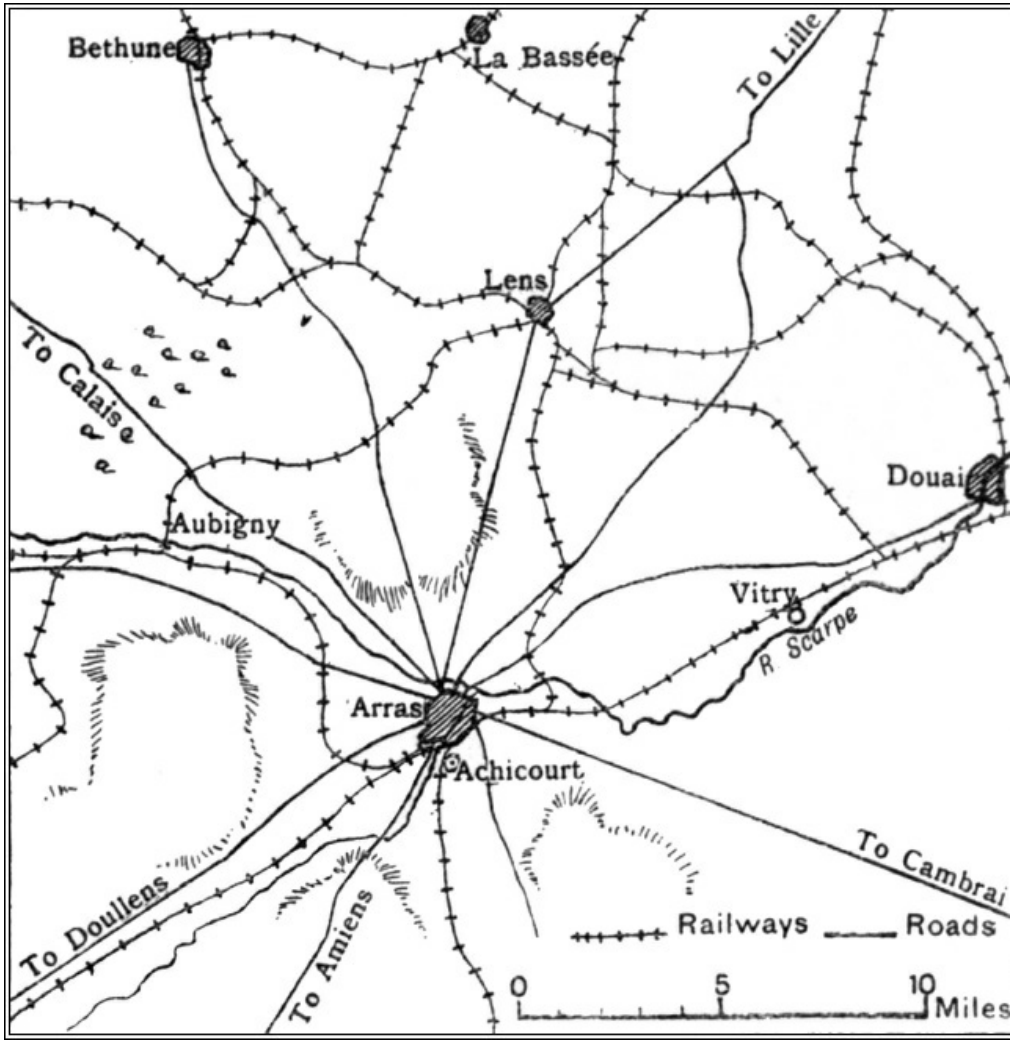
In considering the movement into line we must begin with de Castelnau's 7th Army, which, as we have seen, formed up on Maunoury's left on the 20th of September. At first its success was rapid. Von Kluck's right wing, reinforced by the troops released after the fall of Maubeuge, formed the only opposition. On the 21st it took Noyon, on the Oise, and was pushing its way by Lassigny to Roye through the flats which extend from the Oise to the Somme. But, four days later, the Germans had brought up by rail reinforcements from von Buelow's command, and a three days' battle was fought between Noyon and the Somme. De Castelnau was

Sept. 21.

pushed back from Noyon and Lassigny, and held a line from Ribecourt, on the Oise, through Roye, behind Chaulnes, to a point east of Albert on the plateau north of the Somme. His left was extended by at least two Territorial divisions under General Brugère. Any French advance in the direction of St. Quentin and La Fère was obviously fraught with danger for the western German communications, and the last week of September and the first week of October saw repeated assaults upon de Castelnau's centre at Roye, and upon the left wing on the Albert plateau. The line sagged in places, but in the main the French held their ground; but they did not advance, for by this time they had against them von Buelow himself and the left wing of his transferred army. In those days both sides suffered heavily, and the Germans seem to rate the Battle of Albert as one of the most desperate in the war. At Quesnoy and at Lihons, on the Amiens road, German attacks were repulsed with great slaughter; but all efforts of the French general to swing his left towards Peronne were frustrated.

Sept. 30.

On the last day of September de Castelnau received a welcome reinforcement in Maud'huy's 10th Army, which now came into position beyond the Territorials on his left. The right of the new force rested on the little river Ancre, north of Albert, and extended along the plateau to Arras at its northern end, with its left at Lens, on the railway from Arras to Bethune. Maud'huy had a considerable force of cavalry, which scoured the country to the north towards the Lys and the Yser, and several Territorial divisions under his command moved eastward, and occupied Lille and Douai on the German right. These Territorials were obviously in a position of great danger should the Ger mans push on their outflanking movement, and it is clear that at this date—the beginning of October—the Allied generals were convinced that they would be the first to overlap. Maud'huy's instructions seem to have been to move eastwards towards Valenciennes, and to keep the country clear towards Lille.



The Arras and Lens District.

The map shows the scene of fighting about Arras, the importance of the place as a great centre of road and railway communications, and its connection with the ground held by the British right between Bethune and La Bassée.

A glance at the map shows the strategic importance of Arras, the centre of Maud'huy's front. It lies below the northern end of the plateau which extends from the Somme valley to the great plain of the Scheldt. The slopes on three sides of it provide strong defensive positions, and a network of railways connects it with every part of Northern France. The beautiful old city is famous in history. There the treaty of peace was signed after Agincourt, there Vauban raised his famous ramparts, there Robespierre first saw the light. The Germans

had entered it on 15th September, but had retired on the approach of Maud'huy's vanguard. The French general lost no time in taking the offensive. He entered Arras on the 30th of September, and next day had pushed well eastward on the road to Douai, whence his Territorials had been evicted.

Oct. 1-3.

During the first three days of October Maud'huy was heavily engaged in the flats east of Arras, between the river Scarpe and the town of Lens. The Germans, who had now got the Bavarian army from Metz on their right wing, were attempting to outflank him on the north, and roll him back to the line of the Somme, in which case Amiens and the Seine valley and the Channel ports would be at their mercy, for the British army was still engaged in changing ground. The German plan seems to have been to send out a force of cavalry, with infantry supports in motor buses, in a wide sweep to the north-west towards the line Bethune-Cassel—the force which, a few days later, was to give much trouble to the British Second and Third Corps as they advanced to their positions—and to concentrate the bulk of their troops in an attack upon Maud'huy's centre and left. On 4th October Maud'huy was compelled to retire on Arras, and to take up ground on the slopes behind it. Two days later the Germans bombarded the city, and continued to drop shells into it intermittently for the following three days. Much damage was done, and part of the beautiful old Town Hall was ruined, but the invaders did not succeed in entering the streets. They crossed the Vauban ramparts, but were driven out by French reinforcements.

Oct. 4-6.

Oct. 8.

On 8th October the French 10th Army was in an awkward place. The Germans held Douai and Lens, and were shelling Lille, from which at any moment the Territorials might be driven. Every day the enemy was increasing in numbers by divisions transferred from the front in Champagne and in the Vosges. The plain of West Flanders was swarming with German cavalry, and about this time they were reported as far west as Hazebrouck, Bailleul, and Cassel, the last place only twenty miles from Dunkirk. Maud'huy's task was to cling to his position at Arras till some relief came from the Allied operations on his left. That, generally speaking, was the work of both him and de Castelnau for the succeeding ten days up to the 19th of October. There were awkward sags in the French line at Roye, at Albert, and at Arras, but much was done during those days to straighten them out. The attackers were driven back from Arras, and some slight advance was made to the eastward. So stood the position on 19th October, the day when the Allied line was at last completed to the sea. A few days later began the desperate assault on Arras, which was one

Oct. 19.

of the four main attempts to break our West Flanders front.

Maud'huy's experience supplies an answer to the conundrum—why, since the possession of Lille was of the first importance, was it not held from the first with some force stronger than a Territorial division? The explanation is that Maud'huy was far too sorely pressed to do more than retain his position. Had his offensive succeeded, had he driven the enemy from Douai towards Valenciennes, then Lille would have been occupied by his left wing, and would have formed part of his front. But, as we have seen, he was forced back to Arras, and saved himself only on its western hills. Lille, though we did not know it at the time, was soon to be a point *behind* the German lines.

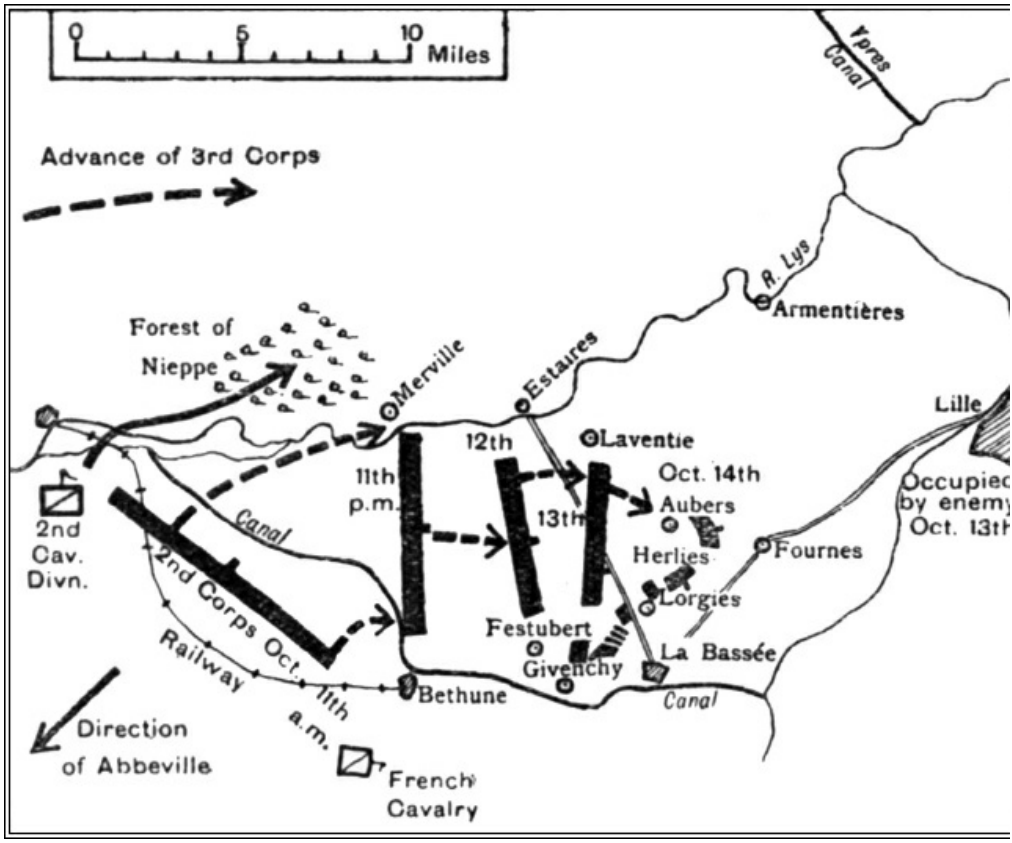
We must now turn to the task of the British army, which during the first three weeks of October was coming into line north of Maud'huy. The extreme left of the French 10th Army was at the time in the villages north-west of Lens, and the Lille-Bethune highway had been fixed as its northern limit. Its cavalry was engaged in watching this flank against the dangerous German enveloping movement. On the 11th of October General Smith-Dorrien, with the British Second Corps, had marched from Abbeville to the line of the canal between Aire and Bethune. On his right was the French cavalry connecting him with Maud'huy, and on his left General Hubert Gough's 2nd Cavalry Division, which was busily engaged driving German cavalry out of the Forest of Nieppe, which lay to the north of the canal. Sir John French's plan at this time for the Second Corps was a rapid dash upon La Bassée and Lille. Smith-Dorrien was directed to bring up his left to Merville, and on the 12th move east against the line Laventie-Lorgies, to threaten the flank of the Germans in La Bassée, and compel them to fall back lest they should be cut off between the British and Maud'huy.

Oct. 11.

On the 12th the movement began in thick fog, the 5th Division on the right, and the 3rd crossing the canal to deploy on its left. Smith-Dorrien, however, found that the enemy were in great strength, four cavalry divisions and several Jaeger battalions holding the road to Lille. Moreover, the Germans held the high ground south of La Bassée, where Villars had once constructed the trenches that defied Marlborough. The Second Corps, struggling all day through difficult country where good gun positions were rare, made some progress, but not much. His experience convinced General Smith-Dorrien that an ordinary frontal attack was impossible, and he resolved to try to isolate La Bassée. To quote Sir John French, his object was to wheel to his right, pivoting on Givenchy, and to get astride the La Bassée-Lille road in the neighbourhood of Fournes, so as to

Oct. 12.

threaten the right flank and rear of the enemy's position on the high ground south of La Bassée.



Smith-Dorrien's Operations (2nd Corps).

Oct. 13.

On the 13th the wheel commenced, but it met with a strong resistance. The 5th Division had the hardest fight, and the Dorsets in Gleichen's Brigade lost their commanding officer, Major Roper, and had 400 casualties, 130 of them being killed. The battalion, which had advanced from Festubert against the Estaires -La Bassée road, maintained its position all day at Pont Fixe. The Bedfords, in the same brigade, were driven out of Givenchy by heavy shell fire. On that day the 14th German Corps had entered Lille, driving out the French Territorials, after a merciless three days' bombardment. The work of the British Second Corps now resolved itself into a struggle for La Bassée. On the 14th the 3rd Division lost its commander, Major-General Hubert Hamilton, who was killed by the explosion of a shell—a serious loss to the army, for he was one of the most skilful and beloved of the younger generals.[3]

Oct. 14.

Next day the 3rd Division avenged its leader's death by a brilliant advance, crossing the dykes by means of planks, and driving the Germans from village after village, till they had pushed them off the Estaires-La Bassée road. On the 16th the 3rd division was close upon Aubers; the following day its 9th Brigade, under General Shaw, took the village, and late that evening the 1st Lincolns and the 4th Royal Fusiliers of the same brigade had carried Herlies at the point of the bayonet.

Oct. 15. 16.

This was the end of the movement of the Second Corps. Hitherto they had been opposed chiefly by German cavalry, and had made progress, but now they were against the wall of the main German line. On the 18th counter-attacks began, which Smith-Dorrien succeeded in repulsing; and on the 19th the 2nd Royal Irish, under Major Daniell, in Doran's 8th Brigade of the 3rd Division, stormed and carried the village of Le Pilly. Next day the German supports from Lille arrived, and the gallant battalion was cut off after heavy losses.

Oct. 19.

We leave the Second Corps at this point, awaiting the counter-attack, of which they had now had their first taste. About this time supports appeared for General Smith-Dorrien, which merit a brief digression. On 19th and 20th October there arrived somewhere west of Bethune the Lahore Division of the Indian army. The Indian Expeditionary Force consisted of two infantry divisions—the 3rd, or Lahore, under the command of Lieutenant-General H. B. Watkis, and the 7th, or Meerut, under Lieutenant-General C. A. Anderson.[4] The force was under Lieutenant-General Sir James Willcocks, the general then commanding the Northern Army in India, who had originally won fame in West African fighting. On a hot autumn morning the first troops had landed in Marseilles, and been received by the French with the enthusiasm due to their martial appearance and splendid dignity. Then for days the smell of wood smoke rose from the dusty hills behind Borély, strange flocks of goats thronged the streets—the first step in the Indian commissariat—and grave, bearded Sikh orderlies slipped through the southern crowds. From Marseilles the Indian division went to camp at Orleans, and that city, which has seen so much, saw a new pageant in her ancient streets. In the park of a neighbouring country house the Rajput Lancers were quartered, and in countless little things—new cooking smells, new phrases, new colours—the East invaded the West. Much had to be done before the troops were ready for the field, for an equipment adapted for an Indian year is no match for the rigours of a Flemish winter. The troops were chafing to be in action, for the honour of their country and their race was in their keeping in this far Western land, where the sahibs had fallen out. On 10th October Sir James Willcocks issued to his command an address which was

admirably fitted to the temper of his men:—

"Soldiers of the Indian Army Corps,—

"We have all read with pride the gracious message of His Majesty the King-Emperor to his troops from India.

"On the eve of going into the field to join our British comrades, who have covered themselves with glory in this great war, it is our firm resolve to prove ourselves worthy of the honour which has been conferred on us as representatives of the Army of India.

"In a few days we shall be fighting as has never been our good fortune to fight before and against enemies who have a long history.

"But is their history as long as yours? You are the descendants of men who have been mighty rulers and great warriors for many centuries. You will never forget this. You will recall the glories of your race. Hindu and Mahomedan will be fighting side by side with British soldiers and our gallant French Allies. You will be helping to make history. You will be the first Indian soldiers of the King-Emperor who will have the honour of showing in Europe that the sons of India have lost none of their ancient martial instincts and are worthy of the confidence reposed in them.

"In battle you will remember that your religions enjoin on you that to give your life doing your duty is your highest reward.

"The eyes of your co-religionists and your fellow-countrymen are on you. From the Himalayan Mountains, the banks of the Ganges and Indus, and the plains of Hindustan, they are eagerly waiting for the news of how their brethren conduct themselves when they meet the foe. From mosques and temples their prayers are ascending to the God of all, and you will answer their hopes by the proofs of your valour.

"You will fight for your King-Emperor and your

faith, so that history will record the doings of India's sons and your children will proudly tell of the deeds of their fathers.

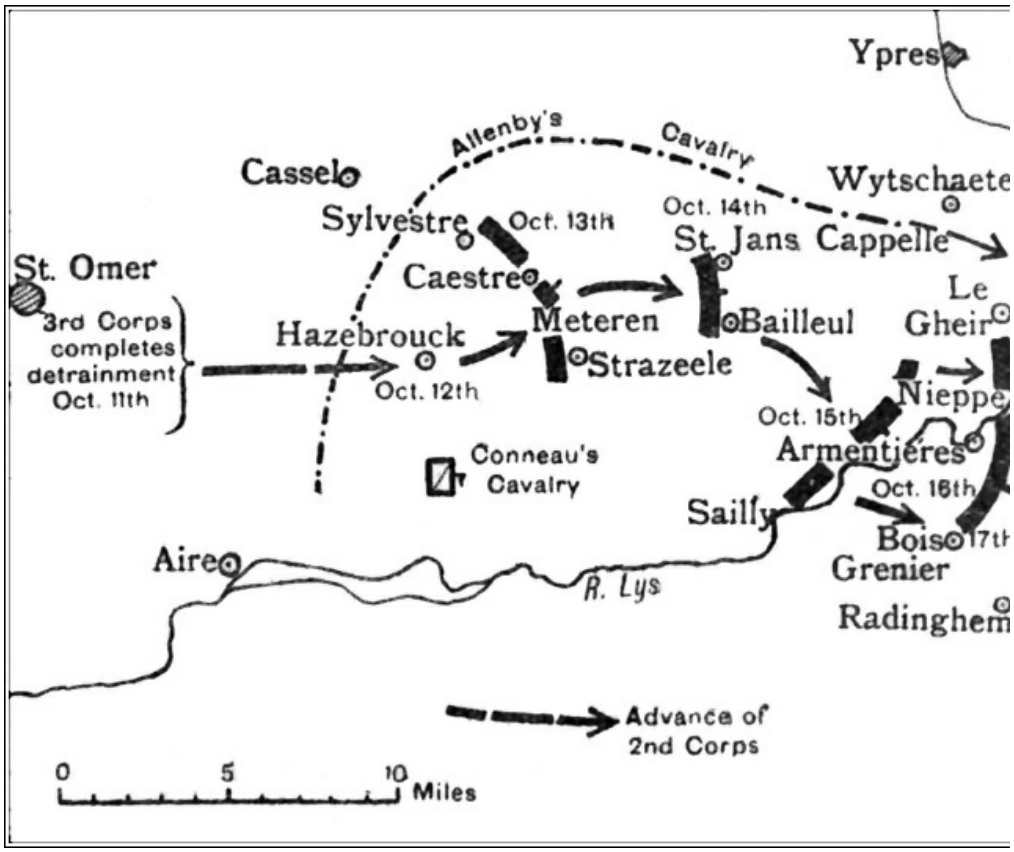
" JAMES WILLCOCKS,

"Lieut.-General, Commanding Indian Army Corps."

Oct. 11.

Oct. 13.

The Third Corps, under General Pulteney, destined for the position on the left of the Second Corps, had completed its detrainment at St. Omer on the night of the 11th. It marched to Hazebrouck, where it remained during the 12th, and next day moved generally eastward towards the line Armentières-Wytschaete, with its advance guard—the 19th Infantry Brigade and a Brigade of Field Artillery—on the line through the village of Strazeele. Pulteney's aim was to get east of Armentières astride the Lys, and join up the Ypres and La Bassée sections of the front. It was an impossible length of line for one corps to hold, so he had cavalry operating on both sides of him, Allenby to the north, and Conneau's French Cavalry Corps to the south.



Operations of the 3rd Corps (Pulteney) up to Oct. 19th.

The Germans were found in strength at Méteren, west of Bailleul, the usual advanced force of cavalry and infantry supports hurried forward in motor buses. It was a day of heavy rain and a thick steamy fog, the fields were water-logged, air-craft were useless, and the country-side was too much enclosed for cavalry. Haldane's 10th Brigade of the 4th Division was acting as advance-guard, and had the privilege of a bayonet charge against the enemy, in which the 2nd Seaforths distinguished themselves. The Germans in Méteren had no artillery, and but for the bad light would have suffered heavily from our guns. We carried the position, drove out the enemy, and entrenched ourselves some time towards midnight, preparatory to a full-dress attack upon Bailleul, in which we believed that the Ger mans were in force. Our reconnaissances, however, on the morning of the 14th showed that the enemy had retired, and that day Pulteney occupied the line Bailleul-St.-Jans-Cappelle.

Oct. 14.

Next day the Third Corps was ordered to take the line of

the Lys from Armentières to Sailly, where, five days before, Conneau's cavalry had met with a stubborn resistance. Armentières is about eight miles from Bailleul, along a straight road. The weather was still dark with fog, and there were many small bodies of the enemy about, but no position was held in force. Pulteney by the evening of the 15th was on the Lys, with the 6th Division on his right at Sailly, and the 4th Division on the left at Nieppe, a point on the Armentières-Bailleul road. Next day he entered Armentières, and on the 17th he had pushed beyond it, with his right at Bois Grenier, three miles south of the Lys, and his left at the hamlet of Le Gheir, a mile north of it. It was now ascertained that the Germans were holding in some strength a line running from Radinghem in the south, through Perenchies to Frelinghien on the Lys, while the right bank of the river below Frelinghien was held as far as Wervicq.

Oct. 15.

Oct. 17.

On the 18th an effort was made to clear the right bank of the Lys with the aid of Allenby's cavalry corps. The strength of the Germans was still doubtful, and Pulteney had some ground for assuming that it was only the mixed cavalry and infantry he had been so far pressing back. As a matter of fact, the Third Corps were now approaching the main German position, as the Second Corps about the same time were finding it at Aubers and Herlies. That day revealed two facts—that the infantry could do nothing in the direction of Lille, and that the cavalry, in spite of some brilliant work by the 9th Lancers, would not win the right bank of the Lys. We found ourselves firmly held at all points from Le Gheir to Radinghem, and our position on the night of the 18th and on the 19th represents the farthest line held by this section of our front. This—the British right centre—was destined to have one of the most awkward places in all the coming battle. It was not itself the object of any great massed attack, as on the Yser, at Ypres, and at La Bassée, but it suffered from being on the fringes of the two latter zones, and, as we shall see, was gravely endangered in the German enveloping movements.

Oct. 18.

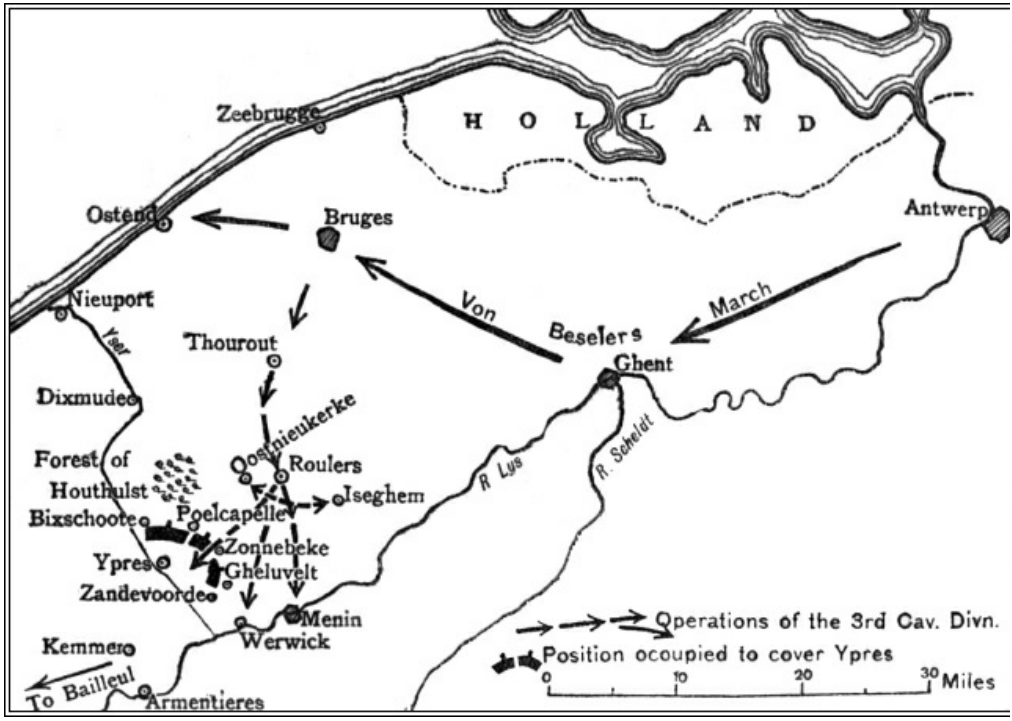
One link was necessary to connect the Third Corps with the infantry farther north. This was provided by the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Divisions,[5] now organized as a corps under General Allenby. The 2nd Division from the 11th of October busied itself with clearing the country of invading bands in the neighbourhood of Cassel and Hazebrouck. On the 14th it joined the 1st Division, and the corps took up positions on the high ground above Berthen on the road between Bailleul and Poperinge. On the 15th and 16th it reconnoitred the Lys, and, till the 19th, endeavoured to secure a footing on the right bank below Armentières. On the night of the 19th Allenby's position was generally east of Messines, on a line

Oct. 15-19.

drawn from Le Gheir to Hollebeke.

Oct. 6-8.

We pass now to the doings of the Antwerp garrison and the British covering troops. On 6th October the 7th Division began to disembark at Zeebrugge and Ostend, and early on 8th October the former point saw the landing of the 3rd Cavalry Division, after a voyage not free from sensation. The force formed the nucleus of the Fourth Corps,[6] and was commanded by Major-General Sir Henry Rawlinson, who had a long record of Indian, Egyptian, and South African service. The 7th Division was under the command of Major-General Capper, and consisted of the 20th Brigade (Brigadier-General Ruggles-Brise)—1st Grenadiers, 2nd Scots Guards, 2nd Border Regiment, 2nd Gordon Highlanders; the 21st Brigade (Brigadier-General Watts)—2nd Bedfords, 2nd Yorkshires, 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers, and 2nd Wiltshires; and the 22nd Brigade (Brigadier-General Lawford)—2nd Queen's, 2nd Warwicks, 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 1st South Staffords.[7] The Northumberland Hussars—the first Yeomanry to see foreign service—acted as divisional cavalry. The 3rd Cavalry Division was commanded by Major-General the Hon. Julian Byng, a brilliant cavalry soldier, who had been one of the most successful column-leaders in the South African War, and had since commanded the forces in Egypt. It contained two Brigades: the 6th (Brigadier-General Makins)—10th Hussars, 1st Dragoons (Royals), and a little later the 3rd Dragoon Guards; the 7th (Brigadier-General Kavanagh)—1st and 2nd Life Guards, and the Royal Horse Guards (the Blues).



The Retreat from Antwerp.

Oct. 6-8.

On the 6th of October Sir Henry Rawlinson visited Antwerp, where he saw for himself the state of that fortress. Next day his headquarters were at Bruges, and a force of French Marines under Admiral Ronarc'h was brought to Ghent as a support. On the 8th the retirement from Antwerp was in full operation, and

Oct. 9-12.

the Fourth Corps headquarters were removed to Ostend, while the 7th Division was at Ghent. Next day Antwerp had fallen, and the covering of the Belgian retreat began. The cavalry went first, to clear the country, and were at Thourout on the 10th and at Roulers on the 12th, where they took up the line from Oostnieuwkerke to Iseghem to cover the Ghent railway, which was threatened by roving German horse to the west and south. On that day the 7th Division and the French Marines left Ghent, forming a rearguard for the Belgians. Next day the Germans entered that town, and the following day passed through Bruges. Two days later the 3rd Reserve Corps occupied Ostend. This was part of von Beseler's army of Antwerp, which should probably be rated at two army corps and a cavalry division.

Oct. 13.

The 7th Division, much assisted by its armoured motor cars, arrived at Roulers on the 13th, and the 3rd Cavalry

Division reconnoitred all the country towards Ypres and Menin, riding in one day over fifty miles. The only hostile activity they could learn of was in the south-west, where large enemy forces were reputed to be moving eastwards towards Wervicq and Menin from the direction of Bailleul. This was the force of cavalry and infantry supports with which, as we have seen, the Third Corps had had dealings. The 3rd Cavalry Division was now in touch with Allenby's cavalry corps in the neighbourhood of Kemmel, on the road between Ypres and Armentières. By this time the Belgian army, very weary and broken, was in the Forest of Houthulst, north-east of Ypres, and had begun to extend along the line of the Yser by Dixmude to Nieuport. On the 16th the 7th Division was holding a position east of Ypres, with the 3rd Cavalry Division as advance guard on a line which ran roughly from Bixschoote to Poelcapelle. North lay the Belgians, with French Territorial supports, and to the west of Ypres two French Territorial divisions—the 87th and 89th—under the command of General Bidon. The line of the 7th Division ran from Zandvoorde through Gheluvelt to Zonnebeke.

Oct. 16. 17.

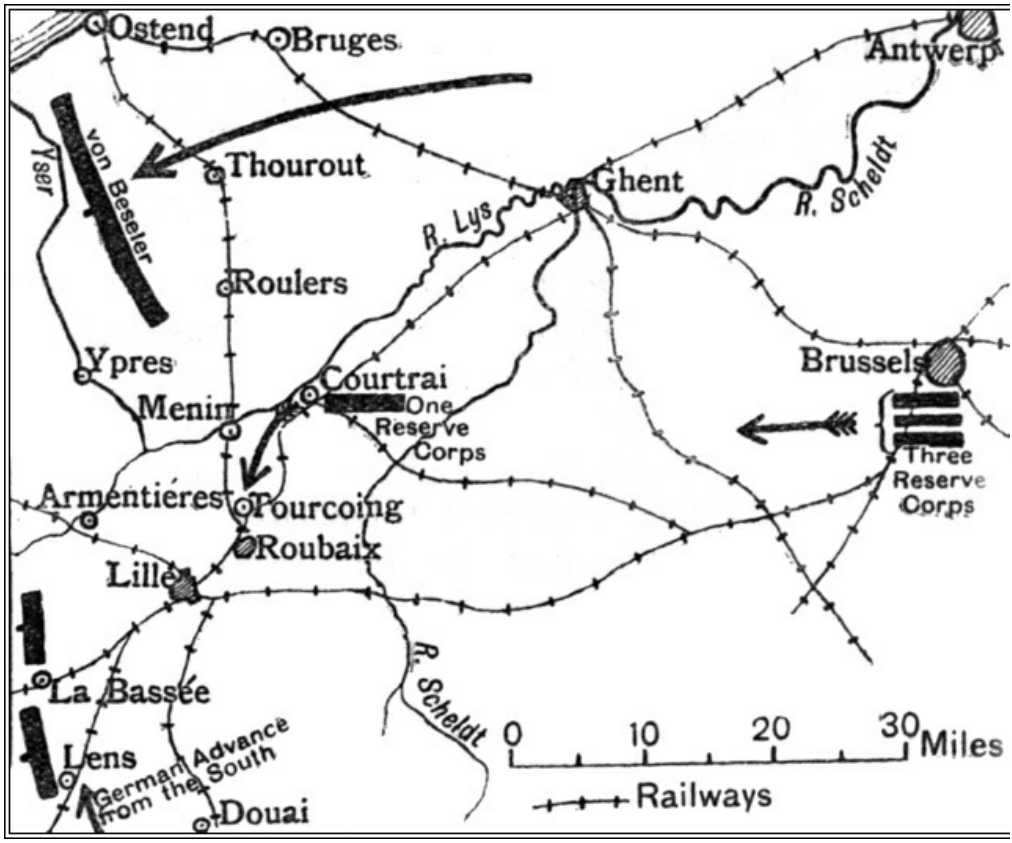
At that time Sir John French was still uncertain about the forces opposed to him. He knew of von Beseler's army on the coast route, and was naturally anxious as to the stand which the wearied Belgians, aided by French Territorials and cavalry, could make against it on the Yser. He also had news of a German reserve corps and a Landwehr division which had been giving trouble to Allenby's cavalry on the Lys. The far more formidable movement, of which the 7th Division was begin ning to get news, was still unknown to him, and if he had heard the rumours of it, he had not been able to get verification. At that time he still believed that the extreme right of the main German force was in the neighbourhood of Tourcoing, and that von Beseler's was an isolated flanking force. He did not know that von Beseler was no more the outer rim of a huge serried line wheeling against the Allies from the north-east.

On 11th October four reserve corps—the 22nd, 23rd, 26th, and 27th—left Germany. Their composition was mainly southern—from Wurtemberg and Bavaria—though troops from Hanover were included. One corps was rushed through by rail to Courtrai, and was, indeed, not formed till the men arrived there. The other three were concentrated in Brussels, and, without losing an hour, began their eighty-mile march westward. These corps were new formations, composed largely of Landsturm and the new volunteers, and including every type, from boys of sixteen to stout gentlemen in middle life. They were to show themselves as desperate in attack as the most seasoned veterans. By the 18th they were on the line Roulers-Menin.

Oct. 11.

On the 16th the Belgians were driven out of the Forest of Houthulst, and fell back behind the Hazebrouck-Dixmude railway. Their retreat uncovered the left of the British 3rd Cavalry Division, and on the following day four French cavalry divisions, under General de Mitry, cleared the forest of Germans, and re-established the line. On that night, the 17th, Sir John French decided that the moment had come to put into effect the third of his strategical alternatives. If La Bassée and Lille had proved too strong for the Second Corps, then Marlborough's famous strategy might be employed against the German right. With Menin as a pivot, commanding an important railway and the line of the Lys, a flanking movement might be instituted against Courtrai and the line of the Scheldt. Accordingly he instructed Sir Henry Rawlinson to advance next morning, seize Menin, and await the support of the First Corps, which was due in two days.

Oct. 17.



Advance of the Four German New Corps.

Sir Henry Rawlinson had an impossible task. He had to operate on a very wide front at least twenty miles long, and he could look for no sup ports till Sir

Douglas Haig arrived. Moreover, he knew of the four new German corps, which were still hardly credited at headquarters, and on the morning of the 18th the French cavalry near Roulers captured some cyclists belonging to one of them. On the morning of the 19th he moved out towards Menin, with the right of the 7th Division protected as far as possible by Allenby's cavalry north of the Lys, while the 3rd Cavalry Division was on its left, and de Mitry's French cavalry to the north of them.

Oct. 19.

The cavalry to the left presently came in touch with large enemy forces advancing from Roulers. The British brigades were skilfully handled, and the 6th Brigade took Ledeghem and Rolleghem-capelle. But owing to the continued German pressure, the 7th Brigade on the left had to fall back, and in the afternoon the 6th Brigade also followed, retiring to billets in the villages of Poelcapelle and Zonnebeke, while the French cavalry held Passchendaele, a mile in advance. The progress of the infantry was summarily stopped by the advance of enormous masses from the direction of Courtrai. The nearest the 7th Division got to Menin was the line Ledeghem-Kezelberg, about three miles from the town. It had to fall back at once to avoid utter disaster, and entrenched itself on a line of eight miles, just east of the Gheluvelt cross-roads, a name soon to be famous in the annals of the war. The great struggle for Ypres was on the eve of beginning.

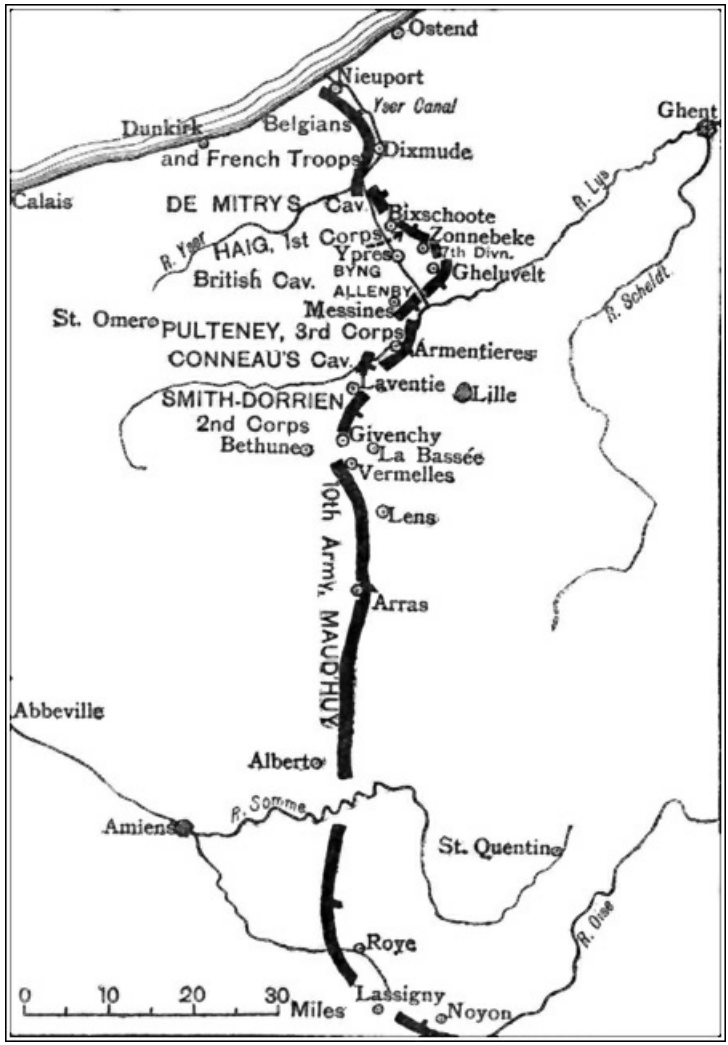
On that day, 19th October, the First Corps, under Sir Douglas Haig, detrained at St. Omer, and marched to Hazebrouck. That evening Sir Douglas Haig was instructed to move through Ypres to Thourout, with the intention of advancing on Bruges and Ghent. That such instructions should have been given shows that the British headquarters were still very imperfectly informed about the real strength of the enemy, which the 7th Division were then learning from bitter experience. Two alternatives presented themselves to the mind of Sir John French. His force was holding far too long a line for its numbers and strength, and the natural use of the new corps would have been to strengthen some part of the front, such as that before La Bassée. On the other hand, a much-battered Belgian army with a small complement of French Territorials and cavalry had sole charge of the twenty-mile line from Ypres to the sea. If the Germans chose to attack north of Ypres they would find a weakly held passage. Accordingly Sir Douglas Haig was directed to move north of Ypres, and Sir John French, after instructing him about Thourout and Bruges, bade him use his discretion should an unforeseen situation arise after he had passed Ypres. The unforeseen situation was not long in appearing. The First Corps never approached Thourout, but were detained in front of Ypres, where they formed the left wing of the great struggle.

By the 19th—to continue our course to the sea—the Belgians had fallen back nearly to the line of the Yser from Dixmude to Nieuport. The Yser is a canalized stream, which, rising near St. Omer, enters at Nieuport the canal system which lies behind the sand-dunes on the edge of the cultivated land, and connects with the salt water by several sea canals. The Belgians were, in Sir John French's words, "in the last stages of exhaustion," since for ten weeks they had scarcely been out of action, but their spirit was unconquered, and the gaps in their line—they cannot have been more than 40,000—were filled up by French Territorials from Dunkirk, and French Marines under Admiral Ronarc'h, while the British and French fleets were waiting to give them support from the sea. But the front was still dangerously weak, and on 18th October General Joffre placed at the disposal of General Foch the reinforcements which presently became the 8th French Army. It was commanded by General Victor d'Urbal, a man of fifty-six, who, like Maud'huy, had been a brigadier at the beginning of the war. This new army, which not only took over the existing troops on the Yser, but acted as a reinforcement to the British left, contained two famous first-line corps, the 16th, under General Paul Grossetti, who had won a reputation for cool heroism in an army which contained many heroes, and the 9th, under General Dubois, which had been the spearhead of Foch's onslaught at the Marne, and was to win eternal glory for its deeds at Ypres.

Oct. 20.

The 20th of October saw the whole Allied line from Albert to the sea in the position in which it had to meet the desperate effort of the Germans to regain the initiative and the offensive. The port was closed, but it might yet be opened. Maud'huy's 10th Army lay on a line from east of Albert, through Arras, west of Lens, to just west of the château of Vermelles, south of the Bethune-La Bassée railway. Smith-Dorrien's Second Corps ran from Givenchy, west of La Bassée, through Herlies and Aubers to Laventie. Then came Conneau's corps of French cavalry, which had done good work on our right at the Marne, and then Pulteney's Third Corps, which was astride the Lys east of Armentières. North of it came Allenby's cavalry corps, with the 1st Division south of Messines, and the 2nd Division between Messines and Zandvoorde. Then, forming the point of the Ypres salient, came the 7th Division east of the Gheluvelt cross-roads, with, on its left, between Zonnebeke and Poelcapelle, Byng's 3rd Cavalry Division. North-west of them, between Zonnebeke and Bixschoote, Haig's First Corps was coming into position. North, again, lay de Mitry's French cavalry, till the Belgian lines were reached at Dixmude. These on the 20th were still mostly on the east side of the Yser, but they held the passages for a retreat to the west bank. French marines and Territorials, soon to be absorbed in d'Urbal's 8th Army, strengthened the

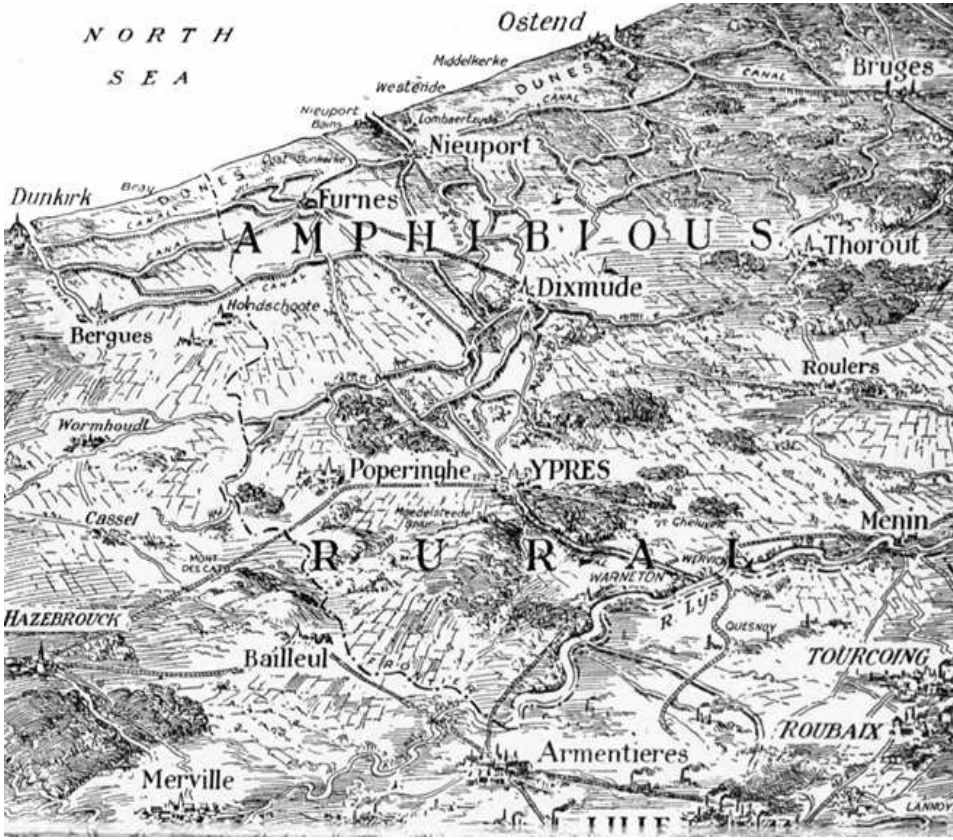
Belgian front to the sea, where the guns of the Allied warships were waiting for the enemy.

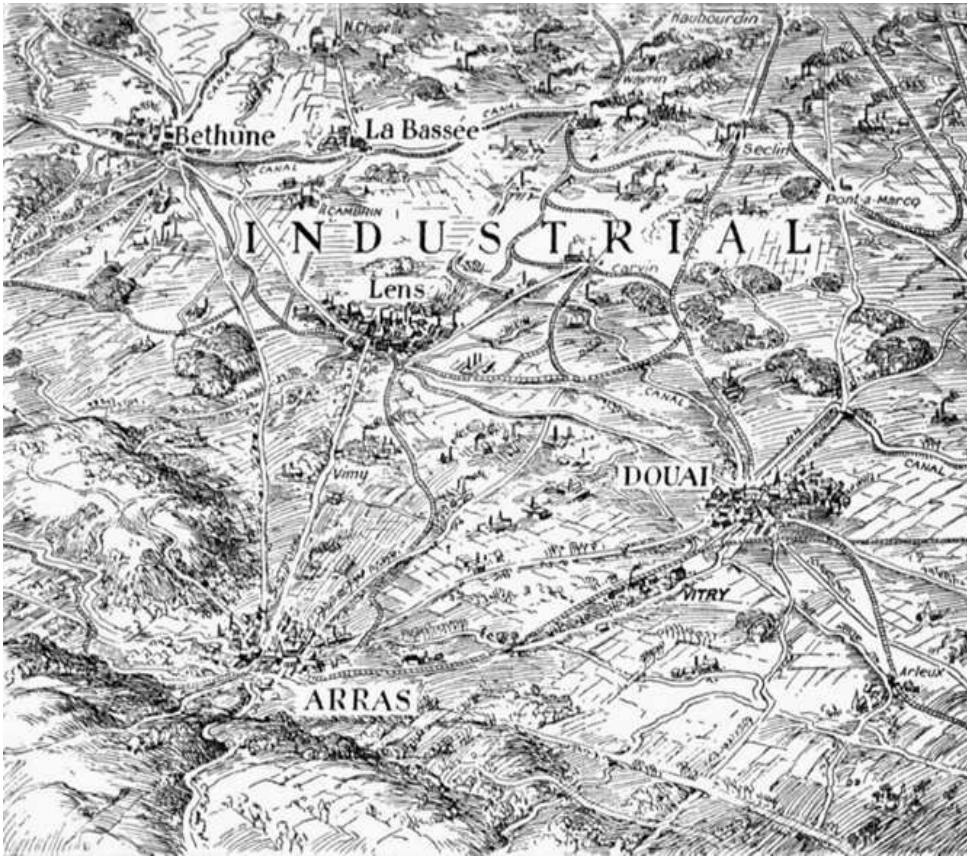


The Allied Line from the Somme to the Sea, about October 20th.

This line of battle, little short of a hundred miles, was held on the Allied side by inadequate forces. Maud'huy may have had three corps, but he had no more; the British were three and a half corps strong—seven divisions of infantry; the Belgians were in effectives little more than a corps—say a weak corps and a half. That is eight corps, and if we add two corps for d'Urbal's regulars, and two corps for Territorials, and allow for cavalry and marines, we shall get a strength of about half a million. The British force, where we know the figures with more exactness, had an average strength of only 1.6 rifles per yard

of front, and it may be questioned if the rest of the Allied line had a higher average than three. The German numbers can only be conjectured. The commands, as we have already seen, had been redistributed, and von Buelow was against Maud'huy's left and the British right, the Bavarian Crown Prince against the British centre and left, and the Duke of Wurtemberg against the Belgians and d'Urbal. It is impossible at present to disentangle and identify the different German corps which appeared and disappeared in the opposing lines. Most were new formations, but the nucleus of the armies was still the veterans who had crossed the Sambre and Meuse in August. We can trace, for example, with von Buelow most of the Prussian Guard Corps, the 2nd, 4th, and 9th Cavalry Divisions, and the 3rd (Berlin) Corps, which had belonged to his old command, as well as the 7th (Westphalian) Corps of von Kluck. In the Bavarian command we can trace the 19th (Saxon) Corps, which had struck so stout a blow on the Meuse. The total German force from Nieuport to Albert may probably be put in the neighbourhood of one and a half million[8], and its constituents were constantly being altered by the passage of fresh formations from Germany and the transference of corps and divisions from more stagnant battlefields farther south. This force was so arranged in the actual fighting that at the points of attack the superiority over the Allies was not three but five to one.


NORTH
SEA
Ostend
Middelkerke
Westende
DUNES
CANAL
Bruges
Nieuport Bains
Lombaertzyde
Nieuport
Dunkirk
Furnes
AMPHIBIOUS
Thorout
Dixmude
Hondschoote
Bergues
Roulers
Wormhoudt
Poperinghe
YPRES
Cassel
Menin
RURAL
WARNETON
HAZEBROUCK
Bailleul
R. Lys
QUESNOY
TOURCOING
ROUBAIX
Armentieres
Merville
LANNOY



Bird's-eye View of the Country from Albert to the Sea.

A word must be said on the character of the *terrain* of the impending battles. From the peat -bogs and endless cornfields of the Santerre, where de Castelnau was engaged, the plateau of Albert rises between the Somme and the Scarpe. It is the ordinary Picardy upland—-hedgeless roads, unfenced fields, lines of stiff trees, and here and there the shallow glen of a stream. At the northern end Arras lies in its crook of hills, a beautiful and gracious little city on the edge of the ugliest land on earth. The hills sweep north-westward to the coast of the Channel, ending in Cape Grisnez, and bound the valleys of the Scarpe, Scheldt, Lys, and Yser, forming in reality the western containing wall of the great plain of Europe, of which the eastern is the Urals. This plain of the Scheldt and its tributaries is everywhere of an intolerable flatness. A few inconsiderable swells break its monotony, such as the Cat's Hill, north of Bailleul, and the undulations south of Ypres and at La Bassée, and there is, of course, the noble solitary height of Cassel. But in general it is flat as a tennis lawn, seamed with sluggish rivers, and criss-crossed by endless railways and canals.

Ten miles north of Arras, at the town of Lens, the Black Country of France begins. From there to Lille and Armentières is the mining region of the Pas de Calais. Every road is lined with houses; factory chimneys and the headgear of collieries rise everywhere; and the whole district is like a piece of Lancashire or West Yorkshire, where towns merge into each other without rural intervals. The Lys flows, black and foul, through a land of industrial débris. North of the Lys towards Ypres we enter a country-side of market gardens, where every inch is closely tilled, and the land is laid out like a chessboard. There are patches of wood, some fairly large, like the Forest of Houthulst, between Ypres and Roulers, but these are no barrier to military movements. Everywhere there are good roads, one-half paved after the Flemish fashion, and the only obstacles to the passage of armies are the innumerable canals. As we move toward the Yser we pass from Essex to the Lincolnshire Fens. The fields are lined and crossed with ditches, and the soil seems a compromise between land and water. Then comes the great barrier of the sand-dunes, which line the coast from Calais eastwards, and through which the waterways of the interior debouch by a number of sea canals. Beyond the dunes are the restless and shallow waters of the North Sea.

On such a line the Allies on the 20th of October awaited the attack of the enemy, as they had done two months before on the Sambre and the Meuse. Now, as then, they were outnumbered; now, as then, they did not know the enemy's strength; now, as then, their initial strategy had failed. The fall of Antwerp had destroyed the hope of holding the line of the Scheldt; the German occupation of La Bassée and Lille had spoiled the turning movement against the German right; the failure at Menin and the swift advance of the new German corps had put Marlborough's device out of the question. Once more, as at Mons and Charleroi, we were waiting on the defensive. But our position on 20th October had two advantages over that of 21st August. Our flanks were secured, and we had now taken the measure of our enemy.

Note on Marlborough's Campaigns, 1708-1710.

Marlborough's campaigns in West Flanders cover so much of the ground of the present war that a brief note may be permitted. The aim of the Allies in 1708 was to strike at France through the Artois, and for this purpose the control of the navigation of the Scheldt and Lys was essential. It was the object of Vendôme's

army, which marched north in the summer of 1708, to recapture Bruges and Ghent, which were the keys of the lower waterways. It succeeded in this task, but was decisively defeated by Marlborough on 11th July at Oudenarde on the Scheldt, after one of the most wonderful forced marches in history. Marlborough himself now desired to march straight into France, detaching troops to mask Lille, and co-operating with General Erle's projected descent upon Normandy —a proceeding which would have automatically led to the evacuation by the French of Ghent and Bruges. This bold stroke the caution of the Dutch deputies forbade, and the Allies sat down before the fortress of Lille, bringing their siege train by road from Brussels, since the Scheldt and the Lys were closed to them. Vendôme and Berwick united their armies, and marched from Tournai to Lille, where, however, they did not dare to offer battle, and Marlborough was prevented by his Dutch colleagues from forcing it on them. The French now attempted to hold the line of the Scarpe and Scheldt to Ghent, and cut off all convoys from Brussels; but Marlborough held Ostend, and Webb's victory of Wynendale enabled the convoys to get through.

Lille, gallantly defended by old Marshal Boufflers, fell on 9th December, and Bruges and Ghent quickly followed. The way to Paris was now dangerously open, and Villars, who took command of the French armies when the campaign opened in the spring of 1709, resolved at all costs to cover Arras, which he rightly regarded as the gate of the capital. He drew up lines of entrenchments from the Scarpe to the Lys, passing through La Bassée. Marlborough, lying to the south of Lille, made apparent preparations for assault in force, and induced Villars to summon the garrison of Tournai to his aid. Meantime the duke had sent his artillery to Menin, and on the 26th of June marched swiftly eastward to Tournai, which fell to him on the 23rd of July. While the siege was going on, Marlborough led his main army back before the La Bassée lines. His object was to turn those lines by striking eastward, and entering France by way of the rivers Trouille and Sambre, and he wished to mislead Villars as to his purpose. On the last day of August, Orkney with twenty squadrons was sent to St. Ghislain to the west of Mons, and the Prince of Hesse-Cassel and Cadogan followed in the midst of torrential rains. Villars, fearing for the fortress of Mons, hastened after them, and on 7th September had arrived before the stretch of forest which screens Mons on the west, and is pierced by two openings—at the village of Jemappes in the north and at Malplaquet in the south. Mons was by this time invested by the Allies, and to cover its siege Marlborough fought the Battle of Malplaquet on 11th September. In that battle—"one of the bloodiest," says Mr. Fortescue, "ever fought by mortal men"—the Allies had 20,000 casualties as against the French 12,000; and though it was a victory, and Mons fell a month

later, the season was too far advanced, and the Allies had suffered too heavily, to allow of an invasion of France. But with Mons and Tournai in their hands, they controlled the Lys and Scheldt, and protected their conquests in Flanders.

In the campaign of 1710 Marlborough's thoughts again turned westward, and on 26th June he captured Douai. But he found Arras and the road to France protected by a vast line of trenches, which Villars had constructed to be, as he said, the "*ne plus ultra* of Marlborough." The duke had to content himself with taking Bethune, Aire, and St. Venant, which gave him the complete control of the Lys. He was in a difficult position for bold action, for his political enemies were lying in wait for the slightest hint of failure to work his ruin. During the winter the work of entrenching went on, and in the spring of 1711 the French lines ran from the coast, up the river Canche by Montreuil and Hesdin, down the Gy to Montenancourt, whence the flooded Scarpe carried them to Biache; thence by canal to the river Sensée; thence to Bouchain, on the Scheldt, and down that river to Valenciennes. The story of how Marlborough outwitted Villars and planted himself beyond the Scheldt at Oisy, between Villars and France, and within easy reach of Arras and Cambrai, deserves to be studied in detail, for it is one of the most wonderful in the whole history of tactics. Thereafter the jealousy and treachery of Marlborough's enemies achieved their purpose, and the great duke's campaigns in Flanders were at an end.

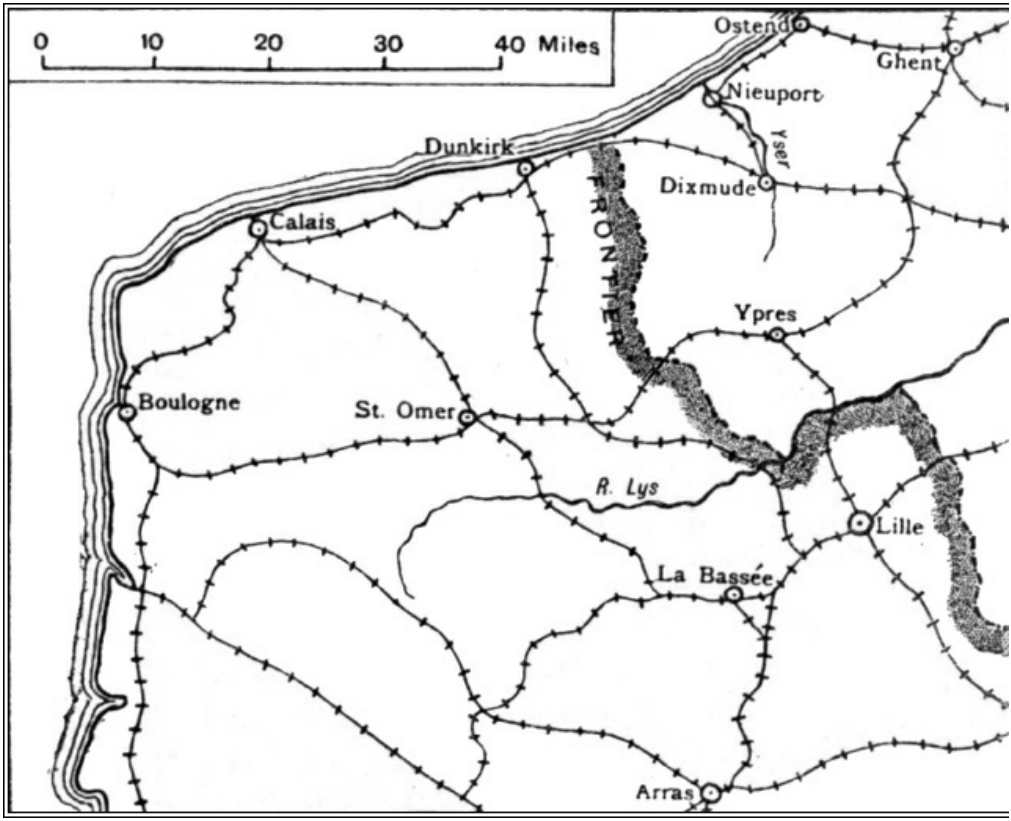
Marlborough's objective was, of course, the opposite of that of the Allies in 1914. They were moving from the south-west, while he moved from the north-east, and the lines of Villars were meant to hinder attack from the east, whereas the Germans at La Bassée were entrenched against an attack from the south and west. But all the line of Northern France from the Scarpe to the Sambre was Villars' front of defence, as it was the German flank defence about 10th October, when the race to the sea was in progress. If the Allies had been able to push through the gap between Roulers and the Lys and turn the German right, they would have followed the identical strategy of the movement which led to Malplaquet, with this difference, that their object would have been not an invasion of Paris, but the turning of the flank of an entrenched invader.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BATTLES OF THE YSER, LA BASSÉE, AND ARRAS.

The Various Routes to Calais—German Strategy Incomprehensible—The Banks of the Yser—German Attack on Nieuport—British Warships in Action—Germans Cross the Yser—The Struggle for Ramscapelle—The Great Inundations—Germans capture Dixmude—Failure of Yser Attack—Attack on La Bassée Position, 22nd October to 2nd November—Loss of Neuve Chapelle—Arrival of Indian Corps—Charge of 2nd Gurkhas—Fighting Value of Indian Troops—Difficulties of the Weather—The Attacks on Arras, 20th-26th October—Maud'huy's Position.

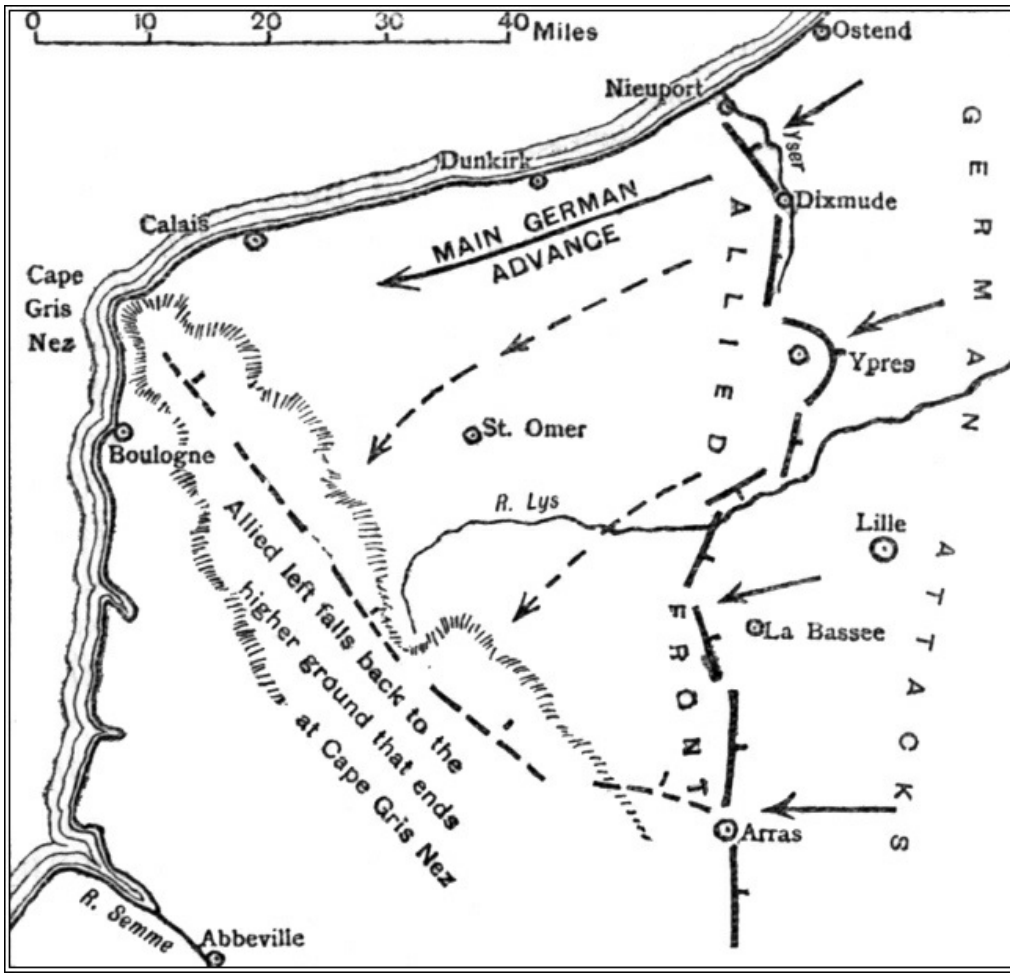
The Allied battle line in the north, which came to completion about the 19th of October, stretched, as we have seen, from Albert to the sea, a distance as the crow flies of more than eighty miles. If the reader will consult the map on page 52, he will see that two points in this front would give the enemy a special advantage in attack. The first is Arras, which is a centre on which lines converge from West Flanders and North-Eastern France, and from which lines run down the Ancre valley to Amiens and the basin of the Seine, to Boulogne by Doullens and by St. Pol, and northward to Lens and Bethune. The second is La Bassée, which gives a straight line by Bethune and St. Omer to Calais and Boulogne. If the Germans sought possession of the Channel ports, then their natural road was by one or the other. A third possible route lay along the seashore by Nieuport, where the great coast road runs behind the shelter of the dunes. If the aim of the enemy was the speedy capture of Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne, a successful breach in the Allied front at Arras or La Bassée would enable them to realize it. Possible, but far less valuable for the same purpose, was the road which followed the sea. It was the shortest route to Calais, but it had no railway to accompany it, and it led through some of the most difficult country which a great army could encounter.



Communications of the Nieuport-Ypres-La Bassée-Arras front with the Channel coast about Calai and Boulogne.

In war the shortest way to an end is often the longest. By this time the German Staff, under the inspiration of von Falkenhayn, had decided that at all costs the Channel ports must be won. Their reason seems to have been twofold. They thought that the capture of Calais and Boulogne would gravely alarm public opinion in Britain, and interfere with the sending of the new levies, which, in spite of their official scepticism, they fully believed in and seriously dreaded. In the second place, with the coast in their possession, they hoped to mount big guns which would command half the width of the narrows of the Channel, to lay under their cover a mine-field, and to prepare a base for a future invasion of England. It was argued that such a measure would complicate the task of the British fleet, which would be compelled to watch two hostile bases —the Heligoland Bight and the French Channel coast—and that in such a division of tasks the chance might come for a naval battle in which the numerical superiority would not lie with Britain. Many other motives, no doubt, lay behind the plan, but these constitute the strategical reasons. Now, with this purpose, the

best road was clearly not the shortest. If the Allied front could be pierced at La Bassée, or, still better, at Arras, and a gate were forced for the passage of the German legions, then two of the Allied armies would be cut off and penned between the enemy and the sea. In this way the chief purpose of all campaigns would be effected, and a large part of an opponent's strength would be finally destroyed. Further, a magnificent line of communications to the coast would be opened up—communications which could not be cut, for all the Channel littoral and hinterland east to Antwerp would be in German hands. If, on the other hand, a way were won along the shore by Nieuport, all that would happen would be that the Allies' left would fall back to the line of heights which ends in Cape Grisnez, and their front, instead of running due north from Albert, would bend to the north-west in an easy angle. Further, the coast road would be a poor line of communications at the best, and most open to attack by a movement from Ypres or La Bassée.

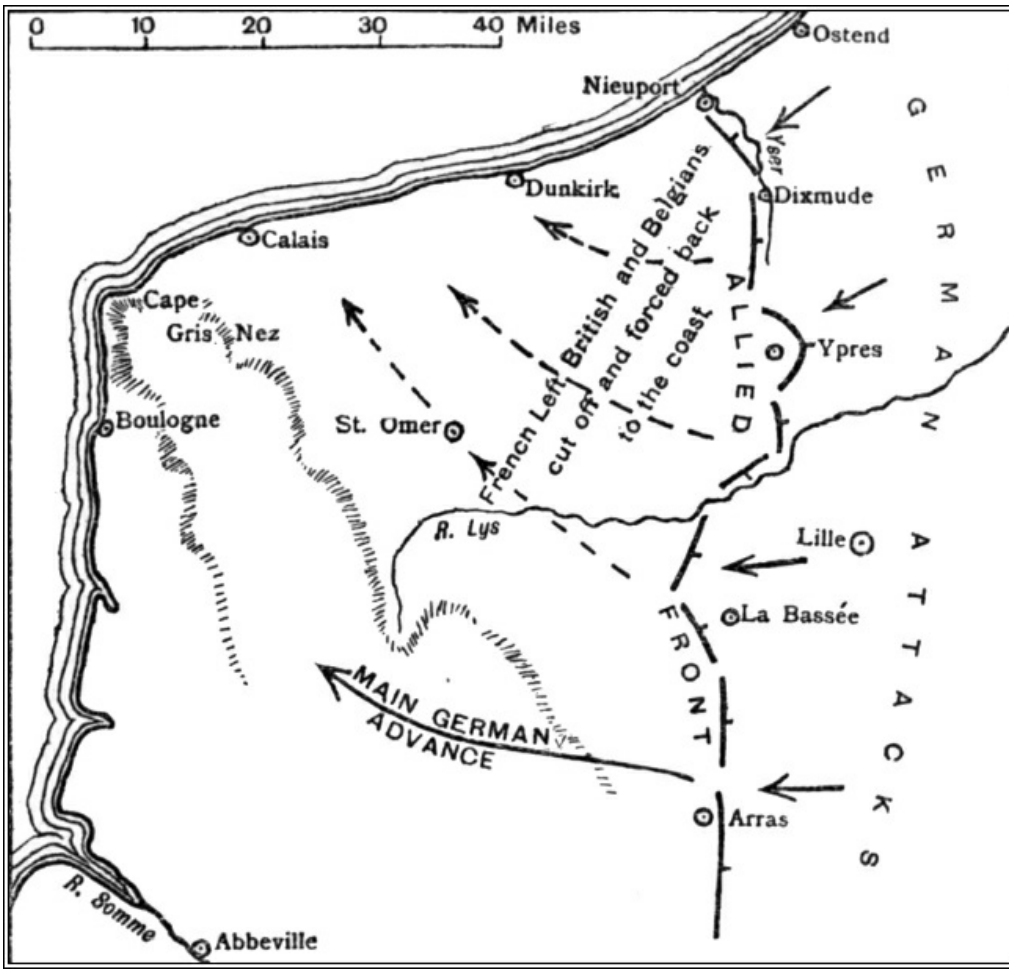


The Fighting on the Allied Left.

(a) Result if the Enemy had broken through by the Coast Route.

Besides these three points where a road might be won, the Allied lines revealed another special feature. East of Ypres, on the 19th of October, it bent forward in a bold salient, the legacy bequeathed by an offensive which had failed. If this could be maintained, it obviously provided a base for flank attacks upon any force advancing across the Yser and through La Bassée. It was, therefore, the aim of the Germans to flatten out the salient as soon as possible. The importance of Arras, La Bassée, Ypres, and Nieuport must be kept constantly in mind if we would understand the complicated campaign which follows. The first two were the points where a successful piercing movement would have results of the highest strategic value, not only opening up the road to the Channel, but putting the whole Allied left wing in deadly jeopardy. The third

was a salient which, if left alone, would endanger any German advance. The fourth, if gained, would give a short, if difficult, route to Calais, and would turn the Allies' flank, though not in a fashion to put it in serious danger.



The Fighting on the Allied Left.

(b) Result if the Enemy had broken through about Arras.

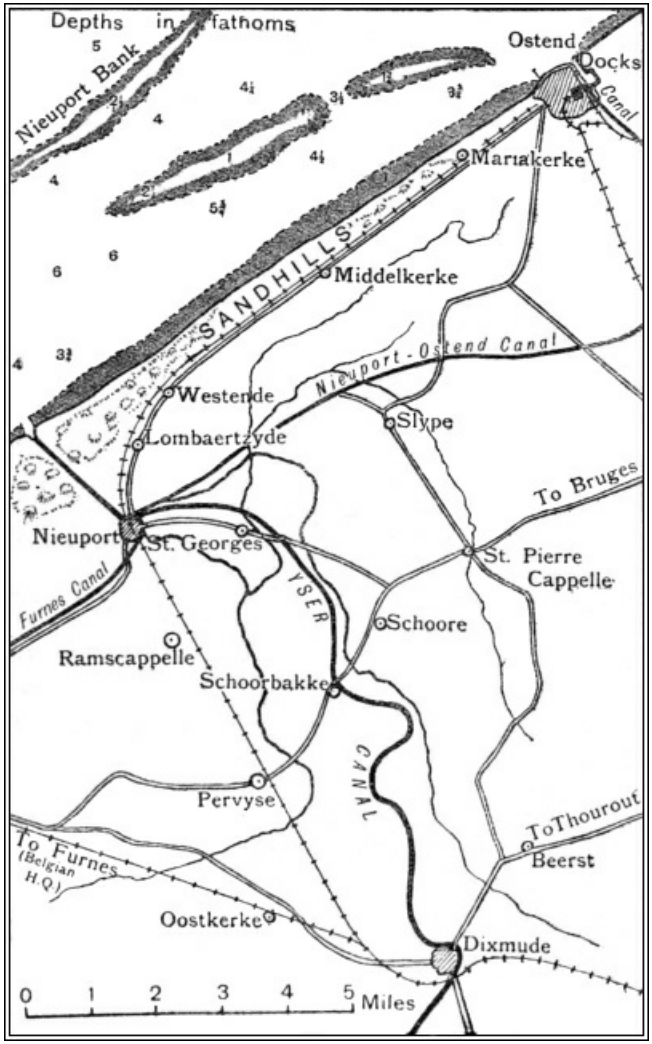
It is a sound rule in war that strength should not be dissipated. You may attack the enemy's front at different points, as Napoleon did at Waterloo, but at each point you should attack in full strength. With this in our minds it is hard to discover an explanation for the course which the Germans actually followed. For they attacked almost simultaneously at all four points, and for three desperate weeks persisted in the attack. Why, it is impossible at present to say. Had the movement against Arras succeeded all would have been won, and the

salient at Ypres would have only meant the more certain destruction of the British army. Had the attack upon La Bassée been successfully carried through, the same result would have been attained; though, since the success was won farther from the Allied centre, a smaller section of the Allied force would have been isolated. Had even the worst of the three roads been chosen for a concentrated action and the coast route cleared for the passage of the German armies, then the Allied flank must have fallen back from Ypres and La Bassée. But it is hard to understand why *a*, *b*, *c*, *d* should have been attacked with equal violence when either *a* or *b* would have given possession of the others. It is never wise to underrate the intelligence of the enemy, and all that we can say at present is that the German strategy is inexplicable. They may have been so confident of their numerical superiority that they believed they had the strength to spare to carry all four positions. But economy of effort is in itself a doctrine of wise strategy, and on this assumption here was a reckless squandering of strength.

In this chapter it is proposed to deal with the three assaults—on the Yser, at La Bassée, and at Arras—leaving the supreme effort against Ypres for separate consideration. But let it be clearly understood that all four attacks were contemporaneous, and directed against a single battle front. The fighting on the Yser merged, towards the south, in the fighting north of Ypres; the struggle for Ypres was closely connected with the battle which raged from La Bassée to the Lys; and the stand of the Second Corps at La Bassée was influenced in many ways by the fate of Maud'huy's left wing north of Lens. If this fact is realized, it seems clearer and more convenient to deal separately with each attack, since each had its own special objective.

The sketch on page 59 will explain the nature of the country along the canal which is usually dignified by the name of the Yser, the little river which feeds it from the south-west. Between Nieuport, the port on the coast a mile from the ocean, and the little town of Dixmude, where the Yser turns sharply to the south-west, is a distance of ten miles. On the left bank, at an average distance of a mile and a half from the Yser, runs a single-line railway from Dixmude to Nieuport, through the villages of Per vyse and Ramscapelle. No railway crosses the canal between Dixmude and Nieuport, but it is spanned by several bridges. The most important is at Nieuport, where the main coast road runs along the harder soil of the dunes. A second lies about midway in the reach, where a road comes east from Pervyse just below the point where the canal loops itself in a pocket. At

Dixmude itself, which lies on the eastern bank, a road and a line run to Furnes and Dunkirk. A number of small creeks of brackish water enter the Yser on both sides, and all around are low, marshy meadows, a little below the level of the sea. One or two patches of drier and higher land are found along the edge of the canal, but nowhere, till we reach the dunes on the actual coast, are there any slopes which can be said to give gun positions or a commanding situation. The whole country is blind and sodden, as ill fitted for the passage of troops and heavy guns as the creeks and salt marshes of the Essex coast.



The Yser Front, Nieuport to Dixmude.

On the 16th of October, as we have seen, the right wing of the retreating Belgian army had reached the Forest of

Oct. 16.

Houthulst, north-east of Ypres, and had been driven out of it by the German movement from Roulers. They now drew in that wing, and by the following day were aligned on the east bank of the Yser, with French cavalry and Territorials connecting them with the British army to the south. De Moranville can scarcely have had more than 40,000 in his command, and to a man they were battle-weary. But the presence of their king, and the consciousness that they were waging no longer a solitary war, but were aligned with their Allies, spurred them to a great effort. The Yser was the natural line for them to hold, for, more than French or British, they were accustomed to war among devious water-courses. The German force against them was part of von Beseler's army from Antwerp—not less than 60,000 men—and the Wurtembergers were moving rapidly from the south to join them. The Belgians had by the 17th no other supports for their line than two divisions of French Territorials on their right, and in Dixmude a brigade of French Marines, for d'Urbal's 8th Army was still in process of formation. The disposition was as follows: the 2nd Belgian Division was in Nieuport, with the 1st on its right, and the 3rd continuing the line to Dixmude. The 5th Division was in reserve on the right centre. Ronarc'h's Brigade of Breton Marines consisted of two regiments, each with three battalions, a total of about 7,000 men.

Oct. 17.

Oct. 18.

By the evening of the 17th von Beseler, to whom the first coast attack had been entrusted, had moved west from Middelkerke and Westende, and was in position just east of Nieuport. In the previous two days there had been an intermittent bombardment, and on the 17th the 1st and 4th Belgian Divisions had been driven across the Yser, but had regained the right bank during the night. Early on the morning of the 18th he attacked with the object of seizing the Nieuport bridge. The Belgians were drawn up east of the Yser, holding in strength the three main bridges. The sudden and violent assault of a superior force upon the left wing of a much-enduring army would in all likelihood have succeeded, and if at this date de Moranville had been pushed well back from the Yser towards Furnes, von Beseler would have been in Dunkirk in two days and in Calais the day after. But at this most critical moment help arrived from an unexpected quarter. Suddenly the German right resting on the sand-dunes found itself enfiladed. Shells fell in their trenches from the direction of the sea, and, looking towards the Channel, they saw the ominous grey shapes of British warships. Two and a half centuries before, when Turenne met the Spaniards at the Battle of the Dunes, he had been greatly aided by Cromwell's fleet, which shelled the enemy's wing. History repeated itself almost in the same spot, and once more the French front fought in alliance with

the British navy.

Germany had never dreamed of any serious danger from the sea. She believed from the charts that off that shelving shore, with its yeasty coastal waters, there was no room for even a small gunboat to get within range, and she did not imagine that Britain would venture her ships in such perilous seas. Every student of naval history knows the dangers of the "banks of Zeeland," and at this very place, between Nieuport and Ostend, the *San Felipe*, from the Spanish Armada, had been wrecked. But at the outbreak of war three strange vessels lay at Barrow, built to the order of the Brazilian Government. Broad in the beam, and shallow of draught, they had been intended as patrol ships for the river Amazon. In August the Admiralty, with fortunate prescience, purchased these strange craft, which appeared in the Navy List as the *Humber*, the *Severn*, and the *Mersey*. They were heavily armoured, and carried each two 6-inch guns mounted forward in an armoured barbette, and two 4.7 howitzers aft, while four 3-pounder guns were carried amidships. Their draught was only 4 feet 7 inches, so that they could move in shoal water where an ordinary warship would run aground. With the first news of the German advance along the coast the Admiralty saw the value of their purchase. On the evening of 17th October the three monitors[9] left Dover under the command of Rear-Admiral the Hon. Horace Hood, and sailed for the Flemish coast. The German attack on the 18th had hardly started when Hood began his bombardment. Von Beseler brought his heavy guns into action, but they were completely outranged, and several batteries were destroyed. For ten days this strange warfare continued. Admiral Hood's flotilla was presently joined by other craft, chiefly old ships of little value, for the Admiralty did not dare to risk the newer ships in so novel a type of battle. The old cruiser *Brilliant* was present, the gunboat *Rinaldo*, several destroyers, including the *Falcon*, and on the 27th there arrived the *Venerable*—the name of Duncan's flagship at the Texel—a 15,000-ton battleship, mounting four 12-inch and twelve 6-inch guns, which came into action from outside the shoals. French warships acted with the British, and the bombardment extended east to Ostend. The Germans were unable to retaliate. Their big guns did not reach us, and their submarines could not manœuvre in the shallow water, and the torpedoes which they fired, being set at a much greater depth than the monitors' draught, passed harmlessly beneath their hulls. Our naval guns swept the country for some six miles inland, and the German right was pushed away from the coast. Nieuport was saved, and the German attack on the Yser was possible only beyond the range of the leviathans from the sea.

But the Germans still clung to the coast route, and the Duke of Wurtemberg had now taken command, bringing with him the pick of the Wurtemberg

regiments. The Allies, too, had received reinforcements, for General Grossetti had brought up from Rheims the 42nd Division of the 16th Corps of the first line, and was holding the centre opposite Pervyse. The critical period of the attack had been the days between the 17th and the 22nd, and the British warships had averted that peril. But out of the range of the fleet the German infantry struggled desperately for the passage. On Friday, the 23rd, a body of Germans succeeded in crossing at St. Georges, and forcing their way to Ramscapelle on the railway. There, however, the Belgians drove them back, and that day they gained no footing on the western bank. On that night, too, no less than fourteen attacks were made upon Dixmude, and were driven back by Admiral Ronarc'h and his marines. Next day another great effort was made at Schoorbakke by the bridge which carries the Pervyse road, and also at a point in the loop of the canal immediately to the south. About 5,000 men seem to have crossed, and at midnight they held the positions they had gained. On Sunday, the 25th, there was a crossing in greater force, and for a moment it looked as if the line of the Yser had been lost.

Oct. 23.

Oct. 24.

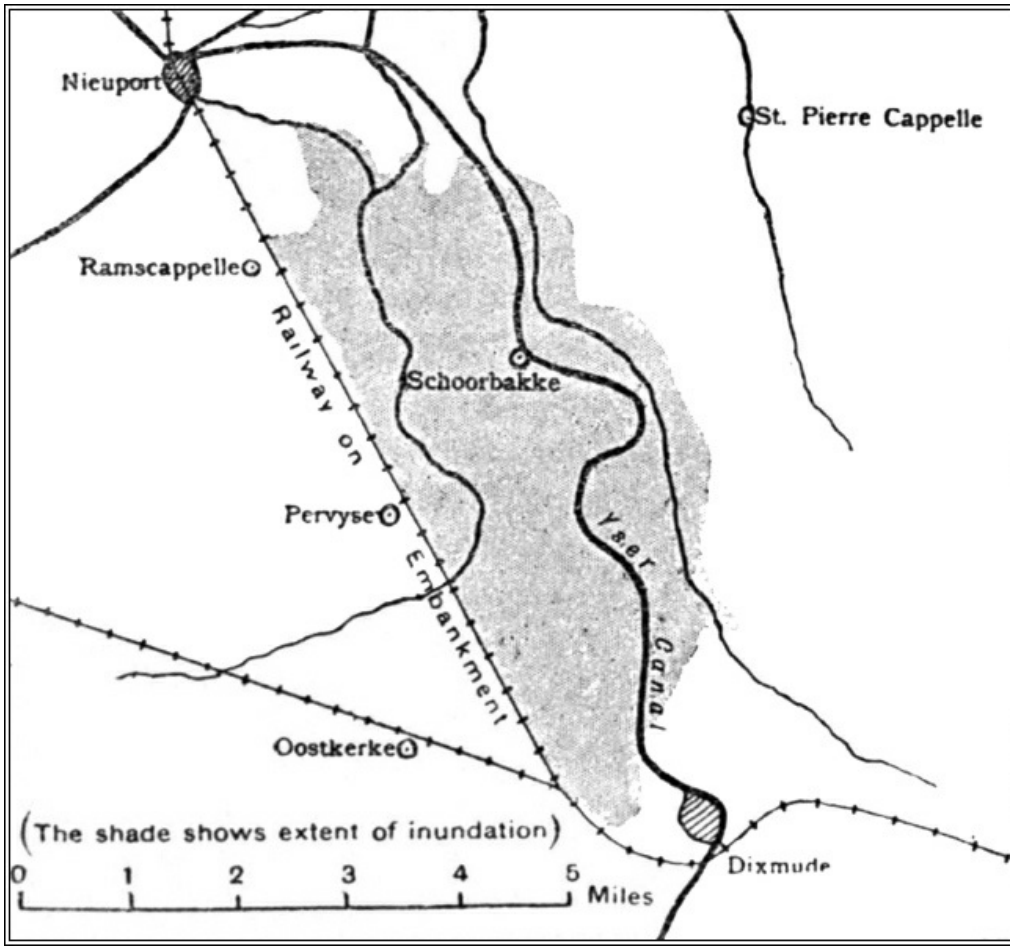
Oct. 25.

But in that country it is one thing to gain a position on the west bank and quite another to be able to advance from it through the miry fields, intersected with countless sluggish rivulets. As the Germans tried to deploy from each bridge-head they were met with stubborn resistance from the Belgian and French entrenched among the dykes. For three days our ragged battalions fought a desperate action in the meadows. Every yard was contested, and the German progress was slow and costly. But even in country where the defence has a natural advantage numbers are bound to tell, and the steady stream of German reinforcements was pressing back the French and Belgians. By the 28th they had retired almost to the Dixmude-Nieuport railway, which runs on an embankment above the level of the fields. The Emperor was with the Duke of Wurtemberg, and under his eye the German attack grew hourly in impetus. Another day, and the Allied left might have been broken.

Oct. 28.

In this moment of crisis the Belgians played their last card. Once more they sought aid from the water, and, after the fashion of their ancestors, broke down the dykes. The last week had been heavy with rains, and the canalized Yser was brimming to its bank. Under cover of the British naval guns the Belgian left had been hard at work near Nieuport. They had dammed the lower reaches of the canal, and on the 28th achieved their purpose. The Yser lipped over its brim, and spread in great lagoons over the flat meadows. The German forces on the

west bank found themselves floundering in a foot of water, while their guns were water-logged and deep in mud. On the few dry patches they kept their ground, but all the intervening land was impossible. The Belgians had fallen back to a position behind the Dixmude-Nieuport railway.



The Inundation on the Yser Front.

Duke Albrecht did not at once give up the attempt. The floods were bad enough, but they were still not impassable. It was clear that the Belgians had larger schemes of inundation, and it became the German aim to win to the railway before these could be put into execution. The obvious point of vantage was the village of Ramscapelle, and the Emperor himself called for volunteers to carry that point. The honour fell to two Wurtemberg brigades, for the soldiers of the duchy have ever been among the best of German fighting men. On the 30th of October,

Oct. 30.

moving from the bridge-heads at St. Georges and Schoorbakke, the Wurtembergers advanced to the attack. They waded through the sloppy fields covered with several inches of water, and by means of "table-tops"—broad planks carried on the men's backs—crossed the deeper dykes. So furiously was the attack pressed home that they won to the railway line and seized Ramscapelle. But on the 31st the African infantry of the French 42nd Division and the 2nd and 3rd Belgian Divisions counter-attacked, and after a stubborn battle drove out the Germans from the village, and hurled them back into the lagoons. The Wurtembergers retired from the ruins, and found a position in the meadows where the flood was comparatively shallow.

Oct. 31.

But in the meantime the Belgians had prepared a greater destruction. Far and wide in all the drainage area of the Yser they had succeeded by now in opening the sluices of the canals. Suddenly on all sides the water rose. Dammed at its mouth, and fed by a thousand little floods, the Yser spread itself in seething brown waves over the whole country up to the railway line. The depth now was not of inches but of feet. The Germans, caught in the tide, were drowned in scores. A black nozzle of a field-gun would show for a moment above the current, and presently disappear. All the while the Allied gun positions at Nieuport and Ramscapelle and Pervyse, and west of Dixmude, shelled the drowning troops. Some escaped; many struggled out on the wrong side, and were made prisoners. The attack had failed finally and disastrously. The Emperor, who had watched the operations through his glasses, shut them up and turned away. The coast road was barred, and he must look for success farther south, at Ypres or La Bassée.

The flooding of the Yser marks the end of the main struggle for the shortest route to Calais. The Belgians and French now held a line resting on Nieuport, and following the railway by Ramscapelle and Pervyse to Dixmude. Between them and the enemy lay a mile or two of muddy waters. Nieuport was safe, for it was protected by British guns from the sea. The Belgians, who had lost a quarter of their effectives, began to counter-attack on the left, and pushed forward advanced posts towards Middelkerke and Westende, and took Lombaertzyde. Presently the Germans had evacuated the whole of the west bank of the Yser—that is, the few dry spots where troops could maintain themselves. They managed to check the Belgian advance in the north, and on 7th November retook Lombaertzyde. But in this section their main efforts were now directed against Dixmude, which was the only point where a bridge-head, if won, could be maintained. The defence of the town by Ronarc'h's Marines was one of the conspicuous feats of the war. It was

Nov. 7.

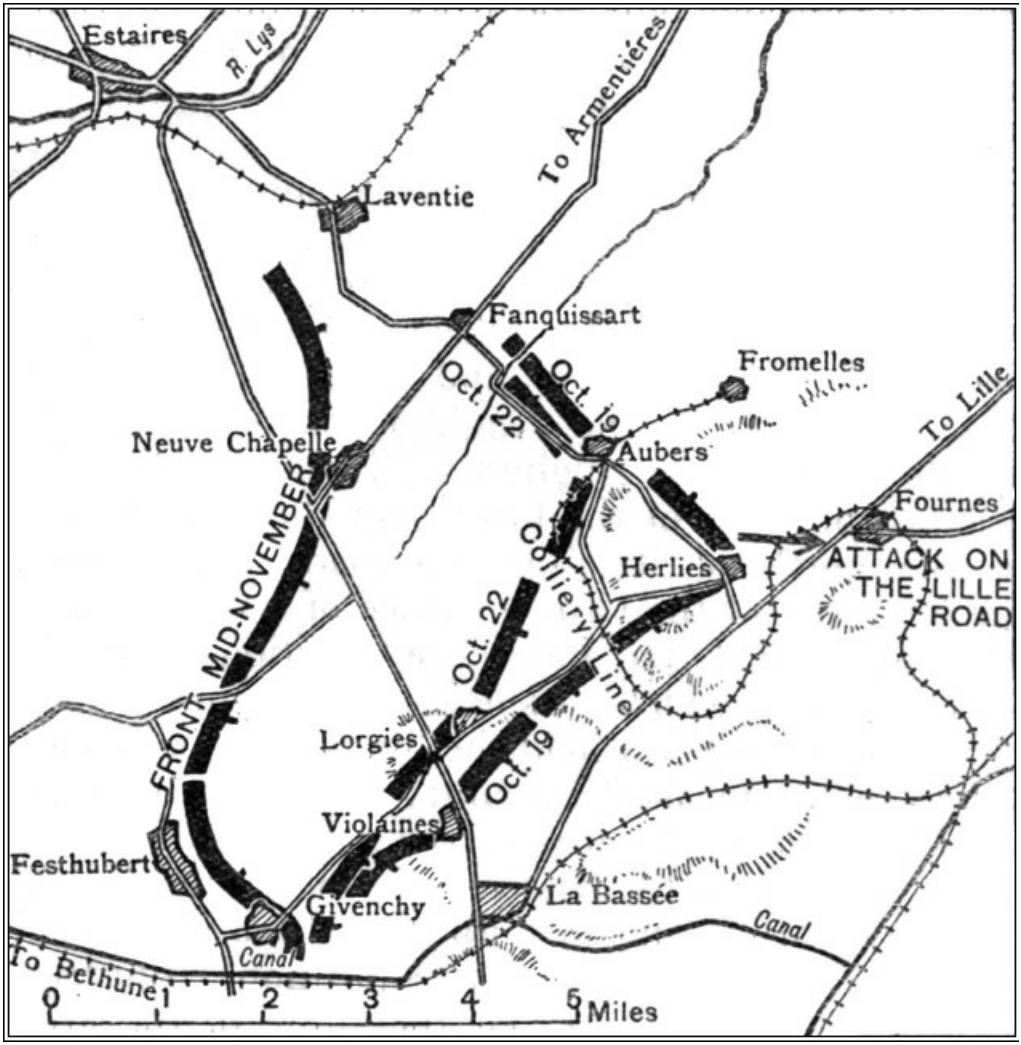
a vital position, for its capture by the Germans at any time before 1st November would have meant the turning of the Belgian right. Ronarc'h placed his batteries with great skill to the west of the town, and a huge flour mill gave him a good observation post. He had desperate fighting on the 16th October, and won a few days' respite, which enabled him to complete his defences. On the 19th he had to meet a heavy attack, which drove in his advanced posts upon the town. Thereafter he had to face a terrific bombardment, which battered Dixmude to pieces. On the night of the 23rd and 24th the defenders had to withstand fourteen different assaults. But the marines, aided by the Belgian 5th Division, held firm, and Dixmude did not fall till its fall was no longer vital. After a heavy bombardment the Wurtembergers took the town on the evening of 10th November, and captured a few hundred prisoners. But it gave them no advantage. There was still half a mile of floods between them and the Belgians, and by that date the first fury of their attack had been gravely weakened. For in the great battle to the south, after three weeks of constant struggle, the flower of the German armies had been repelled everywhere from the Allied lines.

Nov. 10.

We pass over the twenty miles which separate Dixmude from the Lys, and which constitute the *terrain* of the battle of Ypres. Pulteney's Third Corps, with Allenby's cavalry on its left and Conneau's French cavalry on its right, occupied, as we have seen, on 19th October, a position running from east of Messines southward by the east of Armen tières to a point to the west of Radinghem. The fighting on this section may be most conveniently dealt with in connection with the battle of Ypres, of which it formed the extreme right. For the present we will consider only the work of Smith-Dorrien's Second Corps, which was engaged in repelling the German advance from Lille against La Bassée and Bethune.

We have seen that on 19th October the Second Corps held a line pivoting on Givenchy in the south, and then running east in a salient north of the La Bassée-Lille road to the village of Herlies, where it bent westward to Aubers, and connected with Conneau's cavalry in the neighbourhood of the La Bassée-Armentières highway. The 5th Division was on the right of the front, and the 3rd Division to the north of it. The Germans, representing the left wing of the Crown Prince of Bavaria's huge command, held La Bassée, a position, says Sir John French, which "defied all attempts at capture;" and they also held the line of the La Bassée-Lille canal, and all the country immediately to the south and east.

Smith-Dorrien's first aim was to strike at the line La Bassée-Lille in the neighbourhood of Fournes, and so, with the help of the French 10th Army, isolate the La Bassée position. But from the 20th onward, as he felt the surge of the great German advance, his whole energies were devoted to maintaining his ground and blocking the passage to Bethune and the west.



The Fighting about La Bassée.

Sketch Map showing front held by the 2nd Corps on October 19, on night of October 22, and about mid-November.

Oct. 22.

The main attack at La Bassée lasted for ten days—from the 22nd of October to the 2nd of November—by which time the efforts of the Bavarians seem to have been directed farther

north against Ypres and the position of the Third Corps. Smith-Dorrien's force consisted of two divisions—a total, perhaps, of 30,000 men; but some French units seem to have been mixed up with it, probably from Maud'huy's army, and we hear of a French division under General Perron assisting on the right wing. On the morning of the 22nd the first big attack came. The 5th Division on the right was driven out of the village of Violaines, on the road between Givenchy and Lorgies; but the 3rd Worcesters from the 7th Brigade, and the 2nd Manchesters from the 14th Brigade, counter-attacked, and prevented an advance. Smith-Dorrien could now judge of the strength of the German movement, and he saw that the advanced position of the 3rd Division on his left was untenable. Accordingly that night he withdrew to the line running from just east of Givenchy by Neuve Chapelle to Fauquissart, due south of Laventie.

Oct. 24.

Two days later, on the 24th, the enemy attacked heavily along the line; but our artillery prevented them getting to close quarters. In the evening the 3rd Division, especially the 7th Brigade, was hard pressed; but the 1st Wiltshires and the 1st Royal West Kents from the 13th Brigade drove off the enemy. Later the extreme left, the 8th Brigade, was attacked, and the 1st Gordons were driven out of their trenches. These trenches were, however, retaken by the 4th Middlesex, under Lieutenant-Colonel Hull. By this time the Second Corps, which had been for ten days more or less constantly under fire, were getting exhausted, and it became very necessary to find supports. These had arrived a few days before in the shape of the Lahore Division of the Indian Corps, under Major-General Watkis. The Ferozepore Brigade of the division had been sent on the 22nd to support Allenby's cavalry, and the remainder was now used to support the left rear of the Second Corps. One brigade was entrenched on the extreme left, to take over the ground formerly occupied by Conneau's French cavalry, which was needed farther north.

Oct. 27.

Oct. 28.

On the 27th the Germans got into Neuve Chapelle, and for the succeeding few days the main fighting continued on the left of the Second Corps. Next day the Indian troops were given their first taste of battle, with various British battalions interspersed among them, and the 2nd Cavalry Brigade in support. Their task was the retaking of Neuve Chapelle, which was gallantly performed by the 47th Sikhs, the 9th Bhopal Infantry, and the 20th and 21st Companies of the 1st Sappers and Miners. The 3rd Division was by this time very weary and reduced, the Staff work had become faulty, and the attack was inadequately supported, except by the cavalry. The fighting on both sides was desperate and confused, and the Germans flung the bodies of their dead from

their trenches to make cover under which they could advance. No sooner had the British won a hundred yards than the counter-attack came, and the lines swayed backwards and forwards, before and behind the ruins which had once been Neuve Chapelle. The village was never fully recaptured, and the opposing trenches seem to have been close together in the very streets. Next day, on the right at Festubert, there was a German attack which lost us several trenches. In the afternoon Second-Lieutenant James Leach and Sergeant John Hogan of the 2nd Manchesters, both of whom received the Victoria Cross, recaptured one trench by themselves, killing eight of the enemy, and making sixteen prisoners.

Oct. 29.

At the end of the month the Meerut Division, under Major-General Anderson, arrived, and two days later came the Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade and the Jodhpur Lancers. The Indian Corps was now constituted under the command of Sir James Willcocks, and the much-tried Second Corps was partially withdrawn into reserve. Its rest was short, for very soon some of its battalions had to be sent north to take their part in the fight which raged round Ypres. The defence of the La Bassée gate was now chiefly in the hands of the Indians, aided by two and a half British brigades and most of the Second Corps Artillery.

On the 31st the 8th Gurkha Rifles of the Bareilly Brigade and a battalion of the Devons were violently attacked. The Gurkhas had just arrived in the trenches, and found that, since they had been dug for taller men, they could not see out of them. The German machine guns enfiladed them, and there was a terrible slaughter, in which most of their British officers fell. Small wonder that they were forced back, strange as they were to this form of warfare. Wandering in the dark, by good fortune they hit upon the trenches of the 1st Seaforths, a regiment to whom they are blood brothers. For the next two days there was a heavy bombardment all day on our front, but especially against the left wing behind Neuve Chapelle. On 2nd November the Germans pierced our line in one place and bent it back. The situation was saved by a desperate charge, attended by heavy losses, of the 2nd Gurkhas, under Colonel Norie, the famous regiment which fought beside the King's Royal Rifles on the ridge at Delhi.

Oct. 31.

Nov. 2.

The story of the next three weeks in this section is one of repeated attacks, gradually slackening off towards the middle of the month owing to the concentration against Ypres. Ypres was a providential intervention, for it is difficult to believe that, if the attack had been delivered with the violence of the

fighting on 22nd October and earlier, our line could have held its position. As it was, it was slowly forced back till it ran from Givenchy, to which we stubbornly clung, north by Festubert towards Estaires. An attack on Givenchy on 7th November failed signally. Then for a fortnight the campaign here degenerated into an artillery duel, and our men were given a welcome chance of improving and elaborating their line of trenches.

On the work of the Indians we have Sir John French's testimony: "Since their arrival in this country and their occupation of the line allotted to them, I have been much impressed by the initiative and resource displayed by the Indian troops. Some of the ruses they have employed to deceive the enemy have been attended with the best results, and have doubtless kept superior forces in front of them at bay." In Britain the ordinary man, accustomed to tales of the prowess of Sikh and Gurkha, was inclined to think them invincible, and forget that we were bringing them to an unfamiliar type of warfare, and that the finest troops in the world may get into trouble in an uncongenial task. The dashing cavalryman may be an indifferent trench holder, and the flower of the Prussian Guard would no doubt show badly in bush fighting. The strangeness of the whole situation—the great howitzer shells, the endless stream of shrapnel, the mole warfare of the trenches, and all the black magic of the white man's war—cannot but have shaken the nerves at first of our Indian soldiers. It is to their eternal credit that they so quickly recovered; but when the line wavered and broke here and there it meant a heavy mortality among the flanking troops, and among the white and native officers. Of their splendid courage there was never a moment's doubt. When Indian troops broke it was just as often forward as backward. We must remember, too, that they had very few chances, except in night work, of revealing their special excellences. Too rarely came the charge, where Sikh and Pathan and Gurkha could show their unique *élan*. When it came, the Germans learned what many a Border tribe knows to its cost. A letter published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* gives the impressions of a German soldier:—

> "To-day, for the first time, we had to fight against the Indians, and the devil knows those brown rascals are not to be underrated. At first we spoke with contempt of the Indians. To-day we learned to look at them in a different light—the devil knows what the English had put into those fellows. Anyhow, those who stormed our lines seemed either drunk or possessed of an evil spirit. With fearful shouting, in comparison with which our hurrahs are like the whining of a baby, thousands of those brown forms rushed upon us as

suddenly as if they were shot out of a fog, so that at first we were completely taken by surprise. At a hundred metres we opened a destructive fire which mowed down hundreds, but in spite of that the others advanced, springing forward like cats and surmounting obstacles with unexampled agility. In no time they were in our trenches, and truly these brown enemies were not to be despised. With butt ends, bayonets, swords, and daggers we fought each other, and we had bitter hard work."

The climate was their chief enemy. Many who watched their arrival at Marseilles had given them four months to last out in a European winter. Up till 5th November there had been incessant fog and rain. Then came a week of bright weather till the 11th, and then a bitter sleet began, to be followed by frost, and presently by snow. The Indian can stand cold of a kind, as he proved in the Tibetan Expedition, but his diet and his habits ill fit him to resist long-continued wet and the damp cold of our north. They suffered terribly from the unfamiliar weather, and the physical stamina gave way in many whom no enemy's fire could unnerve.

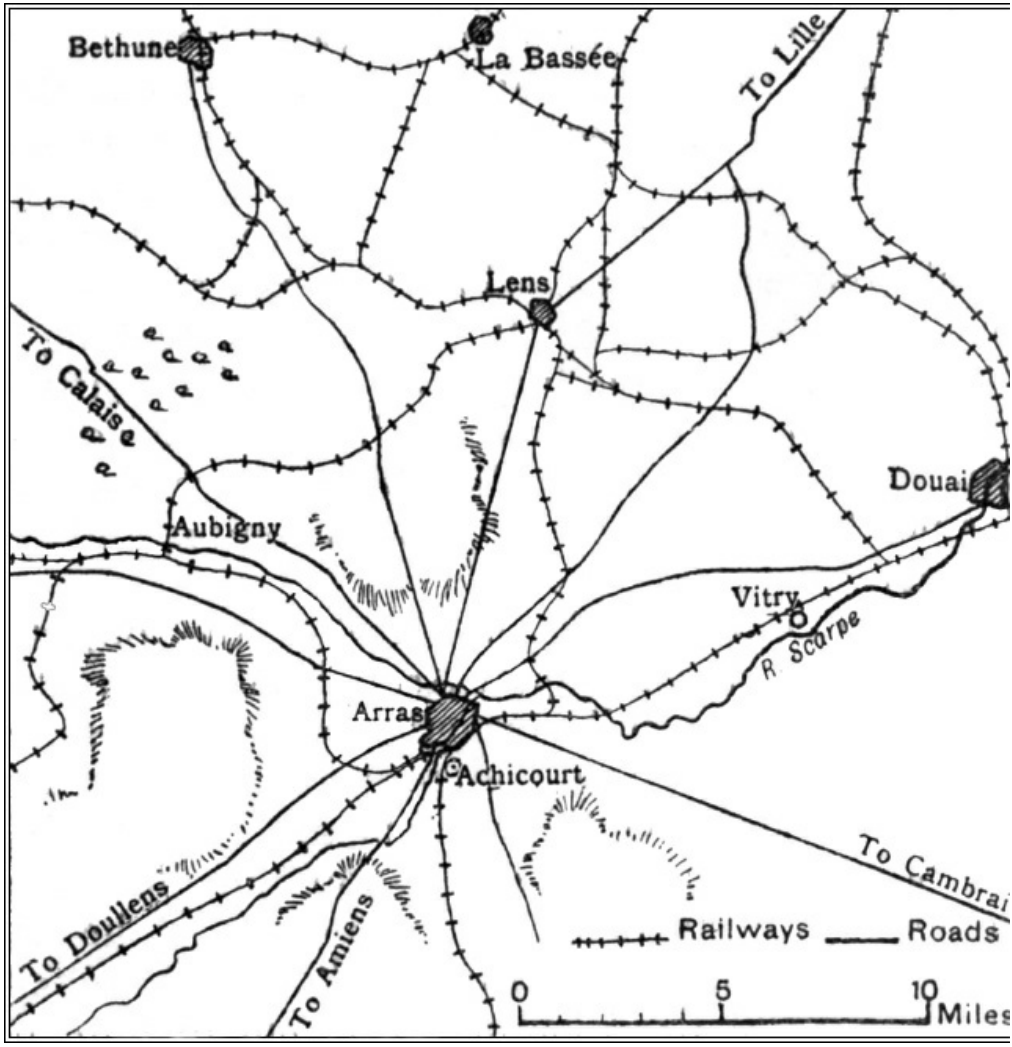
As an example of the "ruses" to which Sir John French refers, one story may be told, which, unlike most tales of the kind, is true. A sepoy of the 58th (Vaughan's) Rifles was out on reconnaissance work, when a searchlight was turned on him close to the German trenches. Boldness alone could save him, so he advanced to the bewildered Germans, salaaming profoundly. They allowed him to approach and enter their trench, when he began a conversation in dumb show. The Germans repeated many Indian names, and when they mentioned the word "Mussalman" he nodded vigorously. When they mentioned the British his eyes flashed, and he drew his hand across his throat. He was given some food and a blanket, and next morning was cross-examined by an officer, who, using the language of signs, learned that there were twenty-five other Mussalmans in the trench who hated the British, and desired to surrender. Accordingly he was sent back to bring in his compatriots. He did not return, but he took to the British trenches much information of high value, for which he received promotion. We must record with regret that a few weeks afterwards this nimble-witted soldier fell in action.

Oct. 20-26.

The stroke against Arras, the gravest menace of all, was delivered from 20th October to 26th October. Before that the battle had raged chiefly around Maud'huy's left centre, west of the town of Lens. The possession of Lens gave the Germans one great advantage,

for south from the town ran a railway which, three miles east of Arras, connected with the main line, Arras-Douai-Lille. When the German front was pushed west of this it was in possession of perfect lateral communications. The German aim was to drive in Maud'huy's left, and, by extending to Bethune, come in on the right rear of the British Second Corps. If it succeeded, then the advance from Lille would force the British back into the triangle between the German advance and the Channel.

But after the 20th of October the objective changed to an assault upon Arras itself. Von Buelow had now his full strength, and in it was the Prussian Guard Corps, reinforced by drafts after its disasters at St. Gond and Rheims. He resolved to follow the major strategy, and cut the Allied line in two at its most critical point. If he succeeded and won the roads to Doullens and Amiens, not only would the Channel ports fall to him, not only would he recover the northern road to Paris, but he would have achieved what had always been the main German objective, and split the Allied line into two parts, which would be driven asunder by the broadening wedge. The southern half might retire in good order, but there would be no way of escape for the northern. It was what von Hausen had done on the Meuse, what the Duke of Wurtem berg had failed to do at Vitry, and von Buelow himself at Rheims. Had some of the German forces, which at the time were butting their heads against the Ypres salient or struggling in the Yser bogs, been brought to aid the task, the odds are that it would have been accomplished.



The Arras and Lens District.

The map shows the scene of fighting about Arras, the importance of the place as a great centre of road and railway communications, and its connection with the ground held by the British right between Bethune and La Bassée.

The Lens section was left to a small force, and the main strength was concentrated before Arras against Maud'huy's centre, the movement being swiftly and secretly effected by means of the lateral line of railway. Maud'huy had no such assistance, and reinforcements from his left could only be brought by the Lens-Arras highway. But behind Arras itself he had certain advantages. The line to St. Pol went round to the west of the city, and north, behind the French positions, ran the line to Amiens by the Ancre valley, while the Doullens

line provided a third passage for the coming of reserves. The junction of the lines is at Achicourt, just south of Arras, and it was obligatory on Maud'huy to hold this point at any cost. His position was, therefore, in a semicircle north and east of the city, with each flank resting on the slopes of the shallow amphitheatre, and Achicourt securely covered.

Oct. 24.

The chief German attack was on the 24th, when von Buelow pushed up to within gun range of the city. All day there was desperate fighting. The Germans rate this struggle in the Artois as one of the main battles of the war, and there is little doubt that, but for Maud'huy's stubborn stand, the gates of the north would have been unlocked. The German guns came near enough to bombard the city a second time, and for the next week shells rained in its ancient streets. The Hotel de Ville, one of the oldest and finest buildings in France, suffered, and whole quarters were reduced to débris. But the destruction of Arras did not give the enemy possession. All attempts to break the French line failed, and by the 26th Maud'huy had begun to retaliate. The traditional *furia francese* has never been seen to better advantage than in the counter-attack which in many places pushed the Germans out of their advanced trenches, and restored to the French some of the little villages in the flats of the Scheldt. Bit by bit the circle was widened, till Arras was beyond the reach of the German howitzers, and the inhabitants began to return to their ruined dwellings. By the beginning of November the attack had failed; and it was not likely to be renewed, for some of von Buelow's best corps, including a division of the Guards, were demanded for the north, where before Ypres was being fought the longest, bloodiest, and most desperate combat in the history of British arms.

CHAPTER XXVII.

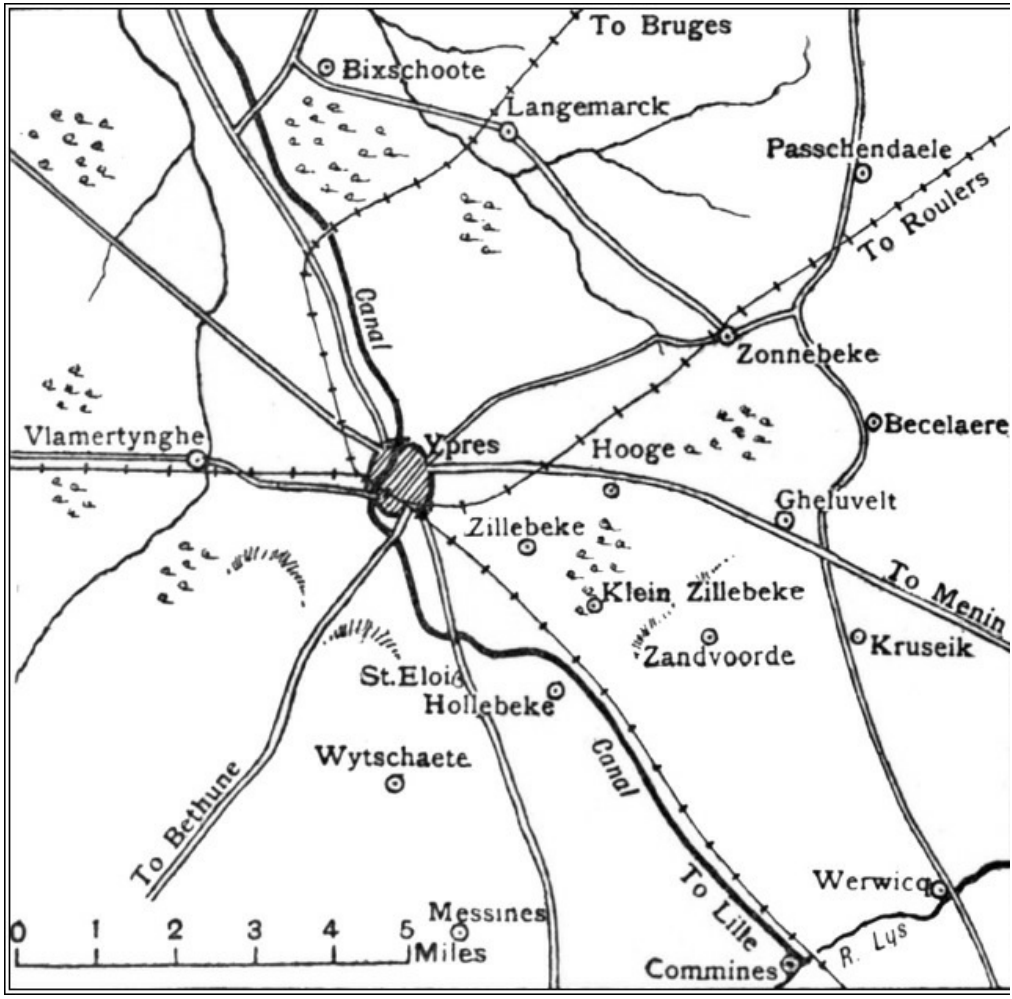
THE BATTLE OF YPRES.

The Ypres Neighbourhood—Movement of First Corps on 20th October—Dangers of the Salient—The Fighting on the 21st—Readjustment of the Allied Line—The 7th Division on the 22nd—Counter-attack on 23rd—Arrival of French Reinforcements—Salient driven in on 24th—The Struggle for Kruiseik—Pulteney's Position on 25th—Readjustment of Line on 27th—Attack on Gheluvelt on 29th—Difficulties of Allenby and Pulteney—The Fighting on the 30th—Retirement to Klein Zillebeke Ridge—Attack on First Corps on 31st—Fight on Klein Zillebeke Ridge—Position between 2 and 2.30 p.m.—Counter-attack by 2nd Division—Charge of the Worcesters—Allenby falls back from Messines—Attacks and Counter-attacks at Klein Zillebeke, 6th-7th November—Charge of the Prussian Guard, 11th November—Fight of French 9th Corps at Bixschoote—End of the Main Battle of Ypres—French Reinforcements arrive—Nature of Battle—Great Disparity of Numbers—Greatness of British Achievement—German and Allied Losses—Ypres a Decisive Victory—Death of Lord Roberts.

The little city of Ypres, now only the shell of its former grandeur, stands midway between the smoky industrial bee-hive of the Lys and the well-tilled flats of the Yser. Once it was the centre of the wool-trade of Flanders, and its noble Cloth Hall, dating from the twelfth century, testified to its vanished mercantile pre-eminence. No Flemish town could boast a prouder history. It was the red-coated burghers of Ypres who, with the men of Bruges and Courtrai, marched in July 1302 against Count Robert of Artois, and inveigled the chivalry of France into a tangle of dykes and marshes, from which few of the proud horsemen escaped. Seven hundred pairs of gilded spurs were hung in the Abbey church of Courtrai as spoil of battle, and the prowess of the burgher infantry on that fatal field established the hitherto despised foot-soldier as the backbone of

all future armies. Ypres possessed, too, a link with our own records. Till the other day, in one of its convents hung the British flag which Clare's regiment, fighting for France, captured at Ramillies.

The town stands on a tiny stream, the Yperlée, a tributary of the Yser, which has long ago been canalized. A single-line railway passes through it from Roulers to the main Lille-St. Omer line at Hazebrouck. An important canal runs from the Yser in the north to the river Lys at Comines, and two miles south of the town, at the village of St. Eloi, turns eastward, bending south again in a broad angle between Hollebeke and Zandvoorde. To the east there are considerable patches of forest between Bixschoote and the Lys valley. A series of slight ridges rise towards the south, lying in a curve just inside the Belgian frontier from west of Messines to the neighbourhood of Zandvoorde. For the rest, the country is dead flat, so that the spires of Ypres make a landmark for many miles. On all sides from the town radiate the cobbled Flemish roads, the two main highways on the east being those to Roulers and to Menin, with an important connecting road cutting the latter five miles from Ypres at the village of Gheluvelt.



Neighbourhood of Ypres.

In the great battle which is the subject of this chapter we are chiefly concerned with the British First and Third Corps, the 7th Division, Allenby's Cavalry Corps, and Byng's 3rd Cavalry Division. On the evening of the 19th the Allied offensive had virtually ceased. First one and then another of the three strategic possibilities had been frustrated. We were aware that at last we had reached the main German front in position everywhere from Lille to the sea, and daily growing in numbers which threatened to fall in a tidal wave upon the thin and far-stretched Allied line. But Sir John French, though cognisant of the enemy's strength, was not yet fully informed about its details, and he made one more effort to break through with a counter-offensive. Sir Douglas Haig with the First Corps had, as

Oct. 19.

we have seen, arrived behind the front on the 19th, and had been directed to move to the north of Ypres in the direction of Thourout. "The object he was to have in view," Sir John wrote, "was to be the capture of Bruges, and subsequently, if possible, to drive the enemy towards Ghent." Had it been possible, the move would have had great strategic advantages. It would have hemmed in von Beseler on the sea coast, and prevented reinforcements reaching him from the south, while it would have provided a basis for a turning movement against the flank of the enemy's main front. But Sir John French had his doubts about its possibility, and Haig was instructed after passing Ypres to use his own judgment. As the First Corps advanced to the north of Ypres it had Bidon's divisions of French Territorials and cavalry on its left, extending from Bixschoote north through the Forest of Houthulst. On its right it had Byng's 3rd Cavalry Division, and south of Byng was the British 7th Division—the total forming Rawlinson's Fourth Corps, which was directed to conform generally to Haig's movements.

Oct. 20.

The First Corps had borne the brunt of the fighting on the Aisne, and had had no rest save such as was afforded by the journey to the north. On Tuesday, the 20th, it advanced to a line extending from Bixschoote to the cross-roads a mile and a half north-west of Zonnebeke, with the 2nd Division on the right of its front, and the 1st Division on the left. That day it had no fighting, but the cavalry on its flanks were heavily engaged. Byng's Division not only protected its right, along with detachments of French Territorials, but was feeling its way some miles in advance. The French in Poelcapelle were driven out by shell-fire in the afternoon, and Byng was compelled to fall back towards Langemarck. The position, therefore, on the morning of the 21st was—on the extreme left, north-east of Ypres, divisions of Bidon's Territorials and some of de Mitry's cavalry; then the British 1st Division, between Bixschoote and Langemarck; then the 2nd Division, extending to near Zonnebeke, with Byng's 3rd Cavalry Division in support on its right rear; then Lawford's 22nd Brigade of the 7th Division, followed by Watts's 21st Brigade, just west of Becelaere, and Ruggles-Brise's 20th Brigade east of the Gheluvelt cross-roads, towards Zandvoorde. Then in front of Messines came Allenby's Cavalry Corps, which had been attempting in vain the crossings of the Lys; after which came the line of the Third Corps, ten miles long, through Armentières.

Oct. 21.

Clearly the immediate post of danger in the Allied front was the extreme left, between Bixschoote and Dixmude, and the right centre around Zandvoorde, between the 7th Division and Allenby's cavalry. But on the 21st the main attack was not at these points. It was delivered against the point of the salient between

Zonnebeke and Becelaere. Sir Douglas Haig with the First Corps advanced successfully till about two o'clock in the afternoon, when news came of trouble on its flanks. The French Territorials on the left were driven out of the Forest of Houthulst, and they and their supports of the 2nd French Cavalry Corps retired across the Yser Canal. At the same time he was informed that the 7th Division and Allenby's 2nd Cavalry Division beyond it were heavily attacked, and it became necessary to halt on the line Bixschoote-Langemarck-St. Julien-Zonnebeke. That line marks the limits of the last British offensive. Thourout and Bruges were now as inaccessible as the moon.

Position of the line at Ypres on October 21.

The main fighting was along the front of the 7th Division, against which the

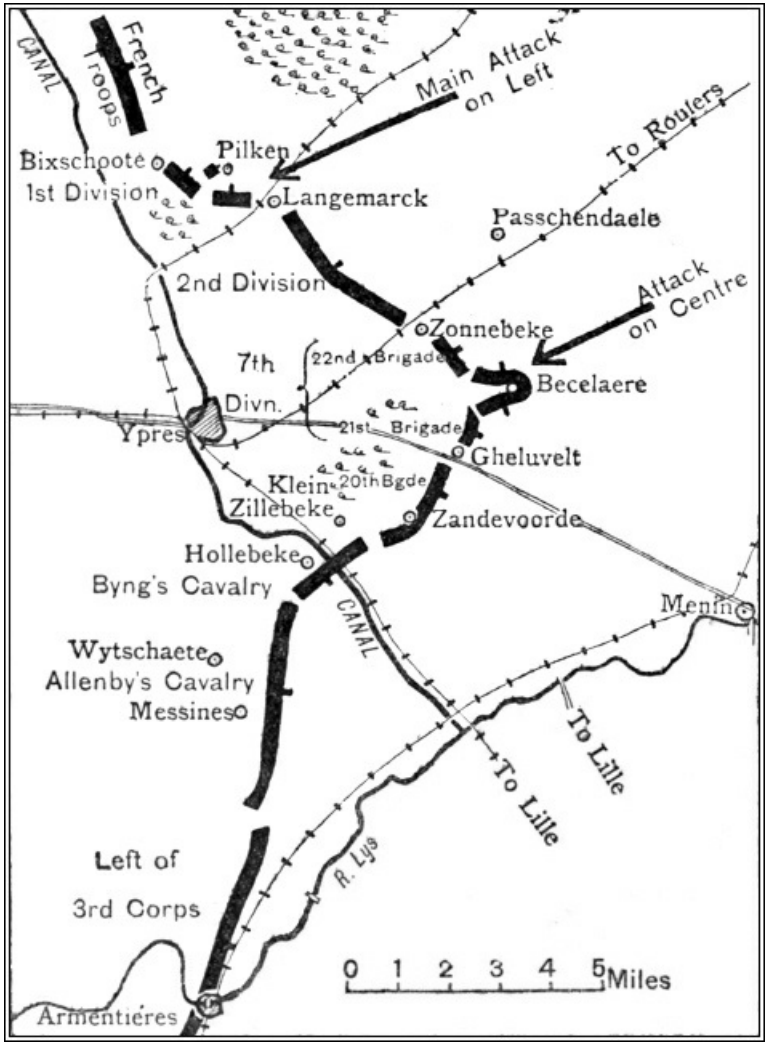
bulk of the four new German corps[10] was thrown. In the first place, Lawford's 22nd Brigade on the left was enfiladed by a German movement against Zonnebeke, and for a little looked like having its flank turned. Not till the afternoon could Haig's 2nd Division link up with it at the level crossing of the Ypres-Roulers railway and safeguard that danger-point. On the centre at Becelaere, held by the 21st Brigade, the Germans succeeded in temporarily piercing our line between the Royal Scots Fusiliers and the Yorkshires. On the extreme right a fierce assault was made from the direction of Houthem against Gough's 2nd Cavalry Division in Klein Zillebeke. The only reserves available were Byng's 3rd Cavalry Division, and from it Kavanagh's 7th Brigade was directed to support the left of the 22nd Brigade, which it did successfully till help came from the 2nd Division. Makins's 6th Brigade was hurried south to Zandvoorde in the afternoon, and filled the gap, occupying the two canal crossings at Hollebeke. By the evening the whole of Byng's cavalry had been moved to the right of the 7th Division, linking up with Gough between Hollebeke and Wytschaete.

That evening Sir John French in Ypres had an anxious consultation with Sir Douglas Haig and Sir Henry Rawlinson, General de Mitry and General Bidon. It was now abundantly clear that the most we could do was to hold the Ypres salient from the Lys to Dixmude till General Joffre could send help—a length of fully thirty miles. For that purpose we had the First Corps, the Third Corps (though Pulteney had also his own separate battle to fight), the 7th Division of the Fourth Corps, three divisions of British cavalry, de Mitry's 2nd French Cavalry Corps of four divisions, and Bidon's two divisions of French Territorials—all told, perhaps, nearly 100,000 men, and some of the troops not of the first line. Against us we had the four new German corps, the 2nd Corps, the 19th Corps, at least two Reserve Corps, a number of Landwehr divisions, and five or six divisions of cavalry, making in all not less than half a million men. Besides, we were aware of other corps moving up from the south. General French's first work was to arrange matters in Ypres, which had become congested with French Territorials, and it was decided that they should immediately move out and cover the flank of Haig's First Corps. He had that day seen General Joffre, who had told him that he was sending the 9th Corps to Ypres, that d'Urbal's further forces were being rapidly concentrated, and that he hoped presently to take the offensive. This help, however, could not arrive before the 24th, and for three days the present line must maintain its precarious and extended front.

Thursday, the 22nd, was a heavy day all along the line. Haig, being compelled to send help to the 7th Division, could

Oct. 22.

do little but maintain his defence. This he did with much loss to the enemy, but late in the evening a violent assault was made upon Fitzclarence's 1st Brigade on his left, on the trenches held by the Camerons north of Pilkem on the Langemarck-Bixschoote road. The Germans broke the line, and succeeded in imprisoning part of the Camerons—the famous red tartans of Quatre Bras and Tel-el-Kebir—in a wayside inn. Farther south, the 7th Division were in a difficult place. In consequence of the attack upon Lawford's 22nd Brigade it had retired its left, and so made a sharp new salient with the left of the 21st Brigade, where were the Wiltshires. There was a gap, too, in the line of the same brigade between the Royal Scots Fusiliers and the Yorkshires, and the latter for the better part of three days were condemned to fight an action on two fronts. Farther south there was a long line from the Zandvoorde ridge to south of Messines held by the 3rd and 2nd Cavalry Divisions in trenches. Round Hollebeke the Germans pressed hard, both with artillery and infantry attacks, and their snipers greatly troubled our men. But they did not press hard enough, for this long cavalry line was our weak spot, and an attack in great force would have broken it and uncovered Ypres. Farther south Pulteney had been having some difficult days. On the 20th the Germans had attacked the advanced posts of Wilson's 12th Brigade on his left, driven them in, and occupied Le Gheir, just north of the Lys. Thereupon General Hunter-Weston counter-attacked, drove back the enemy with great loss, and occupied the abandoned trenches—an operation in which Lieutenant-Colonel Anley of the Essex Regiment and Lieutenant-Colonel Butler of the Lancashire Fusiliers greatly distinguished themselves. At this time the Third Corps was divided into two halves by the Lys, and on the 22nd the centre held by the 16th Brigade was heavily attacked from Frelinghien. It was rapidly becoming necessary to shorten the line by drawing in the right, and bringing Conneau's 1st Cavalry Corps nearer Armentières.



Position at Ypres on the morning of October 23rd.

Oct. 23.

On the morning of Friday, the 23rd, the position was as follows. There was a bad dint in our front on the left of the 1st Division, where the Camerons had been cut off. There was an ugly salient on the left of the 7th Division, where the left of the 21st Brigade was brought to a sharp angle by the "refusal" of the 22nd Brigade, and a dint in the line of the 21st between the Yorkshires and the Royal Scots Fusiliers. An effort was made during the day to get rid of these dangers. Major-General Bulfin, who had done brilliantly on the Aisne, led the Royal West Surrey, the Northamptons, and the King's Royal Rifles in an attack upon the trenches which the Germans had won from the Camerons. He liberated the captured Highlanders in the inn,

and, after much severe fighting, which culminated in a bayonet attack, achieved his purpose, and took 600 Germans prisoners. The enemy concentrated against the 3rd Brigade on Haig's left, in the neigh bourhood of Langemarck. The new German levies, many of whom had had scarcely two months' training, hurled themselves on our trenches with incredible courage and resolution. They were mown down by our fire, but they came on again and yet again, till human endurance reached breaking-point. The corps that attacked that day lost 75 per cent. of its effectives, and round Langemarck lay 1,500 German dead. In the evening there came a welcome relief. General Lefebvre's 18th Division and the 17th Division of the 9th French Corps arrived, and took over the front held by the 2nd British Division, which was thus enabled to extend to the south and relieve the hard-pressed 7th Division of the northern end of its line near Zonnebeke.

The other incident of that day was the determined frontal attack upon the 7th Division. The Bedfords managed to close the gap between the Yorkshires and the Royal Scots Fusiliers. The Wiltshires, forming the point of the salient, once again had the hardest part of the fight, and the Warwicks, to their left, were constantly assailed. The whole position was desperately precarious, for the masses of men against us were hourly increasing.

Oct. 24.

Next day, the 24th, there was an advance upon our extreme left. The French 9th Corps, the veterans of Sezanne and Rheims, pushed forward between Zonnebeke and Poelcapelle, and won a fair amount of ground. In the evening the line of the 1st Division was taken over by French Territorials, and the former moved to behind our front at Zillebeke. The 2nd Division had now closed up, and relieved the left wing of the 7th, and this relief came just in time. For on that day the point of the salient gave way at last. The gallant Wiltshires were driven in and suffered severely, and the Germans entered the Polygon Wood at Reytel, west of Becelaere, destined to be the scene of much desperate fighting in the days to come. A counter-attack by the Warwicks from the 22nd Brigade failed to clear the wood, and Lieutenant-Colonel Loring of that regiment and many of his officers fell. Though badly wounded three days before, he had led his men dauntlessly to the charge.

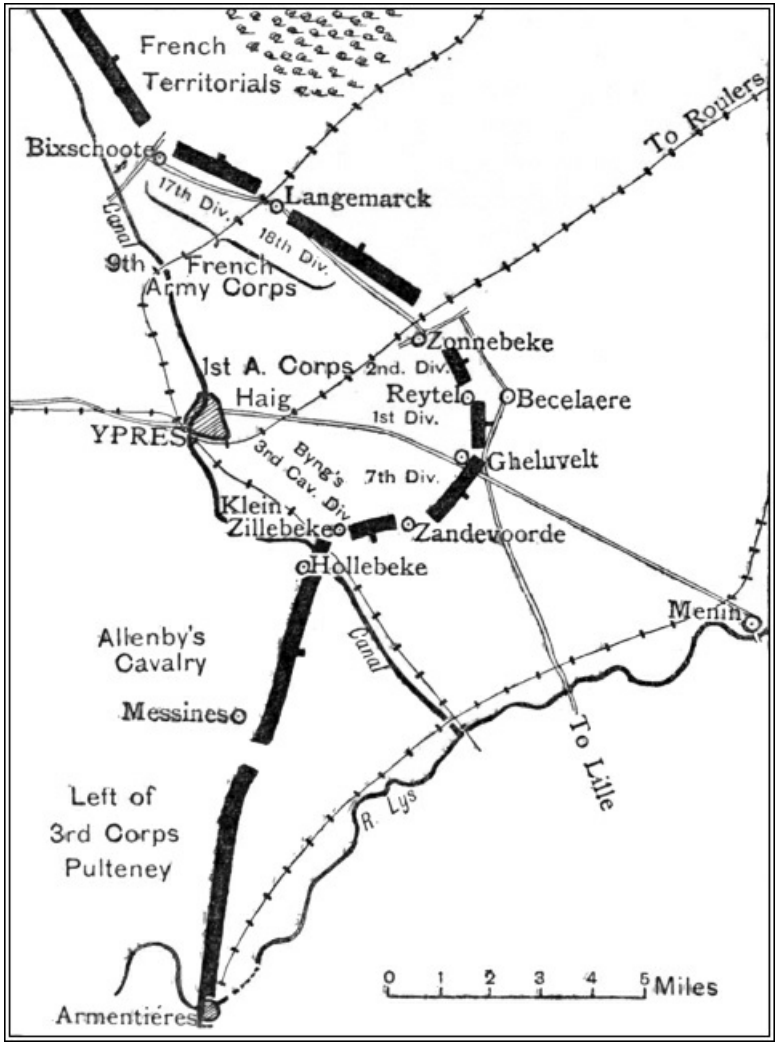
Oct. 25.

The next day, Sunday, the 25th, saw the advance of the left continued. It was in the nature of a counter-offensive to relieve the pressure on the centre, and it temporarily succeeded, some guns and a number of prisoners being taken. In the centre itself the Germans seemed unable to follow up their achievement in the Polygon Wood, a feature

common to the whole Ypres fighting. Repeatedly they pierced our line; but, once through, their initiative was exhausted. We might attribute this to the rawness of the troops, had not the same thing happened with the Prussian Guards. It seems to point to a defect in regimental leadership, for which the Allies had cause to be thankful.

At night a great enveloping attack was made on the salient held by the 20th Brigade, at Kruiseik, north-east of Zandvoorde. The Germans broke through, but the invaders were cornered, and lost 200 prisoners. The 2nd Scots Guards, who held the trenches at this point, counter-attacked, and the assault was repulsed. It was renewed in force just before the wet misty dawn, and the Scots Guards were pushed back, with terrible losses. All the morning the battle continued to rage around Kruiseik, a critical place, for if the salient were broken, the enemy would gain possession of the Zandvoorde ridge. The situation was saved after midday by a brilliant counter-attack by the 7th Cavalry Brigade, who were in trenches at Zandvoorde. They drove the enemy back towards the hamlet of America, on the Becelaere-Wervicq road. The Blues, under Colonel Gordon Wilson, especially distinguished themselves, and in particular Lord Alastair Innes-Ker's squadron, which formed the advance-guard.

Meanwhile our extreme right under Pulteney had been hard pressed. On the night of the 25th the Leicesters in the 16th Brigade were forced from their trenches by shell-fire, and it was resolved temporarily to shorten that part of the line which was south of the Lys. The falling back of the Second Corps in the south, and the continuation of its front northward by Indian troops, enabled Pulteney to take up this new position with the less risk.



The Front at Ypres on October 27th.

On the evening of the 26th it was becoming clear that the line of the 7th Division was dangerously advanced. All that night General Capper was busy readjusting his brigades. The work was completed on the 27th, when the British front ran as follows: On the extreme left north of Bixschoote, French Territorials; from Bixschoote to Zonnebeke, the 17th and 18th Divisions of the French 9th Corps; from east of Zonnebeke to Reytel, the 2nd Division; from Reytel to the Gheluvelt cross-roads, the 1st Division; from Gheluvelt cross-roads to east of Zandvoorde, the 7th Division; from Zandvoorde to Klein Zillebeke, Byng's 3rd Cavalry; from Klein Zillebeke to east of Messines,

Oct. 26.

Oct. 27.

Allenby's Cavalry Corps; and south of that, Pulteney's Third Corps. That evening Sir John French visited Sir Douglas Haig at Hooge and discussed the position of affairs. The 7th Division for a month had been engaged in continuous marching and fighting, and had suffered terrible losses. It was resolved accordingly that Sir Henry Rawlinson should return to England to supervise his 8th Division, which was being mobilized under Major-General F. J. Davies, and that the 7th Division and the 3rd Cavalry Division should be temporarily attached to the First Corps.

Oct. 28.

Oct. 29.

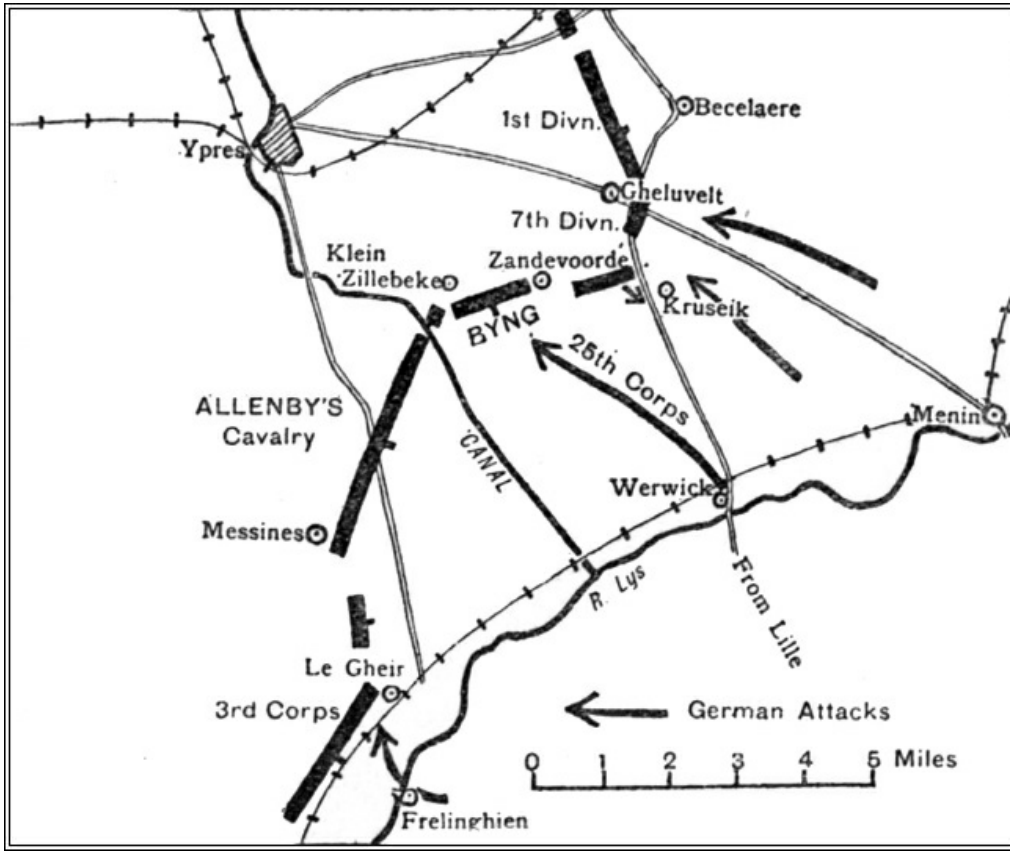
Next day, the 28th, there was little but shelling on the front, a dangerous lull which heralded the storm. The enemy was gathering his forces for a cumulative attack upon our whole line. Very early on the morning of Thursday, the 29th—about 5.30 a.m.—we knew his intentions, for we managed to intercept a wireless message. It was the beginning of the sternest struggle of the campaign in the West.

The great battles of the world have not uncommonly been fought in places worthy of so fierce a drama. The mountains looked upon Marathon, and Thermopylæ, Marengo, Solferino, and Plevna; mighty plains gave dignity to Châlons and Borodino; the magic of the desert encompassed Arbela and Omdurman; or some fantasy of weather lent strangeness to death, like the snow at Austerlitz or the harvest moon at Chattanooga, against which was silhouetted Sheridan's charge. Ypres was stark carnage and grim endurance, without glamour of earth or sky. The sullen heavens hung low over the dank fields, the dripping woods, the mean houses, and all the sour and un sightly land. It was such a struggle as Lee's Wilderness stand, where, amid tattered scrub and dismal swamps, the ragged soldiers of the Confederacy fought their last battles.

The worst danger lay in the re-entrants of the salient, to the north between Bixschoote and Zonnebeke, and to the south between Zandvoorde and Messines. The Germans, confident in their numbers, attacked both, and they also drove hard against the point of the bastion in front of Gheluvelt. As time went on, their main efforts tended to concentrate on the southern re-entrant, where were the cavalry and the right of the 7th Division.

Very early on Thursday, the 29th, in a sudden spell of clear weather, the wave broke against the centre of the First Corps at the point of the salient on the Gheluvelt cross-roads. The 1st Division was driven back from its trenches, and all morning the line swayed backwards and forwards. We had against us no longer the new formations only, but the German 15th and 13th Corps, and the 2nd Bavarians. Almost the whole of our First Corps was employed in the

counter-attack, and the 1st Grenadiers and the 2nd Gordons from the 20th Brigade were conspicuous for the gallantry of their charges. There Lieutenant J. A. O. Brooke of the latter regiment won the Victoria Cross for an attack upon the German trenches which cost him his life. By two o'clock in the afternoon the enemy began to yield, and before the dark we had recaptured the ridge at Kruiseik, and the 7th Brigade had re-established much of our line north of the cross-roads. South of Kruiseik the fighting fell chiefly to Byng's cavalry, especially the 6th Brigade, which had against it the German 25th Corps—another new formation, moved up from Lille. That same day there was an attack on Pulteney's line at Le Gheir and in the Ploegsteert Wood—a dreary space of tattered larches and mossy tracks—and about midnight a fierce assault was made on the trenches of his 19th Brigade. The enemy gained some of the trenches of the Middlesex, but a few hours later the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, from the Brigade reserve, recaptured them, and annihilated the invaders. Forty prisoners were taken, and 200 lay dead. It was a fine performance, for no less than twelve battalions were opposed to one reduced brigade.



The Fighting between Gheluvelt and Le Gheir, October 29.

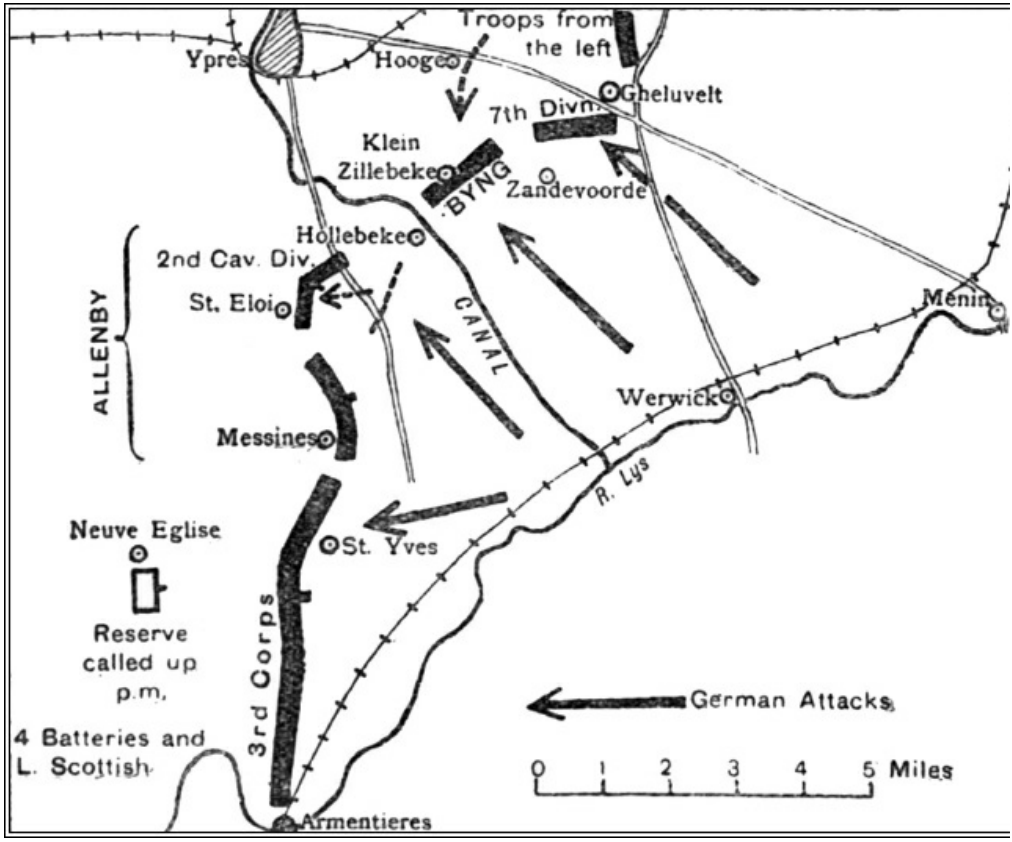
Oct. 30.

Daylight had scarce come on the 30th when the attack on our front was renewed. This time the place chosen was the ridge of Zandvoorde held by Byng's cavalry. Presently the position grew very serious, for the immense weight of artillery fire made the British trenches untenable. One troop was buried alive, and soon the whole division was compelled to fall back a mile to the ridge of Klein Zillebeke on the north. The right of the 2nd Division was thus uncovered, and had to retire to conform, and the Gheluvelt salient was made so much the sharper. Allenby sent up the Scots Greys and the 3rd and 4th Hussars as a reserve, and with their assistance Byng held the Klein Zillebeke position till the evening, when Cavan's 4th (Guards) Brigade from the 2nd Division arrived and took over the line. Sir Douglas Haig resolved that the line from Gheluvelt to the angle of the canal south of Klein Zillebeke must be held at all costs. He accordingly brought the 2nd Brigade to the rear of the line held by the 1st Division and Cavan's 4th Brigade, placed a battalion in reserve at Hooge, and borrowed from the French

9th Corps three battalions and one cavalry brigade. The situation was desperately critical. If the Germans got to the Ypres-Comines canal at any point north of Hollebeke they would speedily cut the communications of the First Corps holding the salient, and nothing would lie between them and Ypres itself. The Emperor was with his men, and had told the Bavarians that the winning of the town would determine the issue of the war. It would certainly have determined the fate of the First Corps, which would have been wholly isolated and destroyed.

The peril at Klein Zillebeke was not all. Farther south the 2nd Cavalry Division had been driven out of Hollebeke, and had fallen back on St. Eloi, on the Ypres-Armentières road. The 1st Cavalry Division sent up supports, and were presently themselves in heavy conflict round Messines, which was bombarded by the German howitzers. Pulteney, too, in the south had the line of the 11th Brigade broken at St. Yves, but the situation was retrieved by a spirited counter-attack carried out by Major Prowse and the Somerset Light Infantry. It was becoming clear that he would have to extend his already attenuated line, for the 1st Cavalry Division on his left must be supported. Reinforcements had already come up from the Second Corps. Four battalions, who had been relieved by the Indian troops, were posted at Neuve Eglise, on the road between Messines and Bailleul, as reserves for the cavalry, and with these reinforcements came a Territorial battalion, the London Scottish.

Lastly, to conclude the events of this day, the 7th Division north of Zandvoorde were given no peace. Lawford's 22nd Brigade on the left centre was hotly assailed, and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers suffered terribly. In the 21st Brigade the Royal Scots Fusiliers once again lost heavily owing to flank fire, but they and the Yorkshires under Colonel King, mixed up—what was left of them—in the semblance of one battalion, held the trenches till dark. The Allied line at this point was now retired to just east of Gheluvelt, where was the 7th Division, to the corner of the canal near Klein Zillebeke, where were the 2nd and 4th Brigades of the 3rd Division, assisted by General Moussy's troops from the 9th French Corps, and with the 3rd Cavalry Division in reserve.



Position on October 30th.

Oct. 31.

Next day came the crisis. The fighting began early along the Menin-Ypres road, and presently the attack developed in great force against, Gheluvelt village. North of it the 1st and 3rd Brigades of the 1st Division were swept back, and the 1st Coldstream wiped out as a fighting unit. The whole division was driven back from Gheluvelt to the woods between Hooge and Veldhoek. The headquarters at Hooge of the 1st and 2nd Divisions were shelled. General Lomax was badly wounded, General Munro stunned, six of their Staff officers were killed, and the command of the 1st Division passed to General Landon of the 3rd Brigade. Meantime the falling back of this part of the line menaced the flank of the 7th Division. The Royal Scots Fusiliers, who had suffered desperately already, stuck to their trenches, and were cut off and destroyed.[11] This battalion, which had landed in Flanders over a thousand strong, consisted now of seventy men, commanded by a junior subaltern. When, later, the remnant was paraded, the men were mostly without caps, coats, or puttees. They seem to have owed much of their misfortunes to

their Belgian interpreter, who was a spy, and was ultimately detected and shot. On the right of the 7th Division Bulfin's detachment, consisting of the 2nd and 4th Brigades, which had been brought there from the First Corps, was exposed by the attack on its left-hand neighbours. The 2nd Brigade fell back just as the right of the 7th Division, having been reinforced, advanced again. This right—the 20th Brigade—was once more exposed, but it managed to cling to its trenches till the evening. On Bulfin's right; General Moussy, with his troops of the 9th French Corps, was struggling hard to keep the line intact towards Klein Zillebeke. He had come to the British assistance in the nick of time, as sixty years before the French army at the same season of the year had come to our aid at Inkerman. He held the line, but he could make no advance to relieve the sore-pressed 2nd and 4th Brigades. Indeed, at one moment it looked as if he might have to yield, but he saved himself by novel reinforcements. He bade the corporal commanding his escort collect every available man.

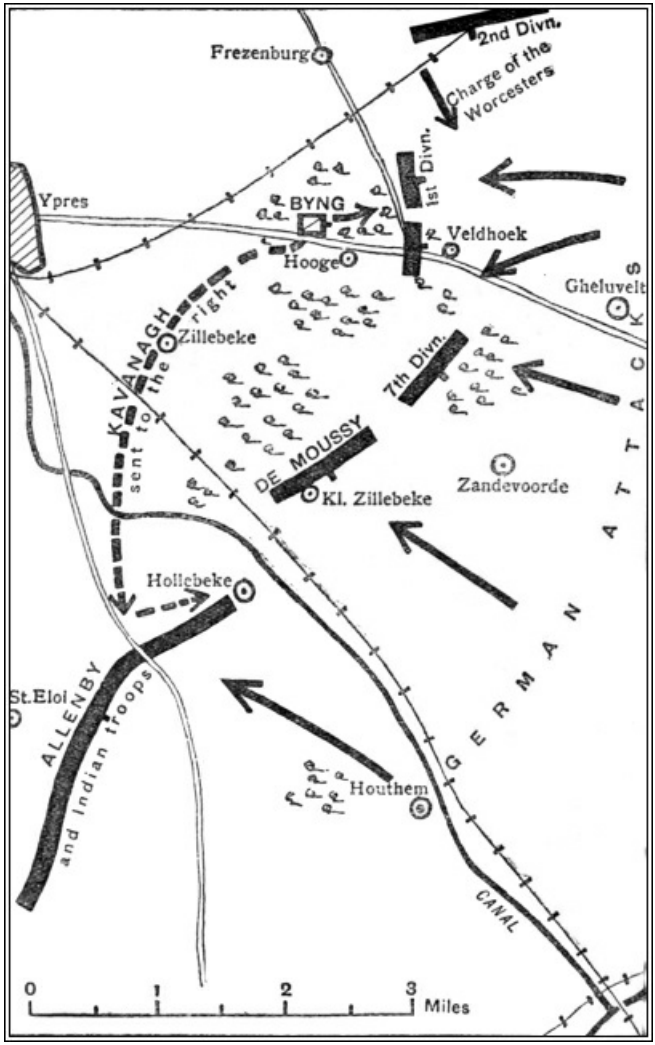
> "The corporal scoured the immediate country-side, and by appealing to every man he met, cooks in the bivouac, Army Service Corps men, hewers of wood and drawers of water, managed to assemble some two hundred and fifty soldiers of all arms, but mostly without arms, and paraded them before the general. The ground was broken by hedges, by the long lines of pollarded willows and ditches which are the characteristic features of the Flanders landscape, and which render the ground extremely unsuitable for cavalry operations. The sixty-five men composing the general's escort were dismounted, and the cuirassiers, with their silver helmets with flowing manes, their steel breastplates, their cavalry boots and sabres, prepared to take part in a bayonet charge in which there were practically no bayonets."

It was Bruce's camp followers at Bannockburn over again, or the charge of Sir John Moore's ambulance men in the retreat to Corunna. The bold adventure prospered, and Moussy was able to hold his ground.

Meantime Allenby's cavalry farther south were also in straits. He had the whole line to hold from Klein Zillebeke by Hollebeke to south of Messines, and his sole reinforcements at the time were the two much exhausted battalions of the 7th Indian Brigade sent up from the Second Corps. On that day Sepoy Khudadad, of the 129th Beluchis, won the Victoria Cross, having stayed

working his gun till all the detachment had been killed. Byng, who had his 3rd Cavalry Division at Hooge, sent forward Kavanagh's 7th Brigade, which took up the line south of the canal near Hollebeke, while the 6th Brigade was ordered to clear the woods between Hooge and Gheluvelt. Even with this assistance Allenby had no light task. He had to hold up the advance of two nearly fresh German corps till such time as Conneau could be brought from the south, and the French 16th Corps could arrive. The position here was not the least desperate of that desperate day.

Sir John French has selected between two and three o'clock on Saturday, the 31st, as the most critical point in the whole battle of Ypres. It was the crisis of the Flanders campaign, perhaps of the whole Western war. The 1st Division had fallen back from Gheluvelt to a line resting on the junction of the Frezenberg road with the Ypres-Menin highway. It had suffered terribly, and its general had been sorely wounded. On its right the 7th Division had been bent back to the Klein Zillebeke ridge, while Bulfin's two brigades were just holding on, as was Moussy on their right. Allenby's cavalry were fighting an apparently hopeless battle on a long line, and it seemed as if the slightest forward pressure would crumble the Ypres defence.

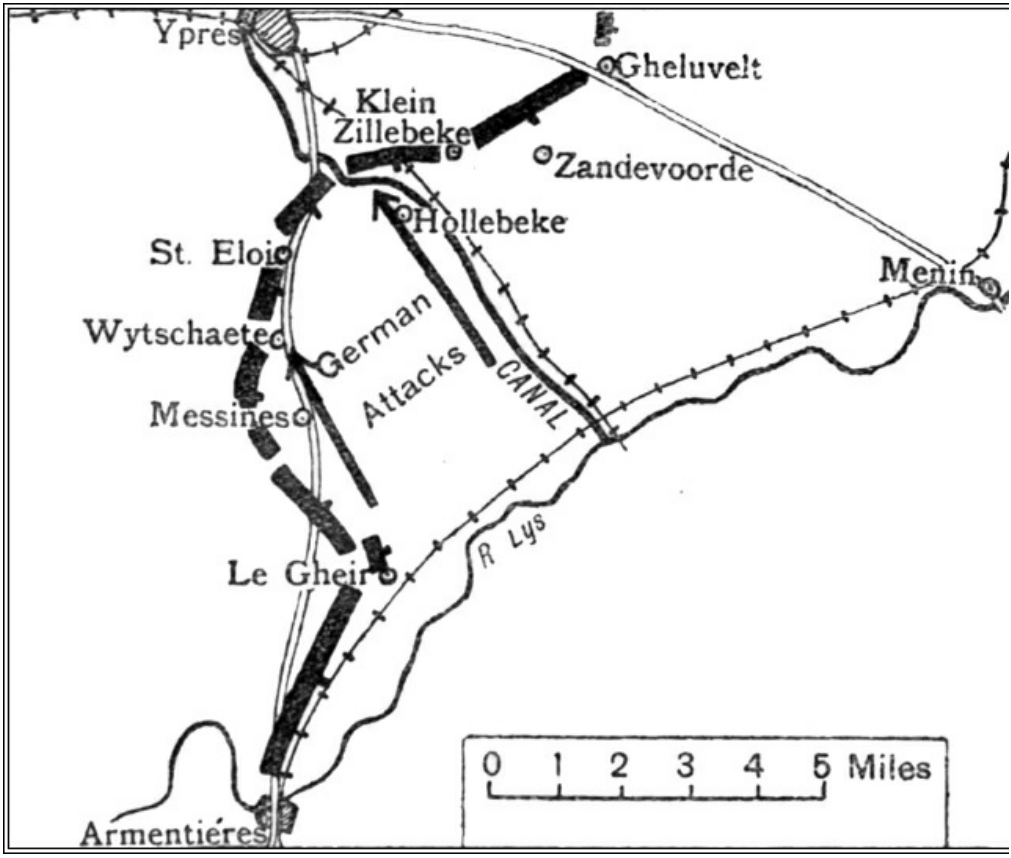


Fighting at Gheluvelt on October 31.

The critical moment.

Help came from the 2nd Division, which had been posted on the left north of Gheluvelt, and had been little engaged. By an enfilading fire it checked the German advance on the left flank of the 1st Division. This enabled the left of that division and the right of the 2nd to combine in a counter-attack upon the German right. The honours of this famous movement fell to one of those homely English regiments of the line which have ever been the backbone of our army. The 2nd Worcesters[12] in the 5th Brigade, supported by our field artillery and by the 2nd Oxford Light Infantry, swept down the highway, and drove the enemy before them. Like Cole's fusileers at Albuera, they came suddenly and unexpectedly

upon the foe. "Then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. . . . Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm weakened the stability of their order."[13] With the bayonet they retook Gheluvelt about 2.30 p.m., and our line was reformed. This released the 6th Cavalry Brigade, who cleared out the woods east of the village, and then filled the gap between the 7th Division and the 2nd Brigade. By the evening the 7th Division and Bulfin's detachment had regained their old positions.



The Line of the Front after the Fight at Messines, November 1st.

Nov. 1.

On Sunday, 1st November, the wearied British line received reinforcements. The French 16th Corps arrived to take over part of the line held by Allenby's cavalry. Divisions of this corps had hitherto been employed under General Grossetti on the Yser. With them came Conneau's 1st Cavalry Corps, transferred from its place between the Second and Third British Corps. That day was remarkable for the hard shelling of our front, and two isolated attacks, one against Bulfin's 2nd and

4th Brigades at Klein Zillebeke, and the other against Allenby around Messines. The first was beaten back with the assistance of Byng's cavalry, who continued for the next few days to act as a general reserve and support to the Gheluvelt salient. But the assault on Allenby was a serious matter. It was delivered before the French reinforcements had come up, and it resulted in the Germans seizing Hollebeke and Messines, which gave them positions on the low ridges from which Ypres could be bombarded. Messines was levelled with terrific shell fire, and, though we counter-attacked furiously, we did not retake it. Allenby called on the four battalions from the Second Corps, which had been kept in reserve between Messines and Bailleul. They came up and entrenched themselves, and till nightfall held their position against a continuous attack, the London Scottish, now for the first time in the firing line, conducting themselves with the *sangfroid* of veterans. During the night the Germans, breaking through on the left flank of the 1st Cavalry Division, took Wytschaete, on the Ypres-Armentières road, and enfiladed the London Scottish; but on the forenoon of Monday, the 2nd, our cavalry supports and the French 16th Corps retook Wytschaete and straightened our front. Messines remained in German hands, making an ugly dent in our line, which now ran from Le Gheir to the west of Messines, by Wytschaete, St. Eloi, and Klein Zillebeke to Gheluvelt. There was heavy fighting on that day on Pulteney's left at Le Gheir, where Drummer Dent of the East Lancashires won the Victoria Cross. When all the officers of his platoon had fallen, he took command and managed to hold the position.

Nov. 5.

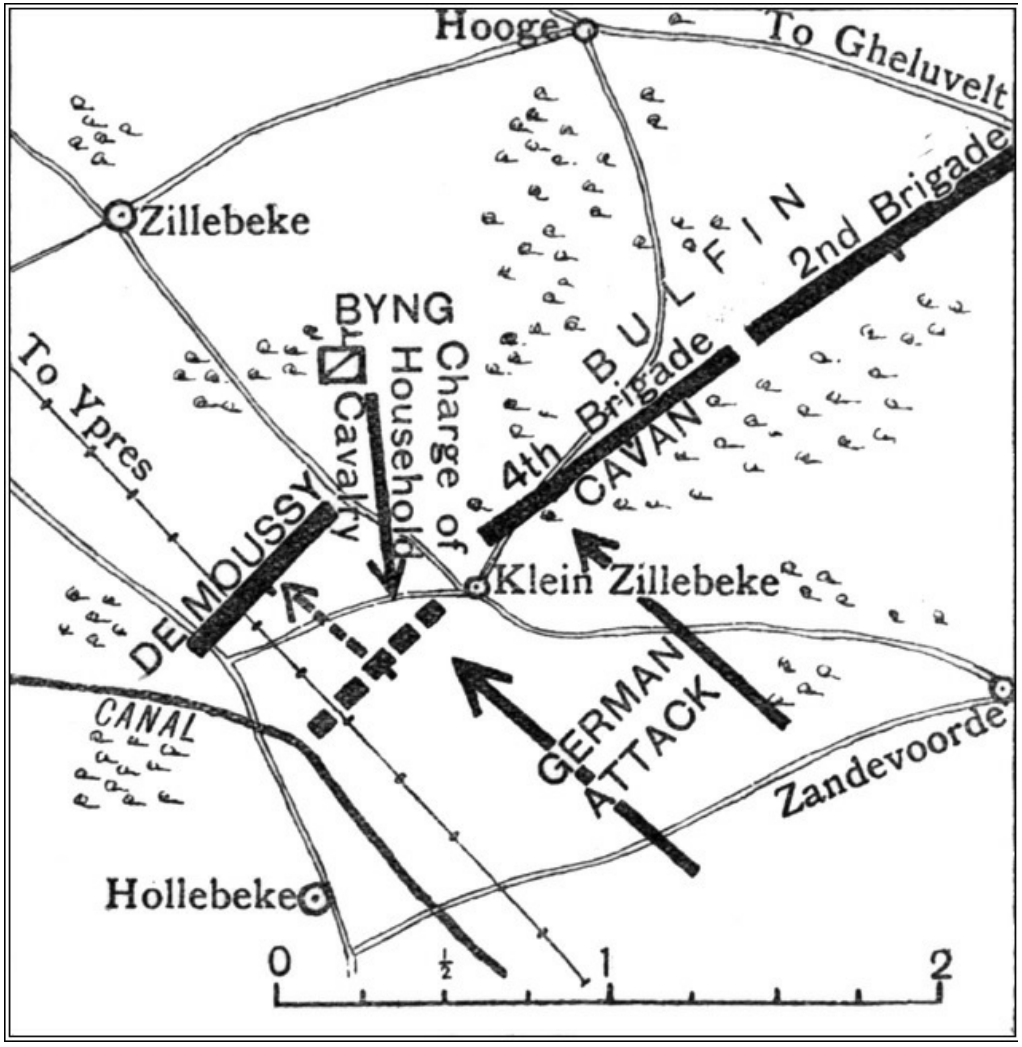
For five days the battle slackened into an artillery duel, and our weary men had a breathing space. On 5th November the line was readjusted, and some relief was given to the 7th Division, which was now reduced from 12,000 men and 400 officers to a little over 3,000. Fourteen battalions from the Second Corps, two Territorial battalions, and two regiments of Yeomanry now took their share of the line.

Nov. 6.

On Friday, the 6th, a sudden attack began on the Klein Zillebeke position, held by Bulfin's 2nd and 4th Brigades and Moussy's French division. In the afternoon the French on the right towards the canal were driven in, and Cavan's 4th Brigade was left in the air. The only reserve available was Byng's cavalry north of the Zillebeke-Klein Zillebeke road. Kavanagh deployed the 1st and 2nd Life Guards, with the Blues in reserve behind the centre, and his advance encouraged the French to resume their trenches.

But the German attack was being pressed in force, and the French came back again upon the Household Cavalry, a couple of whose squadrons were doubled

across the road to stem the rush. For a moment there was wild confusion—French, British, and the oncoming Germans being mingled together in the village street. Colonel Gordon Wilson of the Blues, a most gallant soldier, was killed by the fire from the houses. Major the Hon. Hugh Dawnay, who had come from the Headquarters Staff to command the 2nd Life Guards, led his men to the charge, and inflicted heavy losses upon the foe. Two hundred years before, the French Maison du Roi had charged desperately in Flemish fields, the splendid *Gants glacés*, with their lace and steel, their plumed hats and mettled horses. Very different was the attack of the British Household cavalry—mud-splashed men in drab charging on foot with the bayonet. It was war shorn of all pomp and glamour, a struggle of naked endurance and stark courage.



Hugh Dawnay fell at the head of his men, but not before he had taken order with the enemy. His death was fruitful, for the charge in which he fell saved the British position. In him we lost one of the most brilliant of our younger soldiers, most masterful both in character and in brain. He would wish no better epitaph than Napier's immortal words: "No man died that night with more glory—yet many died, and there was much glory."[14]

Nov. 7.

Kavanagh had succeeded, and his brigade held the trenches on Cavan's right far into the darkness, till the 4th Brigade could establish its line. Next morning, the 7th, there were two counter-attacks. Cavan, at 5.30 a.m., assisted by Kavanagh, advanced and took three machine guns; but the enemy were too strong to permit him to hold the trenches he had won. Farther east, Lawford's 22nd Brigade, which had been relieved for several days, made a brilliant assault, taking and holding a German trench. The close of the day saw that brigade reduced to its brigadier, five officers, and 700 men. One of the dead officers, Captain J. F. Vallentin of the South Staffords, won the Victoria Cross for his cool gallantry in leading the attack.

Nov. 11.

Once more came a period of ominous quietness. It lasted through the 8th, 9th, and 10th, when nothing happened but a little shelling. Then on Wednesday, the 11th, came the supreme effort. As Napoleon had used his Guards for the final attack at Waterloo, so the Kaiser used his for the culminating stroke at Ypres. The 1st and 4th Brigades of the Prussian Guards[15] were brought up from the Arras district and launched against the point of our salient. They had suffered at Charleroi and Guise, terribly in the marshes of St. Gond, scarcely less heavily at Rheims, but now they fought under their Emperor's eye, and they came on as if it was their first day of war. At first they used their parade march, and our men, rubbing their eyes in the darkness of the small hours, could scarcely credit the portent. They came down the Menin road against Gheluvelt, and long before they reached the shock our fire had taken toll of them. But so mighty is discipline that their impact told. The 1st Division bore the brunt of the charge, and at three points they pierced our front, and won the woods to the west. They took our first line of trenches, but seemed unable to decide on the next step. Our frontal fire checked them, our flanks enfiladed them, and they fell back to the trenches they had won. The British counter-assault drove them from most of them; but they held one or two, and a small section of the Polygon Wood. Lieutenant Walter Brodie, of the 2nd Highland Light Infantry, received the Victoria Cross for a brilliant attack

which cleared a portion of our trenches. On that day fell Brigadier-General Charles Fitzclarence, V.C., commanding the 1st Brigade,[16] a soldier whose military skill was not less conspicuous than his courage.

With the failure of the Prussian Guard the enemy seemed to have exhausted his vitality. His tide of men had failed to swamp the thin Allied lines, and, wearied out, and with terrible losses, he slackened his efforts and fell back upon the routine of trench warfare. To complete the tale we must glance at what had been happening on the extreme left of the Ypres salient, where the bulk of Dubois' 9th Corps held the line from Zonnebeke to Bixschoote, and linked up with the battle on the Yser. He had with him to complete his front Bidon's Territorial divisions and most of de Mitry's 2nd Cavalry Corps, and against him came the bulk of the new German formations—the 22nd, 23rd, 26th, and 27th—which had been first launched against the British First Corps and 7th Division, as well as the left wing of Wurtemberg's force which was assailing the line of the Yser. We have told at some length the tale of British doings at Ypres, because we are better informed on the tactical details; but no dispatches have yet expounded the magnificent fight of Dubois' corps, and the exploits of his incomparable Zouaves. The fight raged round Bixschoote, which speedily became a charnel house full of unburied dead. The capture of the place would have given the Germans a position astride the Ypres-Dixmude canal and railway, and enabled them to turn the defence of Ypres from the north—an objective much the same as the corner of the Ypres-Comines canal at Klein Zillebeke. To achieve this end, battalion after battalion was hurled against the village. On one day the French Staff reported that three German regiments were annihilated, and a fourth the next day. The enemy worked round the town on north and south, but wherever he turned he was success fully countered. By 15th November the vigour of the assault was ebbing, as it had ebbed four days before at the point of the Ypres bastion.

Nov. 15.

On 12th November and the following days a spasmodic assault was made on the Klein Zillebeke positions, and along the whole line towards Messines. On this day Lieutenant Dimmer of the King's Royal Rifles won the Victoria Cross for his heroic fighting of his machine gun till it was destroyed, though he had been three times hit by shrapnel and twice by bullets. On the 16th an attempt was made on the southern re-entrant, which failed, and the shelling of Ypres continued, till its Cloth Hall and its great Church of St. Martin were in ruins. On the 17th the German 15th Corps made a desperate effort at the same point, but was repulsed. Presently further

Nov. 12.

Nov. 16.

Nov. 17.

French reinforcements came up, notably General Maistre's 21st Corps, and the sorely-tried British troops were relieved from the trenches which they had held for four stubborn weeks. The weather had changed to high winds and snow blizzards, and in a tempest the Battle of Ypres died away.

Ypres must rank as one of the most remarkable contests of the war; it is certainly one of the most remarkable in the record of the British army. Let us put the achievement in the simplest terms. Between Lille and the sea the Germans had not less than a million men. Six of their fourteen army corps were of the first line, and even the new formations were terrible in assault—more terrible than the veterans, perhaps, for they were still unwearied, and the edge of their keenness was undulled. The immature boys and elderly men, who often fell to pieces before our counter-attacks, came on with incredible valour in their early charges. They were like the soldiers of the Revolution—the more dangerous at times because they did not fight by rule. Against that part of this force which faced us we opposed numbers which began by being less than 100,000, and were never more than 150,000. In the actual salient of Ypres we had three divisions and some cavalry, during the worst part of the fighting, to meet five army corps, three of the first line. For the better part of two days one division held a front of eight miles against three army corps. In this mad mellay strange things happened. Units became hopelessly mixed, and officers had to fling into the breach whatever men they could collect. A subaltern often found himself in command of a battalion; a brigadier commanded one or two companies, or a division, as the fates ordered. At one moment a certain brigadier had no less than thirteen battalions under him. We can best realize the desperate nature of the struggle by quoting an order of Sir Henry Rawlinson issued to the 7th Division. "After the deprivations and tension," he said, "of being pursued day and night by an infinitely stronger force, the division had to pass through the worst ordeal of all. It was left to a little force of 30,000 to keep the German army at bay while the other British corps were being brought up from the Aisne. Here they clung on like grim death, with almost every man in the trenches, holding a line which of necessity was a great deal too long—a thin, exhausted line—against which the prime of the German first line troops were hurling themselves with fury. The odds against them were about eight to one; and, when once the enemy found the range of a trench, the shells dropped into it from one end to the other with terrible effect. Yet the men stood firm, and defended Ypres in such a manner that a German officer afterwards described, their action as a brilliant feat of arms,

and said that they were under the impression that there had been four British army corps against them at this point. When the division was afterwards withdrawn from the firing line to refit, it was found that out of 400 officers who set out from England there were only 44 left, and out of 12,000 men only 2,336."

The leadership of the corps commanders was beyond praise, and on Sir Douglas Haig fell the heaviest task. But Ypres was, like Albuera, a soldiers' battle, won by the dogged fighting quality of the rank and file rather than by any great tactical brilliance. There was no room and no time for ingenious tactics. Rarely, indeed, in the history of war do we find a great army checked and bewildered by one a fifth of its size.[17] Strategically it can be done. Instances will be found in Napoleon's campaigns, and not the least remarkable was Stonewall Jackson's performance in the spring and summer of 1862. While McClellan with 150,000 men was moving against Richmond, and Banks with 40,000 men was protecting his right rear, Jackson with 3,000 attacked Shields at Kernstown. He was beaten off, but he returned to the assault, and for three months led the Federal generals a wild dance in the Shenandoah valley. As a result, Lincoln grew nervous: Shields was not allowed to co-operate with McClellan; M'Dowell's corps was detached from McClellan to support him; the attack upon Richmond ended in a fiasco; and presently Antietam was fought and the invasion of Virginia was at an end. In that campaign, in Colonel Henderson's words, "175,000 men were absolutely paralyzed by 16,000." Ypres is not such a tale. The Allied strategy failed, and all that remained was a seemingly hopeless stand against a torrential invasion. It is to the eternal honour of our men that they did not break, and of their leaders that they did not despair.

A price must be paid for great glory, and the cost of Ypres was high. The German casualties cannot have been less than 250,000 in the three weeks' battle. The Allied forces from Albert to Nieuport lost well over 100,000 men, and in the Ypres fight alone the British lost at least 40,000. The total loss to the combatants was not far from the losses of the North during the whole of the American Civil War. Whole battalions virtually disappeared—the 1st Coldstream,[18] the 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers, the 2nd Wiltshires, the 1st Camerons. One divisional general, two brigadiers, nearly a dozen staff officers fell, and eighteen regiments and battalions lost their colonels. Scarcely a house famous in our stormy history but mourned a son. Wyndham, Dawnay, Fitzclarence, Wellesley, Cadogan, Cavendish, Bruce, Gordon-Lennox, Fraser, Kinnaird, Hay, Hamilton; it is like scanning the death roll after Agincourt or Flodden.

Ypres was a victory, a decisive victory, for it achieved its purpose. The

Allied line stood secure from the Oise to the sea; turning movement and piercing movement had alike been foiled, and the enemy's short-lived initiative was over. He was now compelled to conform to the battle we had set, with the edge taken from his ardour and everywhere gaps in his ranks. Had we failed, he would have won the Channel ports and destroyed the Allied left, and the war would have taken on a new character. Ypres, like Le Cateau, was in a special sense a British achievement. Without the splendid support of d'Urbal's corps, without the Belgians on the Yser and Maud'huy at Arras, the case would have, indeed, been hopeless, and no allies ever fought in more gallant accord. But the most critical task fell to the British troops, and not the least of the gain was the complete assurance it gave of their quality. They opposed the blood and iron of the German onslaught with a stronger blood and a finer steel. Where all did gallantly it is invidious to praise. The steady old regiments of the line revealed their ancient endurance; the cavalry did no less wonderful work on foot in the trenches than in their dashing charges at Mons and the Marne; the Household Brigade, fighting in an unfamiliar warfare, added to the glory they had won before on more congenial fields; the Foot Guards proved that their incomparable discipline was compatible with a brilliant and adroit offensive; our gunners, terribly outmatched in numbers and weight of fire, did not yield one inch; the few Yeomanry regiments and Territorial battalions showed all the steadiness and precision of first-line troops. "I have made many calls upon you," wrote Sir John French in a special order, "and the answers you have made to them have covered you, your regiments, and the army to which you belong with honour and glory." And again in his dispatch: "I venture to predict that the deeds during these days of stress and trial will furnish some of the most brilliant chapters which will be found in the military history of our times." It is no more than the truth. And to the Field-Marshal himself, whose tenacity and coolness were among the sources of victory, we may well apply Sherman's homely testimonial[19] to Grant, and no soldier can seek for higher praise. If fate had rendered the strategy of Marlborough impossible, Sir John French had none the less fought his Malplaquet.

Nov. 14.

Within hearing of the guns of Ypres, roaring their last challenge, the greatest British soldier passed away. Lord Roberts landed at Boulogne on 11th November on a visit to his beloved Indian troops. On the 12th he was at the headquarters of the corps, and went about among his old friends, speaking their own tongue, and greeting many

who had fought with him in the frontier wars. To the Indian soldier he was the one Englishman who ranked with Nikelsaini Sahib in the Valhalla of renown. The strain proved too great for the veteran; he caught a chill in the bitter weather; and while the Indian wounded waited in hospital on his coming, the news arrived that he was seriously ill. Pleurisy followed, and at eight o'clock on the night of Saturday, the 14th, the end came. It was fitting that the master-gunner should die within sound of his guns, that the most adored of British soldiers should have his passing amid the army he had loved so well. He had given his best to the service of his country, and had forgone his well-earned rest to preach the lessons of wisdom to dull ears. Such a career is a greater inspiration to his fellows than a cycle of victories. *Felix opportunitate mortis*, he died, as he had lived, in harness.

From an officer's letter we take this tribute to his memory:—[20]

November 17th.

"We motored over to General Headquarters for Lord Roberts's funeral service this morning. There were a few officers from every corps, and of course all the General Headquarter Staff and representatives of the French Army. We went with the coffin from the house where he died along streets lined by two Highland territorial regiments, with the pipes leading the way, to the Mairie. The service was held in the entrance hall, just inside the doorway, where there was room for perhaps fifty persons round the coffin, while the rest of us stood on the broad stone staircases to left and right, looking down. The Prince of Wales was there, and Alexander of Teck. But the two figures that stood out to me were ——, by the head of the coffin, his furrowed face full of sorrow and hard put to it more than once not to break down; and Pertab Singh—not in his usual voluminous turban, but with a little bit of cloth wound tight round his head; small at the first glance, it was only when you looked again you saw he was a soldier and a prince. They sang 'Now the labourer's task is o'er,' and 'O God, our help,' and it seemed quite natural that Roman Catholics, Hindus, and Mohammedans should all join in the service.

"It was a gloomy day, with frequent cold showers, but as they took the coffin out the sun shone forth brilliantly, drawing across a dark bank of cloud opposite a vivid and most perfect rainbow. An aeroplane was flying out of the cloud into the sunshine, and the trumpets of the French cavalry rang out triumphantly. Then the minute guns started booming, the coffin, draped in the Union Jack, was placed in a Red Cross car—and so the gallant little hero went home from the war.

"I thought during the service of Lord Roberts, almost a boy, attending John Nicholson's funeral at Delhi, and of all the span of his life between, and the link of simple courage and devotion to duty binding all the varied incidents of it together, and was glad of the privilege of having known him."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE FIRST ASSAULT ON WARSAW.

The German Advance—Von Hindenburg's Plan—The Vital Points on the Vistula—Polish Communications—Warsaw—The Russian Line falls back—The Russian Counter-plan—Beginning of the Battle on 15th October—Position in Warsaw—The Battle of Warsaw—Rennenkampf attacks the German Left—German Defeat at Kazimirjev—The Russians cross the Vistula—The German Line falls back—The Austrian Fighting on the San—Temporary Relief of Przemysl—German Devastation in Poland—Von Hindenburg's Counter-strategy.

We left the Russian armies at the close of September with their right wing against the German trenches in the Masurian Lakes, and their left pushed forward across the San, with its vanguard not a hundred miles from Cracow. The centre was still in the main behind the Vistula, though advance bodies of cavalry had moved to the Warta and almost to the edge of the Posen frontier. The main Russian mobilization still continued, and behind the Polish Triangle men were coming in daily. But by this time certain defects in the provision of equipment were being revealed. It was realized that Russia could not hope before Christmas to put the four millions into the field which had been the estimate in the West—that she would be fortunate if she could rise to two millions.

Oct. 5.

About the 5th of October the first news came of the great German advance. Von Hindenburg, seeing that a stalemate had been reached in East Prussia which might continue through the winter, and conscious at last that his beloved province was a self-contained area in which no number of German successes would affect the critical Galician position, resolved to stake everything on a blow at the enemy's centre. One vulnerable point stood out in the amorphous and inorganic mass of Western Russia, and that point was the city of Warsaw. It stood on the wrong side of the Vistula; it was the centre of the scanty railway communications of Poland; it was the capital of the Russian province, a city with a population of three-quarters of

a million, and a maelstrom of races, the like of which could not be found in Europe. If he could take Warsaw before the autumn ended, he would have ideal winter quarters; a base pushed far into the enemy's territory from which to advance in the spring; a breach in the fortress which might speedily make it untenable. Even larger schemes rose to the mind of the new field-marshal. If Russia defended Warsaw, and so islanded an army on the western bank of the Vistula, he might cross the river higher up and cut her communications. If that were achieved, instead of a winter of weary struggles among the Polish mud, he would hold the capital city against an enemy who would have suffered a blow so crushing that no recovery could be looked for till the New Year.

The size of the force which was massing in the early days of October along the whole German frontier from Thorn to Silesia can only be given in round figures. Von Hindenburg had with him the 5th, 6th, and 17th Corps, which had in August been stationed in Poland. The 6th Corps had been severely handled at Opole, but reserves had made up its complement. He had, too, the bulk of the reserves which he had received for his advance to the Niemen, including the East Prussian 20th Corps, since a containing battle in the Masurian Lakes entrenchments did not call for a force so large as had been destined for the conquest of Vilna. There were reserve Saxon and Bavarian corps—well fitted for the Eastern campaign, for to them Russia had always been a terror—and at least one reserve division of the Prussian Guard. He had received, further, Landwehr troops early in October from Germany; and on his right centre he had an Austrian army, stiffened with German troops, under General Dankl. In one way and another he must have had in his centre from Thorn to Czestochowa at least three-quarters of a million men; and the Austrian army in Cracow, now reinforced by huge Landwehr additions, must have reached a million. Adding the troops operating in East Prussia and along the Carpathians, and the garrison of Przemysl, the Teutonic Alliance must have had two and a half million men in the field. At that time in the West we believed that Russia had enormous armies ready—five million was the ordinary estimate—and would "snow under" any German attack. The truth is that she was outnumbered, and continued to be outnumbered for several months. It is very doubtful if by the beginning of October she could have put two million men into the nine hundred miles of her battle front.

To understand von Hindenburg's plan of campaign it is necessary to look closely at the nature of the Vistula line. A glance at the map will reveal some peculiarities. From the point at Sandomirz where it receives the San it flows north by east in a well-defined valley flanked by low hills. At Nova Alexandria it bends almost at right angles towards the north-west, and enters the vast, flat,

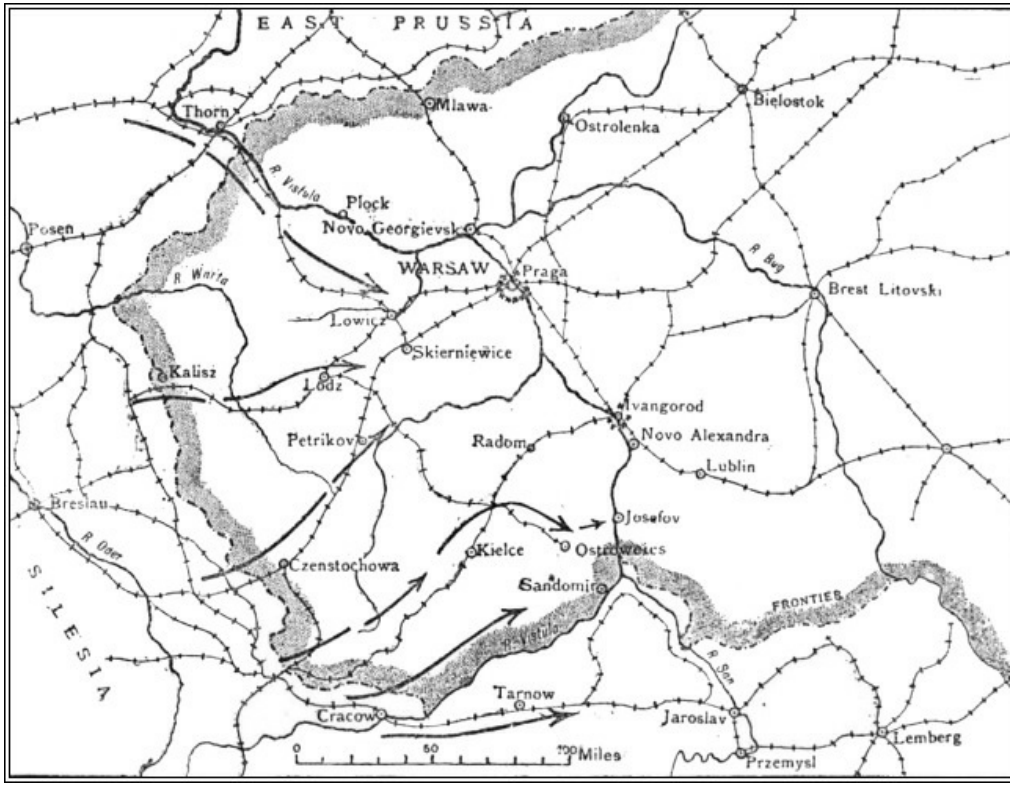
melancholy Polish plain. Thirteen miles on it passes Ivangorod on its right bank —the fortress which is the southern apex of the Polish Triangle. Fifty-seven miles on it reaches Warsaw, which lies on the left or western bank, and here it is more than a third of a mile wide. Twenty-six miles farther comes the fortress of Novo Georgievsk, on the right bank, and here it turns again and flows west by north towards Thorn and the Baltic. From Sandomirz to Novo Georgievsk the river is everywhere deep and unfordable, and it is bridged only at two points— at Warsaw and at Ivangorod. These were, therefore, vital points for the invaders. Two tributaries of the Vistula are important to remember. The first, the San, runs past Przemysl and Jaroslav and joins the greater river at Sandomirz. In its lower course it is navigable, but as it approaches the hills it becomes a fordable and frequently-bridged stream, the crossing of which offers no serious difficulties. The second is the Pilitza, which enters on the west bank between Warsaw and Ivangorod. This is a typical Polish river, about one hundred yards wide, muddy and straining through wide marshes; and it obviously divided any invading force into two quite separate parts. South of the Pilitza again, and south of the town of Radom, lay a great belt of forest country which extended east up to the Vistula bank, and compelled another hiatus in any advance from the west on a broad front.

Let us glance at the lines of communication, few and bad at the best, now that the approach of winter was deteriorating the never very creditable Polish roads. On the eastern side of the Vistula the Russians had in the south the excellent main line from Lemberg and Kiev, which crossed the San at Przemysl. North of that for 150 miles they had nothing at all but indifferent country roads till Ivangorod was reached; which was connected by three lines with Lublin, Brest Litovski, and Warsaw. At Warsaw the main line of Central Europe crossed the river, and branched north to Mlawa and the East Prussian frontier, east to Vilna and Petrograd and to Brest Litovski, and south to Ivangorod. A railway line, therefore, followed the east bank of the Vistula all the way from Ivangorod to Novo Georgievsk.

On the western bank the communications have a fantastic air. Behind the German frontier there lay a network of lateral strategic railways, probably the most perfect system of its kind on earth. But the lines which ran eastwards from the frontier to the Vistula were not numerous. On the south there was a main line from Silesia which ran by Kielce and Radom, and crossed the river at Ivangorod. Midway between Radom and Kielce it sent off a branch to the south-east, which terminated at the town of Ostrowiecs, about twenty miles from Josefov, on the Vistula, where the river narrows to a gut between two island-studded reaches. Farther north a line ran from Czestochowa by Petrikov and

Skier niewice to Warsaw, and was linked up by a cross-country branch with the Ivangorod and Ostrowiecs lines. Another line ran from the frontier by Kalisz, Lodz, and Lowicz to Warsaw. Last of all there was an important line from Thorn which followed the left bank of the Lower Vistula and reached Warsaw *viâ* Lowicz.

One word must be said about Warsaw. The city, as we have seen, lies on the west bank of the river; but its main railway station, the nodal point of the Polish lines, lies in the suburb of Praga, across the river. Three bridges connect Praga and Warsaw—the fine Alexander Bridge for foot passengers and ordinary traffic, a road bridge farther south, and the railway bridge, which lies more to the north, under the guns of the Alexander Citadel. That is to say, Russia's reinforcements could be brought up from the east behind the barrier of the Vistula. Until the enemy crossed that river there was no fear of her main or her lateral lines of communication being cut.



Von Hindenburg's First Advance on Warsaw.

If we look closely at these simple topographical facts, we shall see that von Hindenburg's strategy was determined by them. Only one plan offered a good

chance of success. The Austrians advancing from Cracow on the San should compel a Russian retreat behind that stream, and the consequent relief of Przemysl. In the north there should be a flank movement up the Vistula from Thorn, by means of the river and the Thorn-Lowicz railway. The centre should advance by the two main lines Kalisz-Lodz-Lowicz and Czestochowa-Petrikov-Skierniewice for a great assault upon Warsaw. But the operative part of the line was the right centre which should move towards the section of the Vistula between Ivangorod and Sandomirz by the Kielce-Radom railway, and especially by the Ostrowiecs branch, while Dankl's Austrian army of the Nida should move in support along the left bank of the Upper Vistula towards Sandomirz. If the crossing of the Vistula was to be won, there was only one place for the effort. This was the narrows at Josefov, and the map will explain why. With a railhead at Ostrowiecs the Germans had an admirable base for the attempt, and two fair roads led thence to the river. The Russians on the eastern bank would fight at the very place where their communications were worst. Their nearest point on the railway was Lublin, thirty-three miles off, on a bad road. Ivangorod, by the riverside road, was nearly fifty. Von Hindenburg's scheme was a general concentration all along the Middle Vistula, and a piercing movement at Josefov, where it would be hardest for the Russians to repel an attack in force. Once over the Vistula, he would cut the Kiev railway at Lublin, and, if his attack on Warsaw succeeded, drive the Grand Duke Nicholas in retreat along the northern railways towards Vilna and Petrograd.

It was a well-reasoned plan, which did credit to the victor of Tannenberg. But, unfortunately for him, the Russian generalissimo, as soon as his cavalry had brought news of the great movement from the German frontier, divined his intentions. The Grand Duke Nicholas played for safety, and he played the game well after the traditional Russian manner. He resolved to risk nothing on the plains west of the Vistula, where he would have to rely for supplies on divergent railway lines, and where the broad and muddy Pilitza would cut his army in two. Let the enemy have the benefit of the peculiar awkwardness of Western Poland for autumn campaigning. Leaving a screen of light horse west of the river to keep in touch with the invaders, he gave the order for all the Russian forces to retire behind the Vistula and the San. This meant that Ivanov, pushing on by Tarnow to Cracow, had to fall back fully fifty miles to conform with the alignment of the centre. The Grand Duke held in force the bridge-head at Ivangorod, and had a field army ready for the defence of Warsaw. He did not propose to give von Hindenburg the chance of bringing the Skoda howitzers against the capital. He would meet him well to the west on a line of entrenchments, and, when the attack had broken itself there, would counter-

attack with his right and drive the German left down upon the Pilitza. Meanwhile he had his eye upon Ostrowiecs and Josefov. If the attempt at crossing failed, if the Russians crossed and counter-attacked, the German right centre would have an awkward forest country to retreat in.

In Russia they told a tale of an ingenious counterplot. Poles were captured in the German advance, who, in terror of their lives, gave all the information they could about the Russian preparations. The Grand Duke, they said, had no large force in front of Warsaw, and he did not mean to defend it. He intended to give up the line of the Vistula, and to fall back upon Brest Litovski and the valley of the Bug. Presently authentic German spies brought back the same tale, and in a little German aviators reported a movement of troop-trains from Warsaw and Ivangorod towards the Bug. The Russian generalissimo left nothing to chance, and he succeeded in completely misleading his adversary.

Oct. 10.

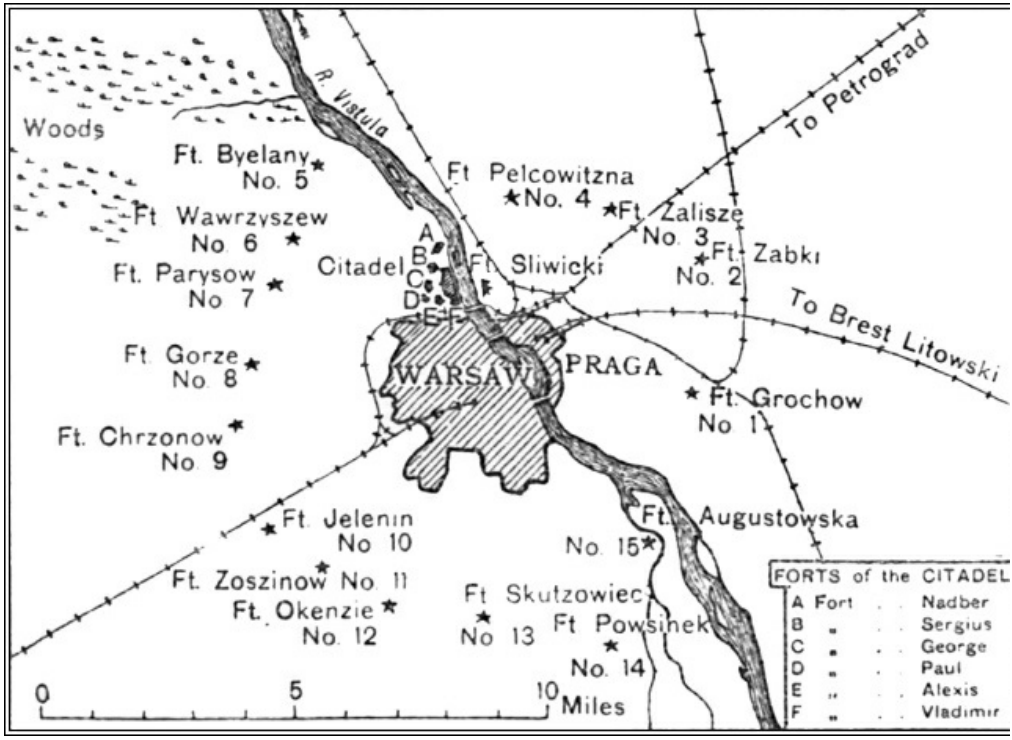
On 10th October von Hindenburg's centre was at Lodz, that great manufacturing town built up by German capital; his left was farther east on the Thorn railway, and his right was between Petrikov and Kielce. Dankl was on the left bank of the Vistula, near Sandomirz, and the Cracow army had reached Tarnow. Except at Warsaw, the Russian infantry were east of the Vistula and the San, and one last desperate effort was being made to reduce Przemysl before it should be relieved. Four days later the German left was at Plock, on the Vistula, the centre east of Lowicz nearing Warsaw, and the right between Radom and Ostrowiecs. The movement of the left endangered a small Russian advance which had been made from the line of the Narev towards the East Prussian frontier. The Russians fell back, and von Schubert's right wing followed, and took Mlawa. Had the Germans been in any great strength they might have seriously endangered the Grand Duke's right; but from their subsequent supineness we may take it that the raid was made by unsupported cavalry. Next day, the 15th, the battle was joined all along the line of the Vistula.

Oct. 14.

Oct. 15.

The German advance was slow and deliberate, more like the occupation of a territory already won than an attack against an unbroken enemy. As they progressed they made roads, excellent roads, which were destined to have only a life of a few weeks. Great stretches of forest were cut down, and the felled trunks used to make corduroy paths over the marshes for the guns. In the worst places artillery causeways were built, soon to be blown to pieces. Actually the gauge of the Kalisz-Lodz-Warsaw railway was altered, many miles being completed each day. These preparations not only gave von Hindenburg a chance

of bringing up his supplies by motor transport from the subsidiary rail heads, but provided, so far as his centre was concerned, a safe and speedy means of retreat. Russian aeroplanes, out from Ivangorod in these days, reported great activity east of Ostrowiecs. It was the German right centre improving the woodland roads from the railway to the narrows of the Vistula.



Defences of Warsaw.

Meanwhile in Warsaw there was an equal busyness. The first intimation of the coming of war was the appearance of German dirigibles and aeroplanes above the city, which dropped bombs, chiefly in the direction of Praga and the great railway station. Presently came showers of leaflets, some directed to the Poles, promising Polish autonomy; some to the Russian rank and file, asking them why they fought in a war engineered by the aristocracy. Democratic appeals were varied by religious. One pamphlet, aimed at Polish Catholic sentiment, bore on its cover a coloured picture of the Virgin and Child, flanked by medallions of the Pope and the Kaiser, that versatile believer who elsewhere was being represented as a convert to Islam. Warsaw, with its mixed population and its enormous number of Jews, was a difficult place to govern with the enemy at its gates. The press was most strictly censored, and elaborate precautions had to be taken to prevent espionage. Very soon the terror of the air-

craft passed away, though something like panic appeared again when German cavalry entered the villa district of Prushkov, about eight miles from the centre of the city, and the well-to-do residents fled into Russia, many not stopping till they had reached Moscow. But Warsaw soon settled down. All through the great battle at its gates the city went on with its ordinary avocations, and only the sight of an occasional "Taube," the Siberian regiments and the Japanese heavy guns moving over the Alexander Bridge, the daily return of wounded, and the western sky lit at night by fires other than the sunset, told the citizens that war was only a few miles distant. Mr. Stephen Graham has told us how one Sunday he wandered out of the city and saw the fringe of the fighting, and on his return found a normal Sunday evening.

> "It was five miles now to the centre of the city and a restaurant. At last I reached it, and there, as ever at night-time, all was gaiety and frivolity, the cafés full to the doorways, the cinema shows glaring as in Tottenham Court Road, the broad pavements crowded with Polish dandies, with elegantly dressed women and ogling girls, with gossiping Jewesses and black-cloaked Abrahams, with hundreds of newspaper hawkers selling not only Polish sheets but also the *Times* and the *Matin*. I had my dinner and my coffee listening to a selection of ragtimes. . . . Next day the sound of battle died away, and on the Tuesday there returned to the city thousands of tired-out, woe-begone Siberian Cossacks and Caucasian cavalrymen—the soldiers who had turned the scale. All Warsaw turned out in the rain to give them cakes and cigarettes, handshakes and cheers."

Oct. 16-19.

The fight for Warsaw began on Friday, the 16th, and continued till the evening of Monday, the 19th. Von Hindenburg had at least five army corps massed for the attempt, and was present in person. The brunt of the Russian resistance fell on the Siberian corps, who had just arrived by rail from Moscow. The Grand Duke Nicholas was also much assisted by the batteries of heavy guns—some say as many as thirty—served by Japanese gunners, which Japan had sent by the Siberian railway. For the first day the issue hung in the balance; on Saturday and Sunday the Russians had established an unshakable trench position a few miles beyond the outer forts, and on Monday the attack slackened and died away. The reason was soon apparent. The Grand Duke Nicholas had swung round his right across the Vistula under cover of the guns of Novo Georgievsk, and was driving in the German left

centre.

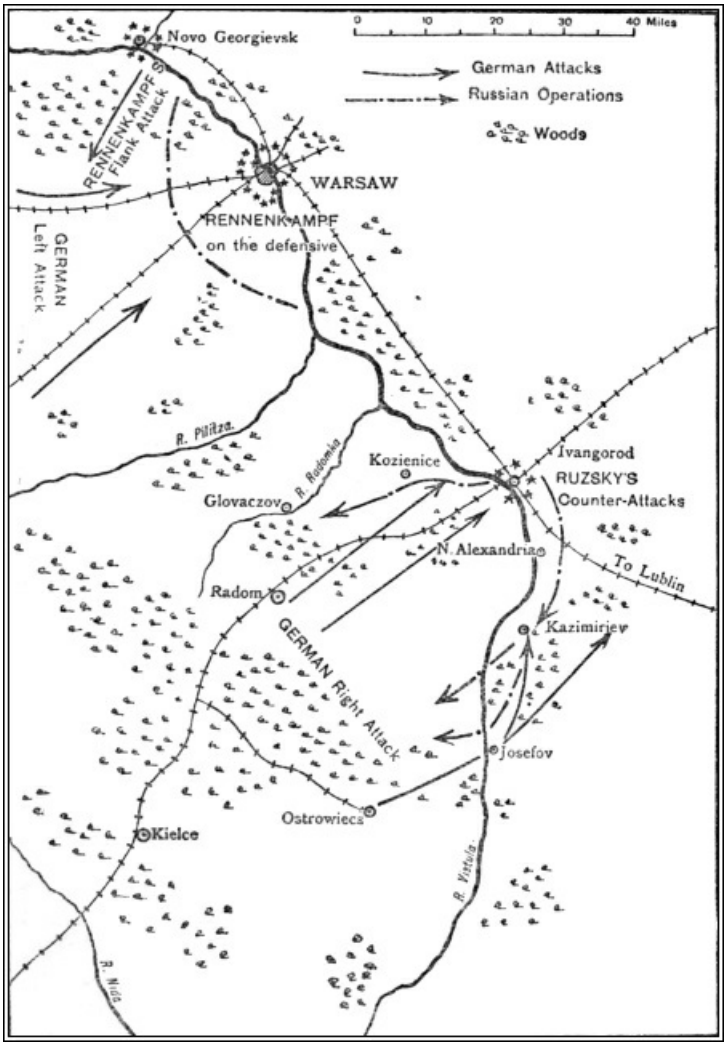
The details of this movement are still obscure, but it is clear that Rennenkampf was brought from East Prussia to direct it. Something had happened to the German left advancing from Plock. Perhaps it had been held on the Bzura by a force thrown across the Vistula from Novo Georgievsk. At any rate, the Russian attack came with crushing force. Why the German aeroplanes, which had been busy for the past week, did not give von Hindenburg warning is still a mystery. It may have been the fog, for there was no obstacle to their reconnaissance in the flat Polish plains. The German left centre was turned round till it ran east and west instead of north and south. It rolled back from the Vistula, and the battle resolved itself into two separate fights—one north and one south of the Pilitza.

Meantime the attempt to cross the Vistula had been vigorously pushed on. One effort was made in the section between Ivangorod and Warsaw; but since the Russians had a railway line on the eastern bank, they were able to bring up their guns and blow the German rafts and pontoons to pieces. The result was the annihilation of the attack. But this was more or less of a feint, and the real effort was made, as the Russian Staff expected, from Ostrowiecs as a base at the narrows of Josefov. A strong assault was made on the bridge-head at Ivangorod by a corps from Radom, to cover the movement which was going on farther south. The Russians appeared to hold the eastern shore weakly at Josefov, and a large German force, including several batteries, crossed in pontoons. They saw no sign of the enemy, and moved joyfully towards the Ivangorod-Lublin railway, confident that they had turned the left of the Russian centre. But on 21st October Ruzsky fell upon them at a village called Kazimirjev, eight miles south of Nowa Aleksandria. It is a district of low hills rising above swampy flats, and the wearied invaders found themselves suddenly opposed to a Russian bayonet charge. No man escaped over the Vistula.

Oct. 21.

Next day the Russians were across the river at Nowa Aleksandria, and, having established gun positions on the high bank, prepared to advance along the whole line. The following day they landed advance parties of Caucasian troops north of Ivangorod opposite Kozienice, and these held their ground most gallantly till the river could be bridged. So began the battle south of the Pilitza, the fiercest part of the great engagement, the chief fighting taking place near the village of Glovaczov, on the river Radomka. The Russians drove the enemy from the open country beside the river into the great woods of spruce, ten miles deep, which make a screen between the Vistula and the Polish plain. Among the

trees there were a thousand separate engagements, desperate hand-to-hand fighting in the cranberry mosses and forest glades. Ultimately they forced the Germans into the open on the west side, where their guns completed the destruction. At Kozienice the Russians buried 16,000 dead, their own and the enemy's. A correspondent who visited the scene after the battle thus describes it: "The forest for miles looks as if a hurricane had swept through. Trees staggering from their shattered trunks, and limbs hanging everywhere, show where the shrapnel shells have been bursting. . . . The state of the last two kilometres of the woody belt is hard to describe. There seems scarcely an acre that is not sown like the scene of a paper-chase, only the trail here is bloody bandages and bits of uniform."[21]



In the forest region south of Radom the glades and paths were well known to the Russian guides, and there were many surprises of German detachments. Here, just north of the river Ilzanka, the 17th and 20th German Corps suffered heavily, as did the reserve divisions of the Guards, and Dankl's 1st and 2nd Austrian Corps, which had joined hands from the Nida with the German right. Ruzsky, now across the Vistula with all his army, gave the retreating foe no rest. The Germans fought desperately, struggling, often at immense cost of life, to save their guns or to render them useless to the enemy. By the 25th the Germans were at Radom, and Ruzsky's right was moving so fast that it got between them and the Pilitza. The next stand of von Hindenburg's southern army was at Kielce; but after an engagement lasting a day and a night, the Russians, on 3rd November, drove them from the town, along the southern railway, with a loss of 2,500 prisoners and many guns. By the beginning of November the long German front had been broken into two pieces, with the Pilitza between—the southern fleeing south-west towards Czestochowa and Cracow, the northern retiring westward towards the line of the Warta.

Oct. 25.

Ruzsky's victory in the south determined Rennenkampf's success north of the Pilitza. Grojec and Skierniewice were taken, and then Lowicz and Lodz; for, with both flanks turned, there could be no resting-place for von Hindenburg short of the frontier. The Germans fought with extraordinary gallantry, thousands of men being sacrificed for the safety of guns and transport. It was the opposite of the policy which had been pursued in the retreat from the Marne, and was probably due to von Hindenburg's special orders, for his temperament made him careful of stores and generous of human life. In one case in the retreat from Skierniewice 2,000 men of the rearguard perished to enable a convoy to get away. Both in the advance and in the retreat the invaders seem to have behaved with reasonable humanity to the civilian inhabitants.

In this fortnight's battle the only modified success won by Teutonic arms fell to the share of the Austrians. The troops of the Dual Monarchy had met with grim disaster in the first two months of war, and they had beyond doubt been badly led; but some were of excellent quality, and now they gave exhibition of it. The two reconstituted armies from Cracow, under the Archduke Joseph and General Woyrosch, linking up with Dankl's army of the Nida, swept eastward to the San. Ivanov was in chief command here, but the resistance was mainly in the hands of Radko Dmitrieff, while Brussilov watched the Carpathian passes and protected the communications with Lemberg. The plain truth seems to be that in their advance the Austrians were successful till von Hindenburg's *débâcle* in the

north uncovered their left flank and compelled them to retire. Their communications were good, and the forested banks of the San gave them a strong base for defence. They crossed the San at several points, reoccupied Jaroslav, and relieved Przemysl. From the south they delivered a fierce attack on the Russian left at Sambor, and nearly succeeded, their object being the recapture of Lemberg. The garrison of Przemysl, under General von Kusmanek, were very near starvation, and welcomed their deliverers. Food and supplies of all kinds were rushed up from Cracow to the fortress, many of the civilian inhabitants were sent away, and Przemysl was given a new lease of life. It had need of it, for in a day or two the iron cordon was closed again. Jaroslav was retaken by the Russians, along with 5,000 prisoners, and Przemysl was re-invested. Finally, Dankl managed to cling to Sandomirz long after there was no German within forty miles of the Vistula, and only retired south of the Upper Vistula when the Russian left centre threatened to envelop him.

Furthest Westward Advance of the Russians (Nov. 1914).

As von Hindenburg retreated he left a desert behind him. The roads he had laboriously made were mined and destroyed, as was the new gauge of the Kalisz-Lodz railway. He "chess-boarded" the ordinary highways, and blew up railway stations, water-towers, and bridges, and he was said to have had a patent machine which turned steel rails into things of the shape of corkscrews. Half his rearguard actions were fought to enable this work of destruction to be completed. The Germans fell short of explosives, so ingenious devices were adopted. One water-tower was demolished by sending a railway engine at full speed against it; the tower collapsed, and the engine disappeared into a river. "The telegraph wires were meticulously cut into sections," an observer

reported, “the posts broken or sawn through, and the insulators broken to bits.” It looked as if the Germans had said farewell for good to Poland, for no army could advance through a wilderness, where its communications would be as easy as were those of Crassus in the Parthian desert.

But von Hindenburg was no aimless vandal. The frontal assault had failed, and he was now to revert to the far sounder strategy of Tannenberg. Had a Russian Staff officer been free about the beginning of November to travel over the whole of Western Poland, he would have observed that the destruction, wholesale in the south, gradually grew less complete towards the north, and practically ceased on the left bank of the Lower Vistula. There the roads were as good, or as bad, as usual, and though here and there a railway bridge had been demolished, enough had been left to reconstruct it quickly. Von Hindenburg was maturing a scheme which depended upon a devastated Poland, *all except the northern quarter*. That is why the main German retreat was towards the south-west rather than the west. If a blow were struck through the north, then the Russians in the centre and south would have no roads or railways by which to send reinforcements.

During those days we were witnessing the desperate assaults upon the Allies’ position from Arras to the North Sea, and comforting ourselves with the thought that soon the Russians would be in Silesia, and the pressure in the West withdrawn. Ignorance is often an advantage to civilians in war, and if we had had an inkling of what lay at the back of von Hindenburg’s mind our equanimity would have been rudely shaken.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SECOND RUSSIAN ADVANCE TO CRACOW.

Difficulties of Russian Strategic Position—Russian Cavalry Advance to Posen Frontier—Russian Strategic Plan—Beginning of von Hindenburg's Counterstroke—Nature and Numbers of German Army—The German Commands—Length of Russian Line—Russian Advance to Cracow—Position at Beginning of December—Double Austrian Counterstroke—Dmitrieff retreats to the Donajetz—Brussilov loses the Passes—Russian Counter-movement before Christmas—The Galician Ends of the Passes regained—Merits of Austrian Performance.

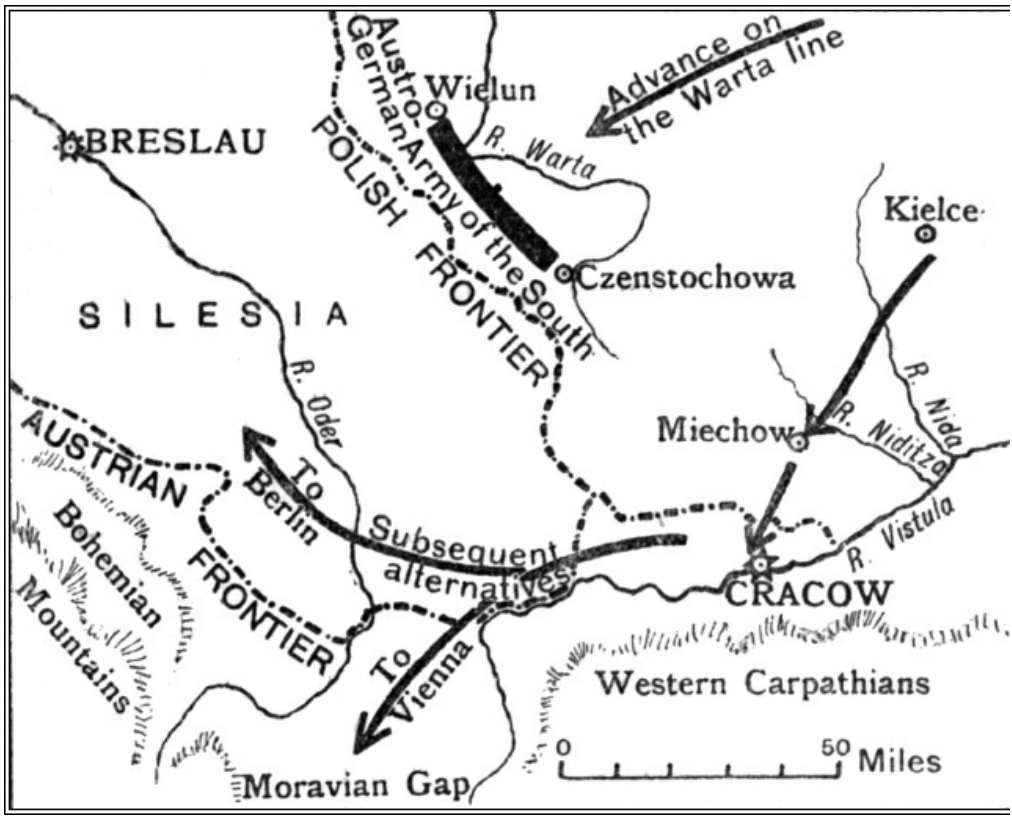
In the campaign in the East disasters have usually been due to successes pushed too far along the line of least resistance. Samsonov hurried on gaily towards Graudenz, and was annihilated at Tannenberg. Von Hindenburg, with Vilna as a bait, advanced to the Niemen, was thrown back, and suffered heavily at Augustovo. After Rava Russka there was no misadventure in Poland, for the Russian centre wisely clung to the Vistula; but von Hindenburg's assault on Warsaw failed decisively, and his retreat was attended by heavy losses. It was now Russia's turn to make a premature advance in the centre and to pay for it, as, three months later, she paid for the same movement in East Prussia. Her strategic position was bad, for she had before her that awkward salient of West Poland—itself now a desert so far as communications went, but lined on north and west by a perfect system of strategic railways. She was faced with the problem either of surrendering the wedge to the enemy or of occupying it and placing herself in imminent danger of a flank attack and a battle fought on lines parallel with her communications.

In all likelihood the Grand Duke Nicholas would have left West Poland alone but for the lure of Cracow in the south-west. In Galicia he had an excellent railway to move by, and Cracow was an objective of such supreme importance that to seize it any risk might be justified. The Galician autumn weather had not yet changed to winter snows, and there was still time for a dash against it and the line of the Oder. We must believe that the Russian General Staff were well

aware of the dangers of Polish campaigning, though they had not divined all that was in von Hindenburg's mind. But they realized that, if Cracow was to be won by a Galician advance, an army must move also through Poland on its right flank, and they hoped to keep von Hindenburg busy in defending the Posen frontier, while Dmitrieff dealt with the great fortress. They believed—as every one at the time believed in Western Europe—that the Germans had a line of positions prepared on the Warta where they would make a stand. Accordingly, while the main advance was Dmitrieff's on the left wing, the whole centre and right were moved west of the line Kutno-Lodz-the Pilitza.

Nov. 9.

In front went a cavalry screen, travelling fast, and covering the slow infantry movements along the damaged Polish roads. By 9th November, on the extreme right centre, Cossacks were at Nieszawa, on the Vistula, not twenty miles from Thorn. On the same day they were at Kolo, on the right bank of the Lower Warta, and next day the vanguard crossed the Posen frontier and cut the railway at Pleschen, on the Cracow-Posen line. This reconnaissance, apparently, did not tell the Grand Duke Nicholas von Hindenburg's main secret—the comparatively good condition in which the northern Polish communications had been kept; but it convinced him that the Germans did not propose to make a general stand on the Warta. The army which had been beaten north of the Pilitza was retiring behind the frontier, on the line Kalisz-Thorn. Farther south the case was different. The army which had been driven from Radom and Kielce was, apparently, entrenching itself along the Upper Warta between Wielun and Czestochowa, while Dankl's 1st and 2nd Austrian Corps were falling back north of the Vistula in the same direction.



Russian piercing Strategy before Nov. 13th.

This news suggested to the Russian generalissimo an improvement on his first plan. While his left assaulted Cracow and turned the line of the Oder, if he struck strongly with his centre along the Warta he might roll up the left flank of the German southern army, and hem it in between Ivanov and Dmitrieff. Accordingly there was a general hastening of the advance all along the Russian line. Strong assaults were made on the German front in the Masurian Lakes, probably to prevent reinforcements being sent to the German centre; the Russian right centre pressed forward towards Kolo and Kalisz, the left centre bore down upon the lines of Czestochowa, and the race for Cracow was accelerated. It was believed that even if the movement down the Warta failed, the Russian centre could hold the enemy, and prevent his interfering with the main Russian objective, the flanking movement upon Cracow and Silesia. It is necessary to keep this last fact constantly in mind. The Russians were resolved at almost any cost to treat Western Galicia, like East Prussia, as a self-contained *terrain*, and to refrain from weakening Dmitrieff whatever might happen on their centre. As we shall see, long after von Hindenburg's counter-offensive in the north had

thrust back Ruzsky and Rennenkampf, the Russian left was still moving on Cracow, and it was not checked until the German-Austrian armies undertook a specific counterstroke on their right wing. By the 12th of November Russian cavalry on the north bank of the Upper Vistula had crossed the Nida and Nidzitsa, and had taken Miechow on the German frontier, not twenty miles north of Cracow itself. Dmitrieff's main forces were still eighty miles to the east, while Brussilov was systematically reoccupying the main passes of the Western Carpathians, and about this date was securing the Dukla.

Nov. 12.

On 13th November the Grand Duke Nicholas first realized that von Hindenburg was preparing a counterstroke. The German field-marshal had withdrawn his northern army safely behind the frontier, and by means of his strategic railways had shifted its front northward to the neighbourhood of Thorn. At Thorn he had more than one reserve corps, and he brought to his aid a considerable part of the East Prussian army—two corps under von François—thinking rightly that the natural difficulties of the Masurian Lakes would prevent any serious Russian menace in that quarter. He had other reserve divisions from Germany, and from the western front, where the assault upon Ypres was now languishing, he received presently certain corps, including at least one brigade of the Prussian Guards. He had now for his striking force a total of not less than 800,000 men, and, as we shall see, he had large reserves within call. His advance was on a comparatively narrow front, the forty miles between the Warta and the Lower Vistula; though his extreme left was to operate against Plock, on the right bank of the latter stream. His objective was once again Warsaw, to be secured by a sudden blow at the right of the Russian centre. He argued, with justice, that, with broken railways and ruined roads, that centre could not be quickly reinforced or easily retire. If it were destroyed, he would be in Warsaw long before Ivanov, who commanded the left centre moving against the Upper Warta, could come up from the south, and the fall of Warsaw would send Dmitrieff back post-haste to the east. Von Hindenburg had with him, as chief of Staff, General von Ludendorff, who was regarded by his countrymen as one of their best Staff officers, and to whom we may probably give the credit for this ingenious strategy. The movement itself was entrusted to General von Mackensen, who had commanded the 17th (Danzig) Corps.

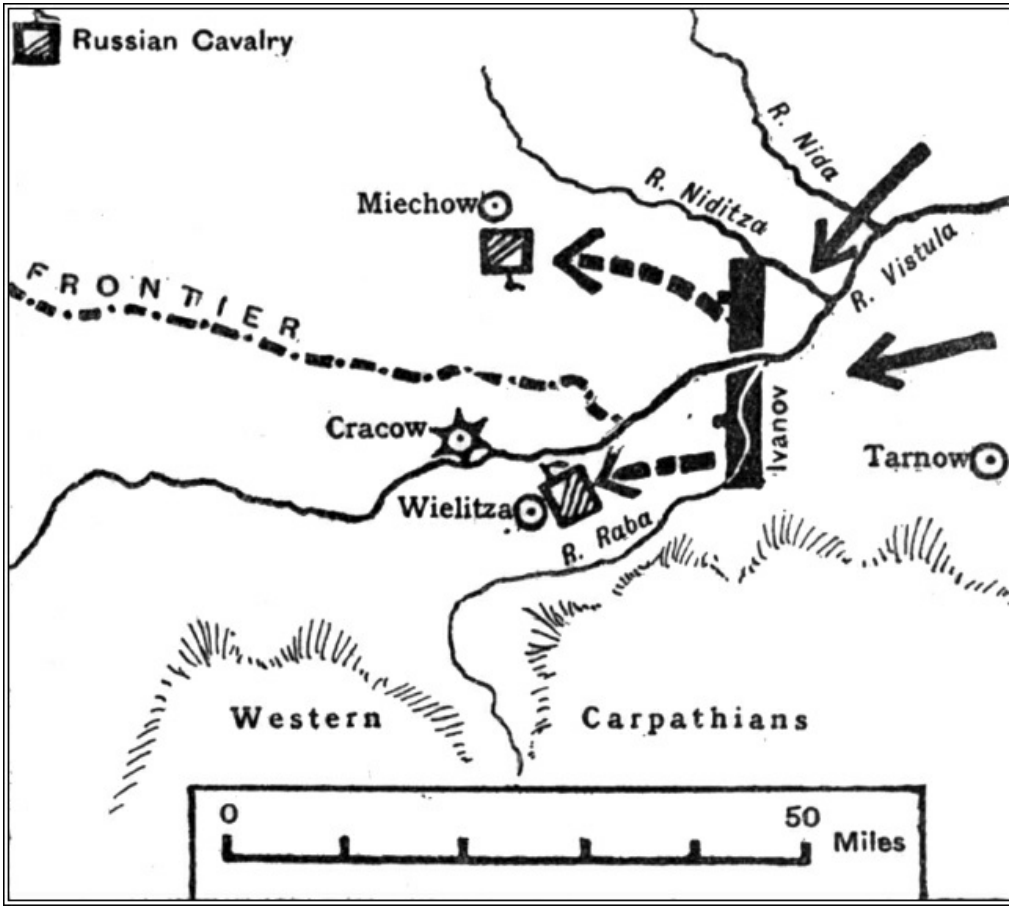
Nov. 13.

The Russian position was a bad one, except on the assumption that the invader had been finally broken. Against an unbeaten and reinforced foe their line offered a dozen points of weakness. With forces which cannot be estimated at more than two millions they were holding a front of nearly a thousand miles.

From the Lower Niemen down through the Masurian Lakes their line ran along the south frontier of East Prussia by Mlawa to a point between Plock and Thorn on the Vistula, then southward by Kolo and Sieradz to east of Czestochowa, striking the Upper Vistula near the Nidzitsa, and continuing by Tarnow to the Carpathians; then along the crest of the mountains to the Bukovina and the Rumanian frontier. From Masurenland to Plock their communications were poor; from Plock to the Nidzitsa they were the worst conceivable. Against the sudden thrust of von Hindenburg it may be doubted if the Russian right centre had more than 200,000 men. The only hope of aid was from behind Warsaw, and the Kutno-Lowicz lines were still in disrepair. Help from the left centre must come by the Czestochowa-Petrikov line, and that had been most diligently destroyed in the German retreat.

The fights in the second attack upon Warsaw stand out conspicuously in this war, for they were the last for a considerable time of the genuine manœuvre battles, where trenches were ordinary shelter trenches, and not the elaborate fortresses which the world had seen on the Aisne and the Lys, and was soon to see on the Bzura. Von Hindenburg's plan was the only exhibition of German strategy which deserves high praise. It showed in the fullest degree the power of turning natural difficulties to an advantage. Like all German movements, it was a railway battle, based upon the possession of assets not shared by the enemy; but, unlike the other German movements, it had the element of genuine surprise.

Its aim was Warsaw, and it did not greatly affect the advance to Cracow of the Russian left. Since the latter is the subject of this chapter, we must leave von Hindenburg beginning to press eastwards from Thorn, and look at what befell during the next few weeks in Western Galicia, while the Russian centre was struggling desperately around Lodz and Lowicz.



The Russian Position near Cracow at the beginning of December.

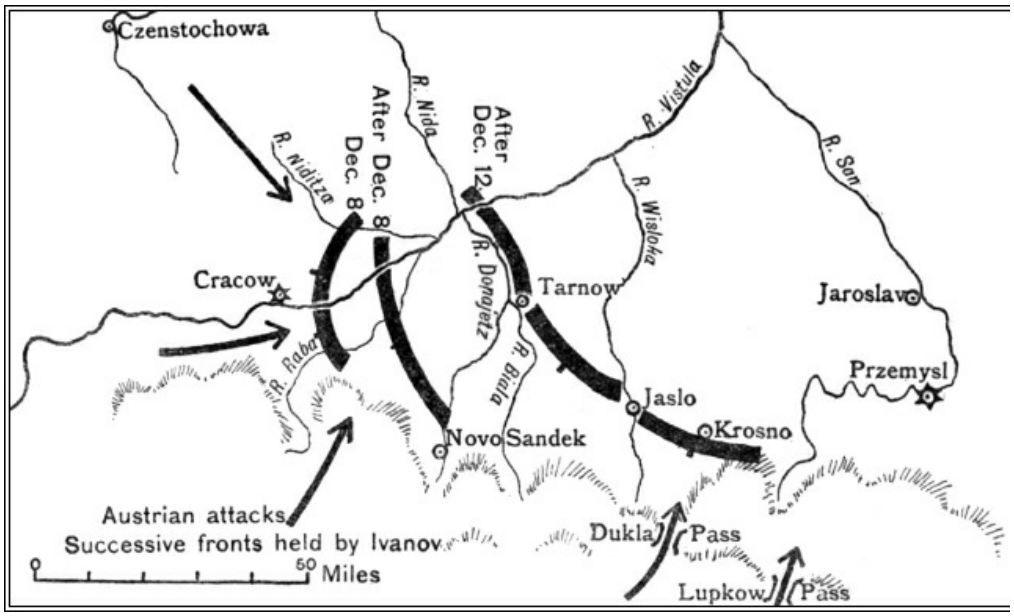
We have seen that by the 12th of November Russian cavalry were in Miechow, just north of Cracow. For the next three weeks Dmitrieff's ad vance went on slowly but steadily, while Brussilov occupied successively the Uzsok, Lupkow, and Dukla passes. The only heavy fighting was on his extreme right across the Vistula, where he came into contact with the right of the German southern army from Czestochowa. By the end of the first week in December his cavalry were in the suburbs of Cracow at Wielitza, and his main force was on the line of the river Raba. He was now about twelve miles from the fortress; and it seemed as if next day the investment would begin, for his right was closing in from the direction of Miechow, and the northern side of Cracow was the hardest to defend.

Dec. 6.

As we have seen, during the first Russian advance in September the fortifications of Cracow had been overhauled, and it was now as strong as its

nature permitted. The big Skoda guns had been got into position, and much entrenching had been done in a wide circle around the city. The main Austrian forces were not in the *enceinte*. They had been moved north to the line Wielun-Czestochowa, and during the last week of November the place was held by a garrison rather than a field army. Von Hindenburg waited till the menace was very near before he took measures of defence, for he clung to the belief that Cracow could be saved at Lodz and Lowicz. But by 5th December it was clear that Russia could not be thus distracted, and a plan for the salvation of the city was hastily matured.

Two forces took the field for the purpose. One, moving from the south-west of Cracow among the foothills of the Carpathians, struck directly at Ivanov's left. The other, operating from the plain of Hungary, aimed at driving Brussilov from the passes, and so threatening the Russian rear and their lines of communications. The first force consisted of two first-line Austrian corps, a number of reserve divisions, and two German formations, one of which—the 24th—probably came from the West. The army from south of the Carpathians was composed of two of the Austrian corps withdrawn from Serbia, and divisions of the Hungarian Honvéd. They struck simultaneously, and Dmitrieff was scarcely called on to face the menace on his flank when he heard of Brussilov being heavily engaged in the mountains.



The Austrian Movement against Dmitrieff.

On 8th December Dmitrieff fought a battle almost on the

outskirts of Cracow. But for the threat in his rear he might have held his ground, for the action on the whole went in favour of the Russians. But two factors combined to make his position undesirable, apart from what was happening to Brussilov. His right across the Vistula was being strongly attacked from the direction of Czestochowa, and on his left bodies of the enemy were working their way through the higher glens of the mountains, and descending the Donajetz valley to threaten his left rear. Accordingly he fell back to a line running from Novo Sandek, on the Donajetz, north-west across the Vistula to a point on the river Nidzitsa.

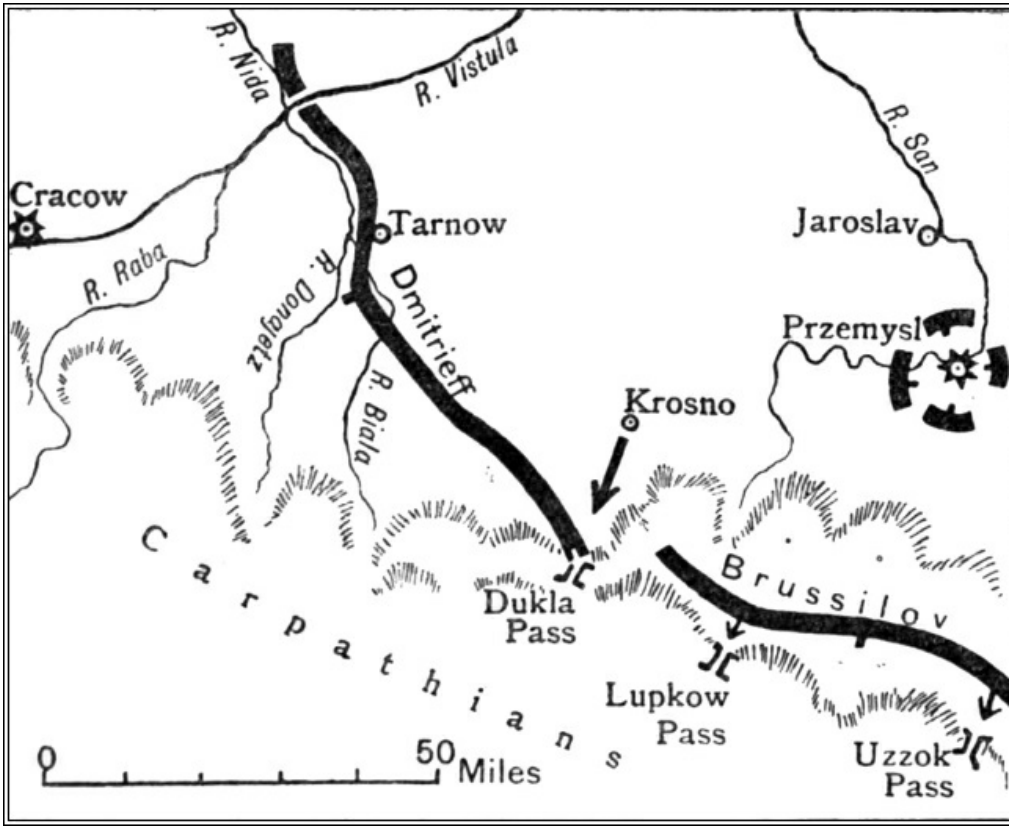
Dec. 8.

On the 12th a serious disaster happened. The second Austrian force carried the Dukla pass. The Dukla, though it has no railway, is the key of the Western Carpathians; for the height of its saddle is only 1,500 feet above the sea, and only 500 feet above the cultivated lands at its foot. It is ten miles across, broad and easy, and perfectly suited even in winter weather for the passage of great armies. Whoever holds it has turned all the eastern passes against an invader from north or south. Its capture by the Austrians meant that large forces could at once be poured down upon the Galician plains, and the Russian army would be cut off between them and the enemy advancing from Cracow.

Dec. 12.

To avoid that danger Dmitrieff fell back again. He was compelled to shorten his line, and his right was, therefore, retired from the Nidzitsa to behind the Nida. His front now ran from just east of the Nida across the Vistula, up, but well east of, the Lower Donajetz, up and east of its tributary the Biala, past Tarnow, and thence by Jaslo to the Carpathian spurs south-east of Krosno. This meant that the debouchment from the Dukla pass was now in front of his line.

To us in the West at the time the news of the retirement was disquieting, but in reality it meant little except a check to the Cracow advance. Unless the Russian left were pushed north of Jaroslav, their main communications, the Lemberg railway, would not be threatened. Przemysl, which is fifty miles from the mouths of the passes, might indeed be relieved, and it was the danger to Przemysl that was the main Russian preoccupation. As had happened before its relief in October, a vigorous bombardment was undertaken, but without effect. It is probable that by this time the numbers of the investing force had been seriously curtailed.



Position of the Russians in Galicia at Christmas.

Presently came news that the Austrians had occupied the crest of the Lupkow pass in Dmitrieff's rear, and were fighting hard for the Uzsok pass, which carries the railway from the Hungarian plains to Lemberg. But by this time the Russian retreat had reached its farthest point, new troops had been brought from Kiev, and the hour had come for a counter-attack. About 20th December the advance began. The enemy was driven from the eastern bank of the Nida, across the Lower Donajetz, across the Biala, while the Russian left, swinging south-west from Krosno, seized the foot of the Dukla pass, and succeeded in cutting off and capturing a considerable Austrian force, estimated at over 10,000. Brussilov meantime undertook operations against the Lupkow and Uzsok, and by Christmas Day the Galician approaches to all the three great western passes were in Russian hands. About the same time the mountains were visited by violent snowstorms, and the weather further safeguarded the Russian flank. Even across low passes no great army dare move in a Carpathian blizzard.

Dec. 20.

Dec. 25.

Before we turn to the far more critical operations in the north a tribute must be paid to the fighting of the Hungarian rank and file. By all accounts at this period it was admirable. In the opinion of their foes the Hungarian soldiers were, man for man, the superior of the German. We have seen that they had stood stubbornly on the San, and now they stood no less gallantly in the Carpathian glens. The arrogance of Berlin has inclined the world to the belief that in the East the German armies were bearing the whole burden on their shoulders. But it was the troops of the Dual Monarchy that barred the way to Cracow. But for Hungary, Dmitrieff would have spent his Christmas on the banks of the Oder.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SECOND ASSAULT ON WARSAW.

Von Hindenburg's Attack on Russian Right—The Marshes of the Middle Bzura—The Struggle for the Piontek Causeway—The Russian Line pierced—The Position of the Piercing Force—Von Mackensen extricates It—Fall of Lodz—Russians take up Position from the Bzura to the Nida—Defeat of German Movement from East Prussia—The Second Battle of Warsaw—Failure of Attack on Bzura and Rawka Lines —Russia's Achievement.

In late autumn in Poland there come heavy mists which cover the landscape like a garment. From sunrise to sunset they never break, and the traveller's vision is limited to a hundred yards of sodden plain. Air reconnaissance is hopeless, and even light cavalry give poor results, for an enemy's strength, even when felt, can only be guessed at. In such weather von Hindenburg launched his bolt against the Russian right centre. The Russian Staff were aware of movements north of the Vistula, and on the 13th of November they realized that something was happening on the southern bank. Aided by the railway from Thorn, a strong force was pressing in the Russian outposts, and Ruzsky promptly contracted his far-stretched front. Ivanov was eighty miles away, facing the entrenched posi tion of the German southern army from Wielun to Czestochowa, and between the two halves of the battlefield lay fifty miles of unoccupied country. With a large force of cavalry guarding his left flank, the Russian general took up a line from the Vistula near Gombin to Uniejov on the Warta, and waited to ascertain the enemy's strength.

Nov. 13.

He was not left long in doubt. The attack came in irresistible force, and the much inferior Russian army slowly gave way. By the 15th Ruzsky had been driven back on Kutnow, and his line ran from the Vistula through Leczyca, and well east of Uniejov. Reinforcements had been summoned from behind Warsaw, but in the nature of things they could not arrive for several days, and no immediate help could be looked for from Ivanov. It is probable that many prisoners and guns

Nov. 15.

were lost in the retirement, for the lines of retreat were few and bad. In any other army the losses would have been greater, but the Russians have a practice of marching not in solid columns but in scattered groups, which seem to straggle indefinitely, but appear with wonderful precision at the appointed bivouac. The cavalry did great service as a rearguard, and the orange and scarlet sheepskin coats of the Turcomans, mounted on their incomparable horses, gleamed through the mist on both flanks. The Russian aim was to fall back in good order behind the river Bzura, which flows from south of Kutnow east to Lowicz, and then north to the Vistula. On the 18th the Germans were in Leczyca and Orloff, in the curve of the Upper Bzura, controlling the roads to Lodz and Lowicz. Ruzsky retired his whole left across the Bzura from Lodz for some forty miles westward. His right still clung to the Vistula in the neighbourhood of Ilov.

Nov. 18.

To understand what followed we must look at the nature of the Upper and Middle Bzura. It is a stream at this point about the size of the Thames, running partly between high corroded banks in a channel eaten out of the plain, and partly in open reaches with a deep fringe of bog. There were no bridges left, but in its upper course, where it bends southward, there were many fords. West of Lowicz for some forty miles runs east and west a great belt of marshes, partly on the Bzura, and partly west of it towards Leczyca. There are crossing-places in these marshes, many of them, for the country people have to find ways of movement, but for the most part they are small paths wholly unfitted for the movement of armies and impossible for guns. About Leczyca there are, indeed, several better passages, and almost in the centre of the belt, between the towns of Kutnow and Piontek, there is one famous causeway, engineered for heavy transport. Twenty miles south of the marshes is the large industrial city of Lodz, which was the first German objective. To break down the Russian position three courses were possible—a flanking movement on the north by Ilov; a flanking movement on the south by Leczyca, where the crossings were easier; and a frontal attack which should force the Piontek causeway. We shall see that von Mackensen at different times adopted all three.

The Bzura is a strong line of defence, but it has the serious drawback that it can be turned on the south. The Russian left rested on no natural ob stacle, no deep river or mountain range, but was in the air in that stretch of no-man's-land around the Upper Warta. Had Ivanov, farther south, been able to move rapidly, a German flanking movement might have been caught between hammer and anvil. But von Hindenburg knew well how thorough had been his campaign of destruction, especially on the Czestochowa-Petrikov-Lodz railway, and had no fear for his own enveloping right wing. Perhaps he remembered the lesson of the

Polish insurrection of 1831, when Russia's aim was Warsaw. Then the advance from east of the Vistula made no progress, and Pashkevitch in the summer resolved upon an assault from the west. In July he marched by the north bank of the Vistula to the Prussian frontier at Thorn, where he crossed the river, and advanced on Warsaw by the south bank. The Poles, under Skryznecki, held the east side of the Bzura with an army of 30,000; but, leaving Pahlen to attack in front, Pashkevitch turned their flank by the Upper Bzura, and drove them back upon Warsaw. A month later the capital surrendered.

Time was the essence of von Hindenburg's plan, for he knew that, unless Lodz and Warsaw fell to him soon, the Russians could get up reserves by their trans-Vistula railways. He must strike finally whilst their force was small and much embarrassed by his first blow. Accordingly he pressed hard with his right from Leczyca, and won the western crossings of the marshes. At the same time his extreme left moved towards Plock, on the north bank of the Vistula, and a force from East Prussia, attacking from Soldau, drove back the Russians south of Mlawa. He was clamouring for more troops, and getting them promptly, for every railway from Germany was working at high pressure, naval engineers and stokers reinforcing the ordinary locomotive staff. The southern army at Czestochowa was ordered to advance to keep Ivanov's hands full, and to prevent any of the nearer reinforcements reaching Ruzsky, until he should have been thoroughly beaten, and the way opened towards Warsaw. Meanwhile the main effort was on von Mackensen's centre against the causeway of Piontek.

Nov. 19.

What followed is tactically one of the most extraordinary incidents of the whole campaign. At first the Russians beat off the attack on the causeway, and held the German army among the villages north of the marshes. But on the 19th a desperate effort of von Mackensen's centre pushed across and drove the enemy well south of Piontek. Over the causeway for four succeeding days troops were rushed in huge quantities, and the Russian line fell back and back, till there was a deep sag in it east of Lodz and south of Strykov. Against that sag von Mackensen on Monday, the 23rd, put forth all his strength. The Russian front broke, and the Russian army of the north was split into two parts—one running east of Brezin and Koluschky, across the Bzura at Lowicz and so to the Vistula, and the other surrounding Lodz on east, north, and west, running from Rzgov by Zgierz to Szadek, on the Upper Warta. The ragged edges of the gap were Rzgov and Koluschky.

Nov. 23.

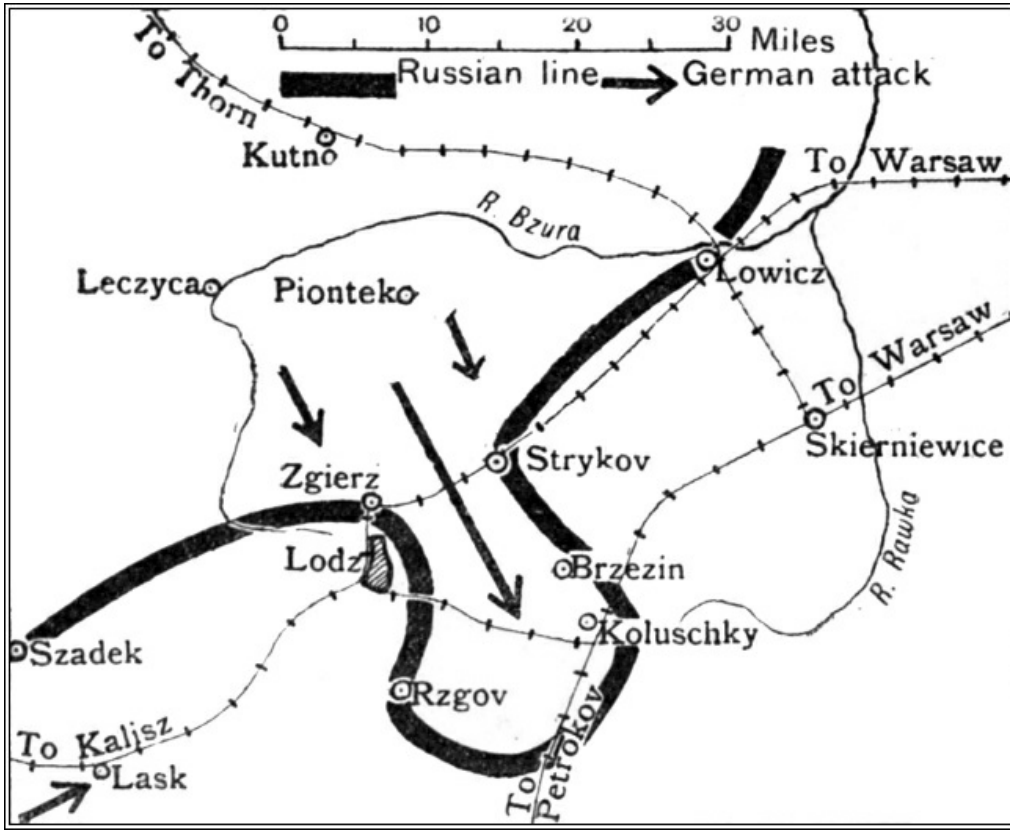
It was a most perilous predicament, for at the same moment the Germans were bringing strong bodies up from Lask on the Kalisz-Lodz line, while the

Wielun-Czestochowa army was threatening Petrikov on the south. This meant that the Russian left around Lodz was assailed on front, flank, and rear—from Leczyca, from Lask, and from east of Rzgov—while the Russian right was apparently powerless to aid. For a moment it looked as if von Hindenburg had succeeded beyond his wildest dreams.

Suddenly at the supreme crisis the Russians were reinforced. The first of the levies from the east appeared—a Siberian corps from the direction of Skierniewice. At the same time new troops arrived from Petrikov, probably the first of Ivanov's contributions. These fresh forces were flung into the battle, and succeeded in cutting off the apex of the German wedge, and re-establishing the Russian line. This was on the 24th, and no help was ever more timely. Another day, and the Russian left would have been beyond all human aid.

Nov. 24.

The point of the German wedge was destroyed. It cannot have been more than a division, probably less, and, whatever it was, it disappears from the campaign. But a singular situation remained. The German wedge had consisted of two corps, the 20th, and the Guards Reserve—90,000 men in all—and 60,000 remained in a kind of *sac*, making a deep bulge in the Russian line. Ruzsky exerted himself desperately to close the mouth of the *sac*, and he almost succeeded. Petrograd believed that a unique Russian victory was preparing, and for two days from Zgierz to Rzgov, and from Strykov to Koluschky, the sides of the pocket pressed in on the trapped German corps. More troops were needed, and these were summoned from the extreme Russian right under Rennenkampf. But for some reason still obscure Rennenkampf was a day late.



The "Pocket" in the Russian Line.

Nov. 24-26.

Von Mackensen took the only possible course. He brought up reserves and broadened the mouth of the pocket, pushing back the flanking Russians at Strykov and Zgierz. In the frantic struggle, which lasted from the 24th to the 26th, the Germans lost terribly. Companies were reduced to a fifth of their strength, whole battalions were so broken that they had to leave the fighting line, and yield place to the new troops which von Mackensen poured into the *sac*. The severest fighting was at night, but during three days there was no cessation, the Germans battling for freedom and the Russians for victory. By the 26th the remnants of the two corps had got out of the pocket at Strykov, and for a moment there was a respite to the carnage.

Tactically, as we have said, it was an extraordinary incident, and it illustrates the conditions under which alone a piercing movement can succeed. To get through the enemy's line with a small force gives no advantage; like the Arabs who broke the British square at Abu Klea, the invaders achieve nothing, and never return. We have seen the same thing in the campaign in the West,

where our front was repeatedly pierced, but the enemy, once through, found his offensive capacity at an end. Again, a wedge driven into an opposing line must be broad enough and strong enough to remain there without contracting its sides. Such was the Saxons' effort at the Meuse, such was Foch's achievement at the Marne against von Buelow and von Hausen. But if the wedge is too thin it can advance no farther, and it stands in imminent risk of being cut off at its base. This all but happened to von Mackensen's two corps, and their escape was due solely to the numerical superiority of the Germans, which enabled them to press outwards the enclosing Russian forces.

But the fresh troops which Germany had brought up were not allowed to remain long on the defensive. When an army is in difficulties its Staff falls back upon their favourite strategical device—the device, in all likelihood, which has given them the best results in recent fighting. With memories of Tannenberg and Mons behind them, the Germans naturally thought kindly of the enveloping movement, just as the French Staff in a similar crisis hark back to the "pivoting square." Reinforcements were still arriving for von Hindenburg, and he ordered von Mackensen to fling his strength against the Lowicz-Lodz front, while with his right wing he drove back the Russian left towards Petrikov. The Russian northern front at this moment ran from Ilov, in the north, crossing the Bzura west of Lowicz, and continuing by Strykov and Zgierz to a point near Szadek, on the Upper Warta. In the crook formed by its left wing lay the city of Lodz.

Lodz, the second of Polish cities, is the industrial capital of the country, the Manchester of Poland, with large textile factories and machine shops. It contains a population of half a million, of which 40 per cent. are German immigrants, since the factories are mostly German-owned, and nearly a quarter are Jews. Such a place in rear of the Russian lines was a post of danger, a rendezvous for spies; and, moreover, to hold it meant that the Russian front, as will be seen from the map, bent forward in an ugly salient. Had a retreat become necessary there, the seven miles of the Lodz streets would have made it slow and difficult. Lodz in the East played much the same part as Ypres in the western campaign. It was the foundation of a salient, the relic of an unsuccessful offensive. More bold than the western commanders, the Russian generalissimo determined to shorten the line and avoid the angle. Accordingly when, on the 27th, there was a frontal attack on his centre and a heavy movement against his left, he deliberately relinquished the city. The withdrawal was slow, and lasted more than a week. On 5th December, shells were falling in the streets, and several of the great hotels were damaged. On Sunday, 6th December, the Germans entered Lodz without opposition, and were welcomed by their

Nov. 27.

Dec. 6.

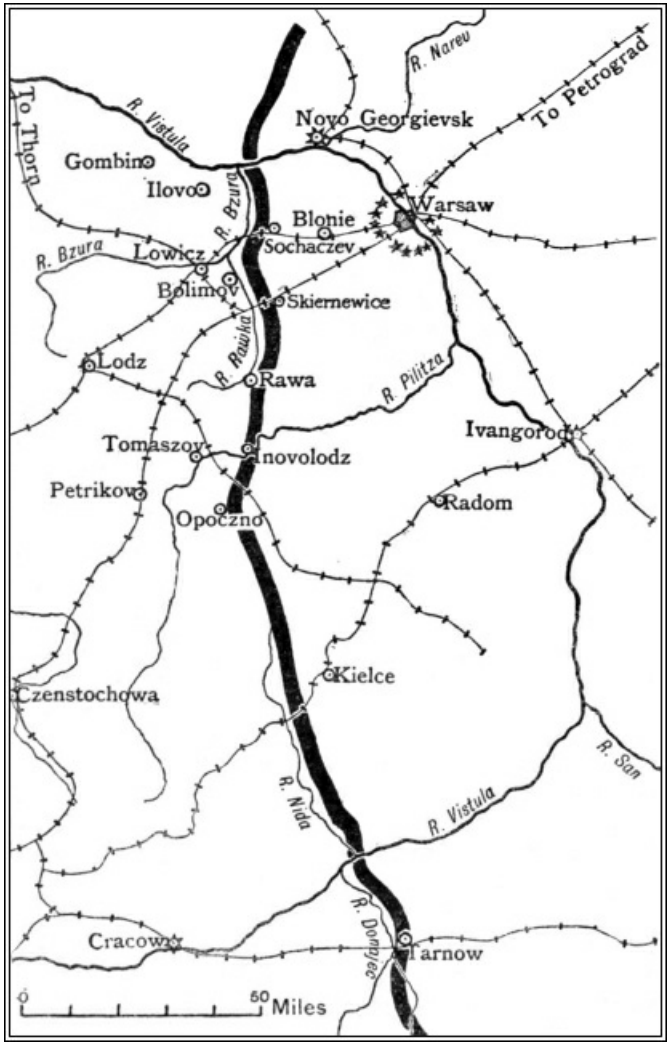
numerous compatriots. The Russian front now stretched in an almost straight line from just west of Petrikov to the Bzura, west of Lowicz, and thence to Ilov and the Vistula.

Lodz, except in so far as it was a railway junction, gave von Mackensen no strategical advantage, and it relieved the Russians of an embarrassing object to defend. In Germany its capture was hailed as a victory, and the phrase, the "Battle of Lodz," has crept into their literature of the war. But there was no Battle of Lodz, as there was no Battle of Brussels; it was surrendered and occupied without a shot. About this date von Hindenburg from Thorn issued an order to his men. "In the course of severe fighting," he said, "lasting several days, my troops have brought to a standstill the offensive of a numerically superior Russian army. Over 60,000 prisoners, 150 guns, and about 200 machine-guns have fallen into our hands. But the enemy is not yet annihilated. Therefore forward, with God, for King and Fatherland till the last Russian lies beaten at our feet." The estimate of Russian losses is probably but little exaggerated, though it may be said, on the other side, that the Russians had probably taken quite as many prisoners. In the main respect, however, von Hindenburg's stroke had failed, for it is clear that the Russian advance on Cracow had been in no way distracted by the events in the north. It had become necessary to weaken the Wielun-Czestochowa army, and to send further troops for that counter-offensive in defence of Cracow, which we considered in the previous chapter. Von Hindenburg, therefore, concentrated his remaining forces on a blow at Warsaw, and for this purpose the Russian right wing seemed the more vulnerable.

This wing, as we have seen, was north of the Bzura, and well east of Lowicz. Against it von Hindenburg hurled his left, which was admirably served by the Thorn-Lowicz railway. At the same time, he attempted a movement which, had it succeeded, would have been fatal to the whole Russian position. The East Prussian force, which for the past three weeks had been pressing down from Mlawa, was reinforced, and a serious effort was made to cut the main railway line between Warsaw and Petrograd. Advancing on a sixteen-mile front, this new force, perhaps a corps strong, occupied the highroad which runs from Przasnysz to the railway south of Mlawa. There, however, it was checked and decisively beaten by a Russian advance from Novo Georgievsk. It was driven north of Mlawa almost to the East Prussian frontier, and for the moment the Russian right flank was secure.

The movement against the Russian wing just south of the Vistula was more successful. When it began, the Russian cavalry were in Gombin, and the infantry

held Ilov in force. The German pressure convinced the Grand Duke Nicholas that his present front had serious weaknesses. It lay awkwardly astride the Bzura, like M'Clellan on the Chickahominy, and in the south it gave bad en trenching positions and worse communications. In all the country from Lowicz to the Kielce-Ivangorod railway there was no easy access to the east. Accordingly he resolved to retire his left wing down the Pilitza to its navigable waters, by which transport could come from Warsaw, and in the north to get behind the Bzura and its tributary, the Rawka. The weather confirmed his decision. The winter frosts still tarried, and no more than a thin coating of ice lay on the Polish bogs. The Vistula and the Pilitza were open for river traffic. Early in December came a spell of complete thaw, which water-logged the whole country-side. Let the German offensive break itself against a strong defensive position, and lose its ardour in the bottomless mud.



Russian position at Christmas from the Bzura to the Upper Vistula.

What we may call the second Battle of Warsaw raged for the better part of three weeks, from 7th December to Christmas Eve. It was fought on the German side not for any indirect object like the relief of Cracow, but for the definite possession of Warsaw itself. For the first fortnight the Russians fell back slowly all along their line. By the 15th Ilov was untenable; by the 17th Petrikov was taken. By the 18th the Russian line had been formed from the Vistula along the east bank of the Bzura, up the east bank of its tributary, the Rawka, through the hilly country south of Rawa to Inovolodz, on the Pilitza,

Dec. 7.

Dec. 18.

across the railway line at Opoczno, and thence by the Lotsosina and the Nida to the Vistula. This involved the surrender of towns like Lowicz, Petrikov, and Tomaszov, but it gave a position which in a Polish winter was probably the best which could be found, both for natural strength and communications. It had always been in the mind of the Russian Staff, and had been carefully worked out in every detail, but there is reason to believe that at first it was regarded as a place only for a temporary stand, and that the real Russian defence was to be on what is called the "Blonie line," through the town of that name eighteen miles west of Warsaw. It was only when the strength of the Bzura-Opoczno line revealed itself that it became for the Russians what the line Arras-Nieuport was for the Allies in the West.

The situation in the East now corresponded exactly with the position in the West. The Russians entrenched themselves on a front against which the enemy's assault broke in vain. As in Flanders, the severest fighting was in the north, and along the line of a little river. The Bzura and the Rawka were, indeed, very different from the canalized Yser. The first-named flows through a level plain, broken up with great patches of fir-woods, in which stand the white Polish country-houses. It is a shallow, muddy stream, fifty yards wide, and in its lower course easily forded, for there are no adjacent marshes. On the east bank there is a gentle slope inland; on the west side there is in some places, about a hundred yards from the water, a sharp bank, marking the rim of an old channel. The Russian trenches were dug close to the stream, the Germans for the most part a little retired beyond the small escarpment. The Russians had here for their communications the unfrozen Vistula and the two lines from Warsaw to Sochaczev and to Lowicz. Farther south they had the Pilitza and the Kielce-Radom railway.

Dec. 19-25.

The Germans attacked the lines of the little rivers between the 19th and the 25th, their main efforts being against Sochaczev on the Bzura, and Bolimov on the Rawka. At night columns in close formation would crash through the cat-ice along the shore, wade the stream which ran breast-high, and, in spite of heavy losses, make good the farther bank. Sometimes they took an advanced Russian trench, sometimes they fell by the river's edge, but in no case did many return. The German attack on Warsaw was pressed with indomitable vigour, for von Hindenburg desired the Polish capital as a Christmas gift for his Emperor. But no valour on earth could carry that line. Warsaw was only thirty-five miles off, and the citizens heard daily and nightly the clamour of the guns. They might have slept as peacefully as if they had been a thousand miles away, for a barrier is a barrier, at whatever distance it stands from the object of desire. By Christmas Eve the

German attack ebbed and died away, as it had ebbed six weeks earlier before Ypres. The winter stalemate, long delayed in the East, had at last arrived.

With the failure of the second attack upon Warsaw we may take stock for a moment of Russia's achievement. She had made no secret preparation for war, and the outbreak of hostilities had found her with her army reorganization incomplete, and a serious shortage of equipment. She had to bring her men by slender communications many thousands of miles, but she was ready to strike a fortnight before Germany believed she could move. Her invasion of East Prussia had done much to relieve the strain in the West, and heavily she paid for her quixotry. But after Tannenberg she made no mistakes. Von Hindenburg was enticed to the Niemen, and then driven back to disaster at Augustovo; while in Galicia Lemberg and all Eastern Galicia were won, and in two mighty battles three Austrian armies were heavily beaten. The Russian generals showed that rarest of combinations—an omnipresent sense of a great strategic objective, and a power of patiently biding their time and relinquishing it temporarily when prudence demanded. A commander less wise than the Grand Duke Nicholas would have battled desperately for Cracow, lost a million of men, and at the end of the year have been farther from it than in September. But as it was, the first great advance was promptly recalled when von Hindenburg threatened Warsaw, and the second was also abandoned when it was at the very gates of the city. The first Battle of Warsaw and the Battle of Kazimirjev were strategically admirable, and the subsequent fighting from Kozienice westward showed the stubborn valour of the Russian soldiers. Not less brilliant was the long retirement from the Warta. There was some blunder of timing in the fighting between Lodz and Lowicz, for which Rennenkampf was held responsible, but there was no flaw in the retreat to the Bzura or the holding of the river line. The Grand Duke Nicholas proved that he possessed that highest of military gifts, the power of renunciation, of "cutting losses," of sacrificing the less essential for the more. We must remember that in all these first five months of war the united strength of the Teutonic League outnumbered the Russians by at least half a million. Locally, as at the first Battle of Warsaw, the latter may have had the superiority, but in all the retreat from the Warta to the Bzura the Russian front was markedly inferior in weight of men to von Mackensen's forces. When we remember this we can do justice not only to the excellence of the generalship but to the stamina and courage of the rank and file. Let it be added that reports are unanimous on the behaviour of the Russian troops, their chivalry towards the

foe, their good humour, their kindliness towards each other, and their devotion to their commanders.

In a decade the miracle of miracles had happened. Russia had found herself, and her armies had become an expression of the national will. “There is as much difference,” wrote one correspondent, “in organization, *moral*, and efficiency between the armies which some of us saw in Manchuria ten years ago, and which crumpled up before the Imperial Guards of Japan at the Battle of the Yalu, and the military machine that these past few weeks has been steadily and surely driving back the armies of Germany and Austria, as there was between the raw American recruits who stampeded at the Battle of Bull Run in 1861 and the veterans who received the surrender of Lee at Appomattox.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE WAR IN EASTERN WATERS.

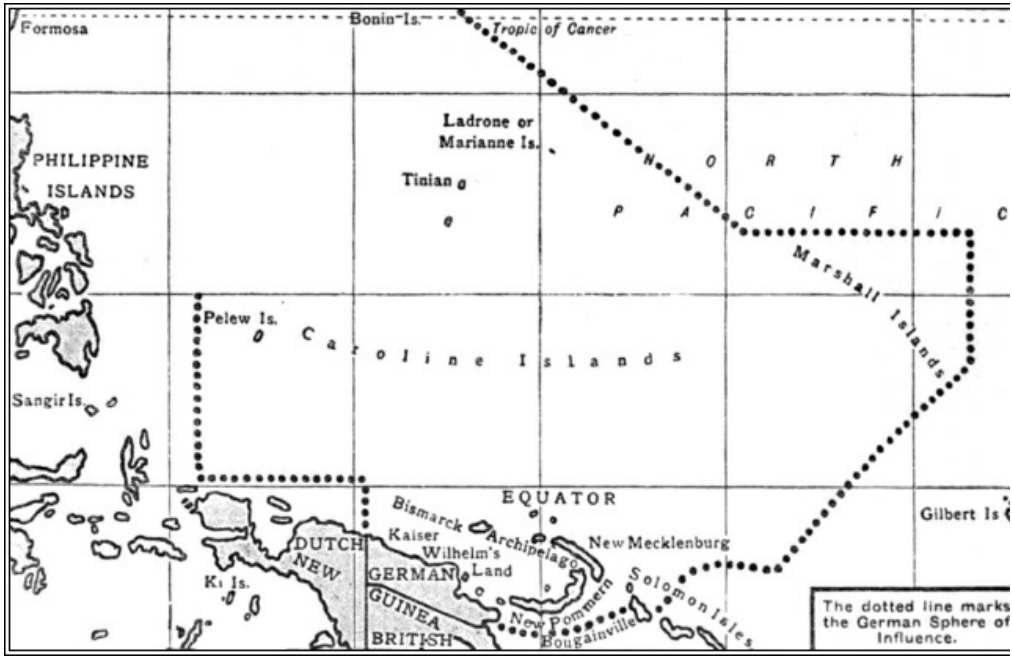
Germany's Pacific Possessions—British Annexation of Samoa—Expedition to New Pomerania, the Solomon Islands, and Kaiser Wilhelm's Land—Destruction of German Wireless Stations—Japanese occupy Marshall Islands—Career of *Emden* from 1st October to her End on 9th November—Comparison with *Alabama*—The Japanese invest Tsing-tau—Arrival of British Force—Surrender of Fortress—Nature of Japanese Achievement.

While the armies were ranging themselves in Europe and the British navy was sealing up the Narrow Seas, a vigorous campaign was being conducted both by land and water in the Far East, where the units of Germany's colonial empire were, one by one, taken by the Allies. Her dominions there were so widely scattered that they could get no aid from the Fatherland or from one another. Each had to fight its battle alone, with such resources as the outbreak of war found in its possession.

In the Pacific, Germany owned 100,000 square miles of territory, mainly in New Guinea. Her possessions there, officially known as Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, were in the northern part of the south-eastern section of the island. A long straight line running south-east and north-west divided them from Papua or British New Guinea, while another straight line, running north and south, separated them from the Dutch colony in the west. Kaiser Wilhelm's Land had an area of 70,000 square miles, and a population of half a million, three hundred of whom were Germans. The country had been little developed, but exported from its chief ports, Friedrich Wilhelmshafen and Constantinhafen, a fair amount of copra, cocoa, and rubber. The German protectorate of New Guinea included not only Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, but a large number of islands lying off its coast, and its official headquarters were at Rabaul, on the island of New Pomerania. Chief among these islands was the group known as the Bismarck Archipelago, which lay to the north-east of Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, and included New Pomerania, New Mecklenburg, New Lauenburg, New Hanover, Admiralty Island, and some two hundred little isles. Their population consisted of some

200,000 natives, and a few hundred Chinamen and Germans. The chief island was New Pomerania, with its two considerable ports of Herbertshohe and Simpsonhafen.

A little to the east lay the Solomon Islands, that archipelago of high wooded mountains and cannibal tribes which Germany shared with Britain, owning the two chief western islands, Bougainville and Buka. North of New Guinea, but still forming part of the protectorate, were three groups midway between Australia and Japan—the Carolines, the Pelew, and the Marianne or Ladrone Islands. They were bought from Spain in 1889, and consisted of some six hundred coral reefs, divided into an eastern and a western group for the purposes of administration, and yielding little but copra. Detached to the east lay the Marshall Islands, twenty-four in number, whose chief product was phosphates.



Germany's Pacific Possessions.

Germany's remaining possession in the South Seas was Samoa, and the tale of her doings there may be read in Stevenson's *A Footnote to History*. The group consists of the two large islands, Savaii and Upolu, with Apia, the chief port, on the latter. Some 500 Europeans, chiefly British and German, resided there, about 1,500 Chinese, and a dwindling native population of about 15,000. From Samoa came copra in large quantities, and of late a fair amount of rubber.

Lastly, far to the north on the China coast, in the province of Shantung, lay the important German possession of Kiao-chau, the history of whose acquisition has already been told in these pages. It is a district of some 200 square miles in extent, situated on a sheltered bay, and surrounded by a neutral zone. The town of Tsing-tau was a naval station, and most of its 5,000 German inhabitants were marines. The place was strongly fortified both by land and sea—Germany had spent £20,000,000 on it—and was connected by rail with the Chinese lines. Its importance was due to its contiguity to the Japanese Port Arthur and the British Wei-hei-wei, and to the excellence of its harbour, which made it an ideal base for the German Pacific Squadron.

The German Pacific possessions had long been a grievance to the Australian Commonwealth, and the first blow was struck by the adjacent British dominions. The Australian Squadron, assisted by the China Squadron, patrolled the Pacific for German cruisers. The initial attack was made on Samoa. On 15th August a New Zealand Expeditionary Force, some 1,500 strong, left Wellington in troopships, and sailed for Samoa under the escort of H.M.S. *Australia*, H.M.S. *Melbourne*, and the French cruiser *Montcalm*. On 28th August it reached Apia, and the commanding officer, Colonel Logan, took possession of the islands without resistance. The German officials came in and swore fealty, and were confirmed in their posts.

Aug. 15.

Aug. 28.

Then came the turn of New Pomerania, which had already been reconnoitred. On 11th September an expeditionary force arrived at Herbertshohe, the port at the north-eastern extremity of the island. A party of sailors, under Commander J. A. H. Beresford, landed at dawn, and proceeded through the bush towards the wireless station. The advance was not unopposed, for the Germans seem to have concentrated here most of the troops which they possessed in their New Guinea Protectorate. In several places the road was mined, while rifle-pits had been dug along the edge, and snipers placed in the neighbouring trees. The sailors fought their way for six miles to the wireless station, where the German defence surrendered. Our casualties were ten officers and four seamen, and the whole German force fell into our hands. At the same time the ports of Herbertshohe and Simpsonhafen, and the capital, Rabaul, were occupied without trouble. Two days later our troops sailed for the Solomon Islands, and secured without difficulty the surrender of Bougainville. We then turned our attention to Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, where we expected a more serious opposition. But again we won a bloodless victory. The British flag was hoisted in Friedrich Wilhelmshafen, and a garrison left behind. The Australian

Sept. 11.

Sept. 13.

navy had done its work with admirable precision and dispatch, covering great distances in a very short time. H.M.S. *Melbourne*, for example, sailed 11,000 miles in the first six weeks of war. At the end of September one or two small islands were still nominally German, but for all serious purposes the Kaiser's dominions in the Pacific had disappeared. The important German wireless stations at Yap (Caroline Islands), Namu (Gilbert Islands), and Rabaul (New Pomerania) had been destroyed. Early in November the Japanese occupied the Marshall Islands and the other northern groups, which they handed over to Australia.

The German Pacific Squadron, based on Kiao-chau, did not attempt to defend the Pacific islands. The bulk of it, under Admiral von Spee, sailed for the western shores of South America, with what consequences we shall presently learn. Two smaller cruisers, the *Emden* and the *Koenigsberg*, betook themselves to the Indian Ocean, and, as we have already recorded, did considerable damage to our commerce. The *Koenigsberg*, after her easy destruction of the *Pegasus* in Zanzibar roads, gave little more trouble, and proved unable to play the part allotted to her in the attack on Mombasa. Her end came about 10th November, when she was found by H.M.S. *Chatham* hiding in shoal water about six miles up the Rufigi River. Here she was sealed up and disposed of at our leisure, the fairway being blocked by sunken colliers.

The Route of the "Emden."

The *Emden* had also a short life, but, in the language of the turf, she had a good run for her money. We last saw her off the Malabar coast of India on the last day of September. Then she turned south-eastward, and captured five merchantmen in the Indian Ocean, of which she sank four and sent one, the *Gryfedale*, into Colombo. She was next heard of off the north end of Sumatra, where our cruisers captured her collier and her attendant steamer, the *Markomannia*. The loss of her colliers made her task difficult, but it did not weaken her boldness. On 30th October she entered the roadstead of Penang, flying a neutral flag and rigging up a dummy funnel, with the result that she succeeded in torpedoing a Russian cruiser and a

Oct. 30.

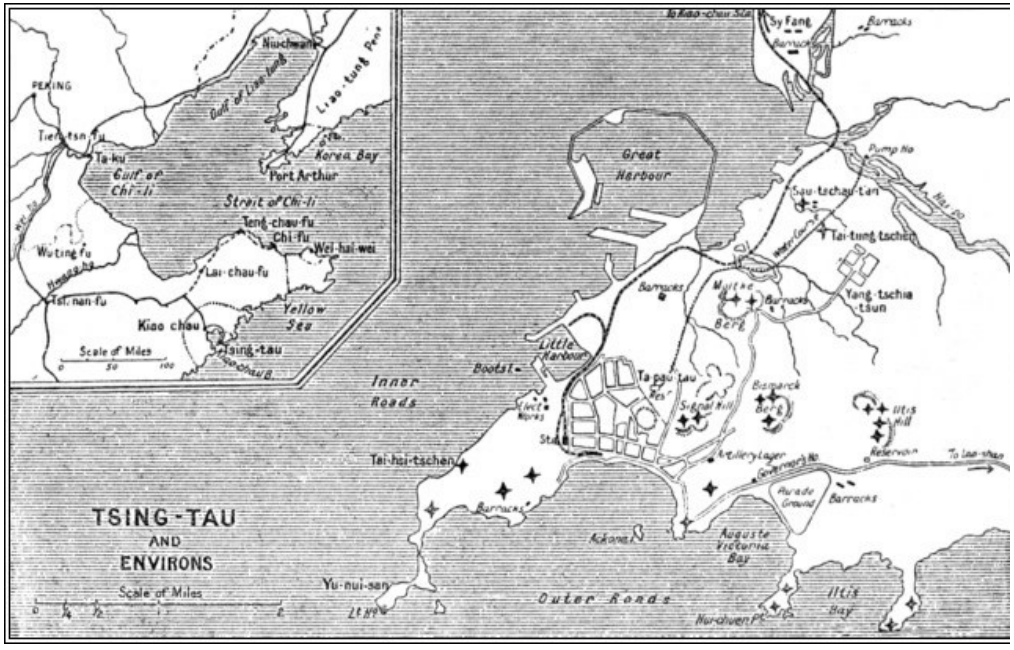
French destroyer. Once more this new "Flying Dutchman" vanished, but her course was near its end. On 9th November she appeared off the Cocos (or Keeling) Islands with the intention of destroying the wireless station and cutting the cable. A wireless message was, however got off, which was picked up by the cruiser *Sydney* of the Australian navy about fifty miles to the east. This message, which was much mutilated, ran, "Strange warship off entrance," and the presence of the *Emden* was at once conjectured. The *Sydney* sighted the feathery cocoanut trees on the Keeling Islands about 9.15 a.m. on the 9th, and shortly after saw the top of the *Emden's* funnels. She was lying off Direction Island, where she had landed a party to destroy the cable station. The *Emden* opened fire at long range, and then steered a northerly course, fighting all the while a running battle with the *Sydney*. One hour and forty minutes later she ran ashore on North Keeling Island, a burning wreck, with her funnels shot away and her decks a shambles. It was an unequal contest. The *Sydney's* 6-inch guns had an easy mastery over the 4.1-inch guns of the *Emden*, and while the latter had 230 killed and wounded, the former had only 18 casualties. Captain Karl von Müller was captured and his sword returned to him, for he had proved a gallant enemy. If he sent out S.O.S. signals to entice our merchantmen, then indeed he was guilty of a grave breach of the laws of war; but there was no objection to his disguise at Penang, provided he flew the German flag before taking hostile action. He treated the crews of his captures with generosity, and no act of brutality was ever brought against him.

Nov. 9.

The *Emden* was an expensive ship to our commerce. In two months she captured seventeen merchantmen, which made up about half the total loss to that date of our mercantile marine. One way and another she cost us rather more than the price of a Dreadnought. In her short life she did far more damage proportionately than the *Alabama*, which destroyed about sixty-eight ships, valued at some three millions sterling, but took two years to do it, as against the *Emden's* two months. On the other hand, it should be said that the *Emden* was more than three times the size of the Confederate privateer. Both vessels made a stout fight at the last, and Captain Semmes, like Captain von Müller, was saved, and became something of a hero in the popular esteem of his enemies.

We must turn next to the chief episode in the Eastern Seas, the siege and capture of the fortress of Tsing-tau. This was the only German fortress to be carried in the early months of the war. It was an elaborate entrenched camp, strong both by land and sea, and equipped with the latest type of fort, with

concrete and steel cupolas, and all the other modern refinements upon Brialmont. Japan, as we have seen, delivered her ultimatum to Germany on 15th August, and the days of grace came to an end on 23rd August. She entered upon war partly out of general considerations of policy, and partly from an old and well-founded national antipathy. But she entered upon it at the request of Britain, who, as Baron Kato informed the Japanese Parliament, asked her to free their joint commerce from the German menace in Eastern waters. The Japanese army was largely modelled on the German; it was from German instructors that she had learned much of that art of war which had given her the Manchurian victory; and there was much in the German military temperament with which she sympathized. At the outbreak of war the best opinion in Japan believed that Germany would win, and it says much for her loyalty to her alliance and her sense of public honour that she did not for one moment hesitate to fling her weight on the British side.



Tsing-tau and its Environs.

Japan had now twice the military and naval power which she had had when she began the war with Russia. This is not the place to enlarge on her armed strength; suffice it to say that she had an army with a peace strength of 250,000, which in war would be increased to 1,000,000; she had made a speciality of artillery, especially the heavier guns; her navy comprised six Dreadnoughts, six other battleships, four first-class battle-cruisers, and large classes of cruisers,

destroyers, and coast-defence ships. In tonnage her fleet was nearly double the size of that which she had possessed at the date of the Treaty of Portsmouth. For the assault of Tsing-tau she organized a special siege force, under the command of Lieutenant-General Kamio. It embraced a division of infantry, and three additional brigades—a corps of siege artillery, a flying detachment, and detachments of engineers and marine artillery. A squadron from her fleet, under Vice-Admiral Kato, which was assisted by several British warships belonging to the China station, co-operated by sea.

The map will show the nature of the Tsing-tau fortress. It stood near the end of the Tsing-tau peninsula, which formed the eastern containing shore of Kiao-chau Bay. To the north-east of the town were a number of low heights—Bismarck Hill, Moltke Hill, Iltis Hill—which the Germans had heavily fortified. Beyond the peninsula lay marshy coastland, much liable to flooding, through which the railway ran west to the town of Kiao-chau, within the German sphere of influence, but outside the leased territory. The German governor, Admiral Meyer Waldeck, and his garrison of 5,000 were bidden by the Kaiser to defend the fortress as long as breath remained in their bodies. The German squadron, under Admiral von Spee, had very properly sailed away, for a besieged harbour is not the place for a fleet in being, but several of the smaller warships remained behind.

Aug. 27.

On 27th August, the Japanese took the first step by occupying as a base some of the small islands which cluster around the mouth of the harbour. From these they instituted a series of mine-sweeping operations, a wise precau tion, for the Germans had relied much upon that peril of the seas. So thorough was the Japanese work that only one vessel of their fleet was mined during the siege. On 2nd September they landed troops at the northern base of the peninsula, their object being to cut off the fortress by a movement against it from the mainland. But the autumn rains, very heavy in Shantung, put a bar to this enterprise. All the rivers, which descended from the hills, rose in high flood, and spread out in lagoons over the coastlands. General Kamio had to content himself with sending aeroplanes over the fortress, which dropped bombs successfully on the wireless station, the electric-power station, and on the ships in the harbour, and with an assault upon the railway station of Kiao-chau, at the head of the bay, which he took on 13th September. He was then some twenty-two miles from Tsing-tau itself, and had the railway line to aid his advance. By the 27th he had reached the chief of the outer defences of the place, Prince Heinrich Hill, and next day captured it without serious opposition. This gave him a gun position

Sept. 13.

Sept. 27.

from which he could dominate all the inner forts, much as the fall of the trans-Nethe forts gave the Germans command over the inner lines of Antwerp.

Sept. 23.

On the 23rd, a small British force arrived from Wei-hei-wei to co-operate with the Japanese. It consisted of the 2nd battalion of the South Wales Borderers, and about half a battalion of the 36th Sikhs, and was under Brigadier-General Barnardiston, who commanded the British troops in North China. It landed at Lao shan Bay, on the seaward side of the peninsula, and, having only a short way to march, joined hands with the Japanese on 28th September, just after the capture of Prince Heinrich Hill. Since the floods were now falling, advance was easier, and the invaders were soon only five miles from Tsing-tau, and had drawn the cordon tight across the peninsula. German warships in the bay attempted to bombard the Japanese right, but were driven off by Japanese aeroplanes, which showed extraordinary boldness and skill during the whole operations.

Sept. 28.

Sept. 30.

Meanwhile a vigorous bombardment was going on from the Japanese squadron lying in the mouth of the harbour, and on 30th September a German counter-attack both by sea and land was quickly beaten off. Slowly General Kamio was coming to the conclusion that the enemy either did not mean to obey their Kaiser and fight to the last breath, or had very doubtful fighting ability. They were enormously wasteful of shells, which did not look as if they contemplated a long resistance. The Japanese general was convinced that a fierce assault was more desirable than a slow investment. But first he gave the non-combatants in Tsing-tau a chance to leave, and on 15th October a party of women and children and a number of Chinese were conducted through the Japanese lines.

Oct. 15.

General Kamio had now his big guns in position, and the bombardment began in earnest. He had practically no field artillery, but he had a heavy siege train of 140 guns, including six 11-inch howitzers, and a large number of 6-inch and 8-inch pieces. The Germans seem to have had nothing larger than 8-inch. The first general bombardment was from the sea, when considerable damage was done to the forts on Kaiser Hill and Iltis Hill. On the 31st of October, the birthday of the Emperor of Japan, the first land bombardment began. On that day most of the inner forts were silenced, and, as at Antwerp, the skies were black with the smoke of burning oil-tanks. On 1st November, H.M.S. *Triangle* silenced the forts on Bismarck Hill, and presently only one fort,

Oct. 31.

Nov. 1. 2.

Huichuan, was left in action. Next day, the Austrian cruiser, *Kaiserin Elizabeth*, was sunk in the harbour, and the floating dock disappeared, having probably been blown up by the defenders. Meantime the army was pushing its way down the peninsula, driving back the German infantry, and making large captures of guns and prisoners. By the night of 6th November, the Allies were through the inner forts, with their trenches up to the edge of the last redoubts, and the outworks to east and west were taken during the night. Early on the morning of the 7th the hour had come for the final attack in mass.

Nov. 6.

Nov. 7.

That attack was never delivered. At six o'clock white flags fluttered from the central forts and from the tower of the Observatory. That day representatives of the two armies met, and at 7.30 in the evening Admiral Meyer Waldeck signed the terms of capitulation. At ten on the morning of the 10th, the Germans formally transferred Tsing-tau to General Kamio, and Germany's much-debated foothold on the continent of Asia had gone. The German casualties were heavy, and the survivors, nearly 3,000 in number, were sent as prisoners to Japan, Admiral Meyer Waldeck and his Staff being allowed to retain their swords. The Japanese losses, out of a total of 22,980, were 236 killed and 1,282 wounded, and the British losses, out of a force of 1,500, were 12 killed and 61 wounded. In addition, Japan lost one third-class cruiser, the *Takachiho*, one third-class destroyer, the *Shirotae*, torpedo boat No. 23, and three mine-sweepers.

Nov. 10.

The capture of Tsing-tau, seventy-six days after the declaration of war, and little more than a month after the investment was complete, came as a surprise to Japan, who had made preparations for a struggle till Christmas, and to Germany, who had not realized that the fate which had befallen Namur and Maubeuge would, under similar circumstances, befall her own fortresses. General Kamio handled the expedition with perfect judgment, and provided brilliantly for co-operation between the sea and land forces. It was an achievement of which Japan might well be proud, for it was to her armies that Tsing-tau yielded, since, though the British contingent had done well, it was only one-fourteenth of the investing force. When General Barnardiston reached Tokio, he was given a popular reception, such as had never in the history of Japan been accorded to any stranger. It was a proof, if proof were needed, that the Japanese had entered upon the war not for their own interests alone. They were mindful of the ties which bound them to the other great island people of the world.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN REBELLION.

South Africa and Self-government—The Movement towards Union—General Botha's Policy—The Herzog Party—The Labour Party—The Prophet Van Rensburg—Beyers—De Wet—The Nature of the Rebellion—Botha calls out the Burghers—Defeats Beyers and Kemp in Rustenburg—Muller defeated at Sandfontein—Beyers crosses the Vaal—The Doings of De Wet—Defeated by Botha at Marquard—Beyers defeated at Bultfontein—De Wet flees to the Kalahari—Captured at Waterburg—Death of Beyers—Kemp reaches German South-West Africa—General Botha's Clemency—The War in East Africa—British Reverse at Tanga.

The grant of self-government to the Transvaal and Orange Free State in 1906, four years after the conclusion of the South African War, was a bold step, which occasioned much uneasiness to those who were most familiar with the temper of the back-veld. A strong people like the Boers do not surrender readily their dreams, and their tenacity of purpose was kept alive by certain sections of the Dutch Church, and by the ignorance and remoteness from modern life of the rural population. That the venture did not end in disaster was due to two events which could not have been foreseen. One was the movement towards a Union of South Africa, the foundations of which had been laid by Lord Milner's reconstruction after the war, and which Lord Selborne, aided by a brilliant band of young Englishmen, brought to a successful conclusion. The second was the appearance of two Dutch statesmen of the first quality. The old Afrikander leaders, like Mr. Hofmeyer, had often been men of great ability and foresight, but they had lacked the accommodating temper of statesmanship. General Botha, the first Prime Minister of the Union, had been the ablest of the Boer generals, and his subsequent work entitles him to a high place among Imperial statesmen. He had the large simplicity of character and the natural magnetism which makes the born leader of men; his record in the field gave him the devoted allegiance of the old commandos; he was a sincere patriot, both of South Africa and of the Empire, for, while abating nothing of his loyalty towards the land of his birth, he

saw that the fortunes of South Africa were bound up inextricably with the fortunes of the Empire as a whole; while he had that noble opportunism, that wide practical sagacity, which enabled him to move by slow degrees and to conciliate divergent interests by sheer tact and goodwill. His lieutenant, General Smuts, had won fame alike as a scholar, a lawyer, and a commander in the field. With greater knowledge and a keener intellect than his chief, he had not General Botha's gift of popularity and popular leadership; but between them the two showed a combination of talents which it would be hard to parallel from any other part of the British dominions.

General Botha had not an easy part to play. The Unionist Party, led first by Sir Starr Jameson and then by Sir Thomas Smartt, while remaining the official Opposition, might be trusted to co-operate in all reasonable legislation. But among the Dutch there was a section, led by General Herzog, and drawing its support chiefly from the Orange Free State, which was definitely anti-British, and aimed not at racial union but at Dutch ascendancy. It was a true party of reaction, narrow and sectional in its aims, and bitter in its spirit. There was also growing up on the Rand and in the industrial centres a Labour Party, largely officered by professional agitators from overseas, which realized the delicacy of South African economic conditions, and aimed at a "hold-up" in the interests of a class. It will thus be seen that South African politics showed few affinities with those of other British countries. The party in power, General Botha's, was a Conservative Party, composed mainly of landowners and farmers, and representing landed capital; the Opposition, mainly British in blood, contained most of the industrial capitalists, and was mildly progressive in character; the Labour Party was not such as we are familiar with in Britain, but in the main rigidly "class" in its aims and anarchical in its methods; while the Herzogites were nakedly reactionary and obscurantist. As usually happens, the two extremes tended to form a working alliance, and we had the extraordinary spectacle of the Rand agitator and the *taakhaar* from the wilds meeting on the same platform.

General Botha before the war began had cleared the air by two bold steps. He had dismissed General Herzog from the Ministry, and definitely dissociated himself from his aims, thereby driving the Herzogites into violent opposition. Then he had dealt faithfully with the Labour Party. The first great strike on the Rand in 1913 had been a success, for the Government were unprepared, and the strike leaders dictated their own terms. The second attempt was a complete fiasco. The Government called out all its forces, the reign of terror was broken in three days, and ten of the leaders were summarily deported under martial law. The result was to bring the official Opposition much closer to the Government,

but to array against the Prime Minister a dangerous faction made up of the Herzogites and the defeated and discredited Labour Party.

The advent of war made a new division. General Herzog found that he could not collect a following, and became a trimmer. He attacked the Government, but forbore to aid the rebels when the insurrection broke out. The Labour Party, considering their treatment, behaved with genuine patriotism; many of their leaders took service in the new army, the working men of the Rand hastened to enlist, and General Botha's rescinding of the deportation order was a fitting recognition of this loyalty. But meantime a very serious falling away was becoming apparent in the ranks of the Dutch. It cut across political parties, for many of the Herzogites supported General Botha's policy, and intriguers were busy among those who had never followed Herzog. The great mass of the Dutch people never wavered. Maritz's performance had offended many who would otherwise have been lukewarm on the British side, for he had in effect invaded the Cape province with foreign troops. But in certain districts a general discontent with the trend of modern politics, and dark memories of the South African War, combined with religious fanaticism to produce a dangerous temper. Presently treason found its leaders.

In the last war there was a certain predikant of Lichtenburg, Van Rensburg by name, who acquired a great reputation for second sight. He used to be known to our Intelligence Department as "Delarey's prophet," and was supposed to have much influence over that distinguished general. After peace he went on living in Lichtenburg, and that influence increased, while his reputation spread far and wide through the back-veld. When war with Germany broke out he discovered that the events foretold in the Book of Revelation were at hand, and that Germany was the agent appointed of God to purify the world. If we dared to draw the sword upon her he prophesied the blackest sorrows.

Sept. 11.

He had a number of visions, one of red and blue and black bulls, and one of an angel perched on the Paardekraal monument, which he interpreted on the same lines. The disaster at Hex River on 11th September to the troop-train carrying the Kaffrarian Rifles seemed to the superstitious a vindication of his forecast. Four days later came a second instalment. The prophet had an eye to local politics, and had announced that Generals Delarey, Beyers, and De Wet were the leaders destined to restore the old Republic. On the night of 15th September Generals Delarey and Beyers were travelling in a motor car westward from Johannesburg, and were challenged by a police patrol which was on the look-out for a gang of desperadoes. Beyers bade the car drive on, prob ably fearing that his plot had been betrayed, and a shot was fired which

Sept. 15.

ricochetted and killed Delarey. The true story of that night and of Delarey's intentions is still untold. It may be that he had been won over to rebellion, but it is difficult for those who shared the friendship of that high-minded gentleman to believe that he would have brought himself to violate the oath of allegiance which he had taken to the British Crown.

About Beyers's disloyalty there was soon little doubt. Early in September he had resigned his post as Commandant-General of the Union Defence Force, in a letter which revealed more than he intended, and to which General Smuts most effectively replied. He had done brilliant work in the Zoutpansberg during the South African War, and probably ranked next after Generals Botha, Delarey, and Smuts among the Dutch commanders. But for some time German agents had been working upon his vanity, while the "Prophet" played upon his sombre religion. He had visited Germany, and been received by the Emperor, and from that honour he had never recovered. We need not judge him too hardly, for he paid the penalty of his folly; and it would be unreasonable to expect that rebellion would seem a heinous crime to one who, twelve years before, had been fighting against Britain. The real gravamen of his offence is that he broke the military oath which he had sworn as Commandant-General. Along with General Kemp, a former lieutenant of Delarey's and a good soldier, he proceeded to stir up disaffection in the Western Transvaal. With him was joined the famous Christian de Wet, whose name was at one time a household word among us. De Wet was not a general of the calibre of Botha, Smuts, and Delarey, and his chronic lack of discipline spoiled more than one of the last-named's movements. But as a guerilla fighter in his own country-side he had no equal. He had not Delarey's moral dignity or Beyers's knowledge of modern conditions, being a Boer of the old, stiff, narrow, back-veld type, with a strong vein of religious fanaticism. But his name was one to conjure with, and his accession to the ranks of the irreconcilables vastly increased the difficulty of the Government's problem.

The main strength of the movement lay in the "bywoner," or squatter class, the "poor whites" who had been created by the Boer system of large farms and large families. For them the future held no hope. In the old days they had staffed the various treks into the wilderness, but outlets were closing, and Africa was filling up. They had little education or intelligence, but they had enough to know that their economic position was growing desperate, and they not unnaturally struck for revolution when the chance came. They made up the bulk of De Wet's men, and the rest were a few religious fanatics, a few Republican theorists, some men who still cherished bitter memories of the late war, and a number of social *déclassés* and unsuccessful politicians. Little pity need be wasted on the latter, but it is not easy to withhold a certain sympathy for the luckless

"bywoner," for whom the world had no longer a place.

The rebellion was not long in revealing itself. On 26th October the Union Government announced that De Wet was busy commandeering burghers in the north of the Orange Free State, while Beyers was at the same task in the Western Transvaal. On the 24th De Wet seized Heilbron, a little town in the north Free State, on a branch of the main line from Cape Town to Pretoria. Further, at Reitz, he had stopped a train and arrested some Union soldiers who were travelling by it. Beyers, meantime, with a commando formed chiefly of Delarey's old soldiers, was in Rustenburg, threatening Pretoria. General Botha at once summoned the burghers to put down the revolt, and to their eternal honour they responded willingly. It was no easy decision for many of them. They were called on to fight against men of their own blood, some of whom had been their comrades or their leaders in the last war. From farm to farm went the summons, and many a farmer took down his Mauser, which had shot nothing but buck since Diamond Hill or Colesberg, and up-saddled his pony, as he had done before the great Sand River concentration. The magic name of Botha did not fail in its appeal, and in a few weeks he had over 30,000 under arms. He was now a man of fifty-two years of age, tired with heavy years of office and a sedentary life, and not in the best of health. The rebellion must have been peculiarly bitter to one who had striven beyond all others for a united South African people, and who was not likely to forget the friendships of the old strenuous days.

Oct. 26.

He did not suffer the grass to grow under his feet. Resolving to clear Beyers out of the neighbourhood of the capital before he turned to deal with De Wet, he entrained for Rustenburg on the 26th, and fell in with the enemy next day to the south of that town, about eighty miles from Pretoria where the Zeerust road goes through the northern foothills of the Magaliesberg. There he smote Beyers and Kemp so fiercely that their commandos were scattered, eighty prisoners were taken, and the leaders fled incontinently to the south-west. Part of the rebel forces went northward into the hills of Waterberg, but the bulk of them followed their generals to Lichtenburg.

Oct. 27.

In Lichtenburg Colonel Alberts was waiting for them. His first encounter was unfortunate, for 110 of his men were cut off from the rest, and captured at Treurfontein by the rebels. A day or two later he retrieved the disaster, recovered the prisoners, and thoroughly beat Claasen, the rebel leader. Meanwhile that portion of Beyers's force which had gone north to Waterberg, and which seems to have been under the command of Muller,

Nov. 8.

was busied in raiding the line that runs north from Pretoria, till Colonel van der Venter, fresh from his success in the Cape, hustled it back into the hills. On 8th November he caught the raiders at Sandfontein, near Warmbaths, some sixty miles from Pretoria, and dispersed them, with many killed, wounded, and prisoners. The remnants fled back to Rustenburg and the west.

By this time we had news of the whereabouts of Beyers and Kemp. Hunted by Colonel Lemmer, the former fled south-west to the flats of Bloemhof, crossed the Vaal River, and entered the Orange Free State. He had a sharp fight near the junction of the Vaal and the Vet, and lost about 400, as well as most of his transport, but succeeded himself in getting clear away. The men whom Colonel Alberts had already beaten were now with Kemp making for Bechuanaland and German territory. They were safe enough in that direction, for the Kalahari Desert at the end of the dry season might be trusted to take its toll of rash adventurers. On 7th November General Smuts made a speech in Johannesburg, in which, summing up the situation, he announced that the rebellion in the Cape was over, that the Transvaal rebels were now only a few scattered bands, and that in the Orange Free State alone, where De Wet was at work, had the revolt assumed any serious proportions.

Nov. 7.

De Wet had only a month of freedom, but he made good use of it so far as concerned the distance covered. Ten years before he would have made a very different sort of fight among those flats and kopjes of the northern Free State, where spring was beginning to tinge with green the long umber and yellow distances. But now the stars in their courses fought against him. His own countrymen had become prudent, and did not see the admirable joke of sjamboking a magistrate who had once fined him five shillings for whipping a native. They gave information to the Government, and grudged ammunition and stores to the good cause. Once he had had fine sport in that district, slipping through blockhouse lines and eluding the clumsy British columns, but now he found himself being constantly brought up against that accursed thing, modern science. So long as he could trust to a good horse matters went well, but what was he to do when his pursuers took to motor cars which covered twenty miles where the British Mounted Infantry used to cover five? The times were out of joint for De Wet, and so he went sjamboking and commandeering through the land, perpetually losing his temper, and delivering bitter philippics against these latter days. General Botha was "ungodly," the English were "pestilential," Maritz was the only true man. Heresy, Imperialism, and negrophilism were jumbled together as the enemy. "King Edward," he cried, with some pathos,

"promised to protect us, but he did not keep his promise, and allowed a magistrate to be put over us." There you have the last cry of the *ancien régime* in South Africa, which saw patriarchalism and personal government vanishing from a machine-made world.

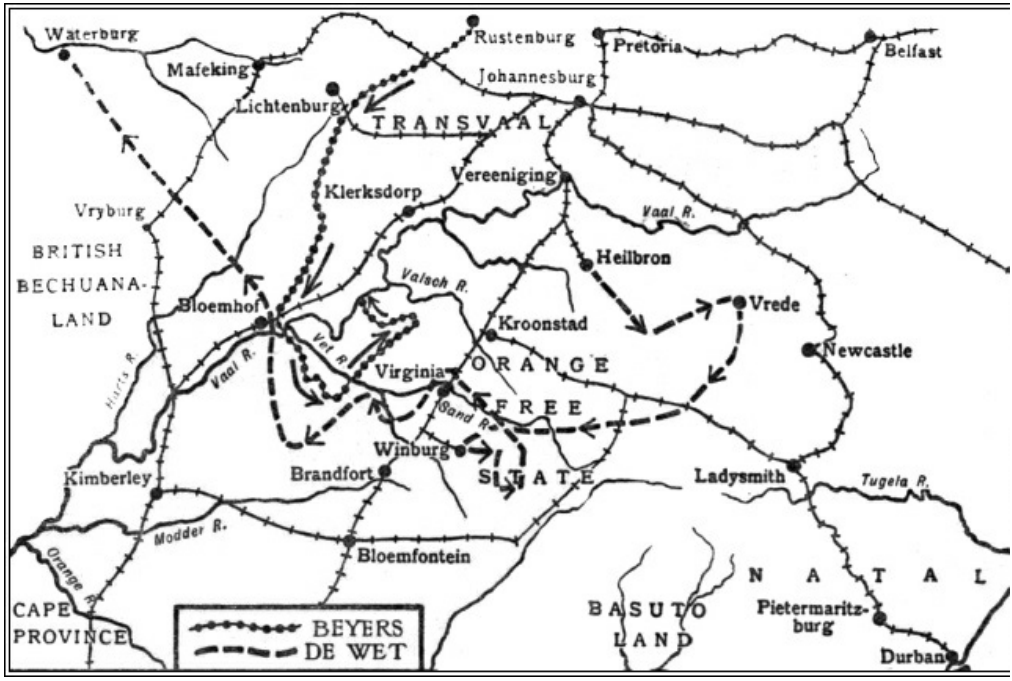
Oct. 28.

Nov. 7.

De Wet was at Vrede on 28th October, when he had the famous interview with the magistrate already referred to. Meanwhile his lieutenant, Wessels, had looted Harrismith, near the Natal border, and damaged the railway line. Thereafter De Wet turned west, and found sanctuary in the neighbourhood of Winburg, where, on 7th November, at a place called Doornberg, he defeated a Union force under Commander Cronje, and lost his son David. At the time his army seems to have numbered 2,000 men. Next day a second rebel force was beaten at Kroonstadt by Colonel Manie Botha, who continued the pursuit for several days. By this time General Botha, having pretty well cleared the Transvaal, was on his way south, and on the 11th came in touch with De Wet at Marquard, about twenty miles east of Winburg. The rebels were in four bodies, one at Marquard, one at a place called Bantry, a third at Hoenderkop, and a fourth, with which was De Wet himself, in the Mushroom Valley. General Botha's plan was to surround the whole rebel force, two Union armies, under Colonels Brits and Lukin, working round its flanks. Something went wrong, however, with the timing of the movement, the dispatches miscarried, and Lukin and Brits did not reach their allotted posts in time. In spite of this accident, De Wet was completely defeated. General Botha took 282 prisoners, released most of the loyalists taken by the rebels, and captured a large quantity of transport. On the 13th, it was officially announced that the interrupted train service between Bloemfontein and Johannesburg would be resumed.

Nov. 11.

Nov. 13.



Map illustrating the wanderings of De Wet and Beyers.

De Wet at first fled south, but presently doubled back, and on the 16th was at Virginia, on the main line. Two armoured trains on the railway managed to prevent a large part of the rebel force from crossing, and to head it eastward. Presently some of its commandants began to come in, and many who had taken up arms, attracted by the clemency of General Botha's proclamation, laid them down again. De Wet was aiming at a junction with Beyers, who was in the Hoopstad district at the time. Beyers, however, was in trouble on his own account. On the 15th, Colonel Celliers had fallen upon him at Bultfontein, and had beaten him thoroughly, and made large captures. Most of the 1,500 rebels were driven northwards, many across the Vaal. Accordingly De Wet, fleeing from Virginia down the Sand and Vet Rivers, found Celliers ahead of him, and heard of Beyers's disaster. He saw that the game was up, and halted his force near Boshof. There seems to have been considerable disaffection in its ranks, and in a final address to them he advised all who were tired of fighting to hide their rifles and go home. Many took the advice, including two of his sons, many yielded themselves to the Union forces, but De Wet himself, with twenty-five men, made one last dash for liberty.

Nov. 15.

On 21st November he tried to cross the Vaal, and was driven back by Commandant Dutoit. In the evening, however,

Nov. 21.

with a following now reduced to six, he managed to slip over the river above Bloemhof, and took the road for Vryburg and the north-west. He now picked up some fugitives, and the small commando crossed the railway line to Rhodesia, twenty miles north of Vryburg. He had, apparently, conceived the bold scheme of going through the Kalahari to German South-West Africa. But he had not allowed for the motor cars of his pursuers. For a day or two there was heavy rain, which made the roads bad, and gave the Boer ponies of his party an advantage over any motor. But by the 27th the weather had cleared, the veld was hard and dry, and Colonel Brits, who had taken up the chase, began to capture the slower members of the commando. As the fugitives penetrated into the western desert their case became more hopeless. De Wet was forced by the motors behind him to cover fifty miles at a stretch without off-saddling, a thing hateful to the Boer horsemaster. The end came on 1st December, when, at a farm called Waterburg, about a hundred miles west of Mafeking, De Wet and his handful surrendered to Colonel Jordaan. He was taken to Vryburg, and two days later entered Johannesburg a prisoner. He had yielded at the end with a shaggy good humour. Having decided that modern conditions were the devil, he was glad to see his own Afrikanders such adepts at the use of the powers of darkness.

Nov. 27.

Dec. 1.

With the capture of De Wet the rebellion was virtually at an end. There was a good deal of skirmishing along the south and north banks of the lower Vaal. Kemp, accompanied by the Lichtenburg "Prophet," fled west after Treurfontein to the little town of Schweizer Reneke, and thence towards Vryburg. He had some fighting at Kuruman, from which he headed south-west across the Southern Kalahari. He was engaged again north of Upington, and it was a very battered remnant which ultimately crossed the border of German South-West Africa. Early in December General Botha organized a great sweeping movement from Reitz, which ended in the surrender of Wessels with the only large body of rebels still in the field. Beyers, with a small commando, after his defeat at Bultfontein had haunted the southern shore of the Vaal between Hoopstad and Kroonstad. On the morning of 8th December he fell in with a body of Union troops under Captain Uys, and was driven towards the river. He and some companions endeavoured to cross the Vaal, which was in high flood, and, midway in the stream, he found his horse failing, and slipped from its back to swim. His greatcoat hampered him, and he tried in vain to get rid of it. A companion heard him cry, "Ik kan nie meer nie" (I can do no more), as he disappeared. His body was found two days later. He had been drowned, for there was no bullet mark on him.

Dec. 8.

By the end of December the last embers of disaffection had been stamped out within the Union territory. Of the five leaders whom Maritz had named, De Wet was captured, Muller was wounded and a prisoner, Beyers was dead, Kemp was across the German border, and Herzog had never declared himself. In less than two months General Botha had harried the rebels round the points of the compass, and had taken 7,000 of them prisoners, with a total casualty list to the Union army of no more than 334. He exhibited great magnanimity and wisdom in his hour of triumph. Rebels who had been members of the Defence Force and had broken their military oath were very properly put on trial for their life. But to the rank and file he showed no harshness, and, in the interests of South Africa's future, this clemency was not misplaced. Rebellion could not, for the country Boers, carry the moral stigma which it would bear if dabbled in by an ordinary Briton. The Empire had no sentimental claim upon them, and the case for loyalty founded on material interests required a certain level of education before it could be understood. Besides, so far as the older race of Boers was concerned, insurrection was in their bones; it had always been a recognized political expedient, and, indeed, for more than a century had been the national pastime.

There is little to tell of the rest of the fighting in Africa till the end of the year. Togoland was quiescent in our hands. In the Cameroons the French and British were slowly pushing the Germans farther into the interior, while on all the northern border there was a succession of raids and counter-raids. The Germans seem to have hoped much from a Panislamic propaganda among the Mohammedan natives, but the entry of Turkey into the war made no difference in West Africa, where the Khalif has never been a name to conjure with. The campaign in South-West Africa had to wait till General Botha had his hands free of local rebellion. But the last months of 1914 showed a certain activity in East Africa.

In that country, as we have seen, we were compelled by the weakness of our resources to stand on the defensive, a *rôle* in which, by a mixture of skill and good fortune, we had reasonable success. But with the beginning of November our forces were largely increased, and we began a forward movement which ended in a real disaster.

On 1st November a second Indian Expeditionary Force arrived on the East African coast. It was commanded by

Nov. 1.

Major-General Aitken, and consisted of one British battalion—the 1st Loyal North Lancashires, the 95th and 101st Indian regiments, the 61st King George's Own Pioneers, the 1st Palamcotta Light Infantry, the 1st Kashmir Rifles, together with a few other detachments of Imperial Service troops, accompanied by two mountain batteries. On the morning of 2nd November this force, escorted by two gunboats, lay off the German port of Tanga, the coast terminus of the Moschi railway, and summoned it to surrender. The officer in charge asked for some hours' grace in order that he might communicate with the Governor, who was then absent. This was granted, and the original time was largely extended, and used by the Germans to hurry down every available soldier by the Moschi line. Towards evening the British general grew impatient, and landed one and a half battalions, who advanced through the coast scrub towards the town. There it was apparent that a strong defence had been prepared, and the invaders had to fall back towards the shore, where they could be covered by the gunboats.

Nov. 2.

The next day was occupied in landing the rest of the force, and the attack was renewed on the morning of the 4th. It proved a complete failure. The Germans had mastered the art of bush fighting. Ropes were hidden under the sand of the paths, and, when stepped on, brought down flags which gave the enemy the required range. They also adopted an old Manyumwezi trick, and hid hives of bees half-stifled with smoke beside the roads, which swarmed out when the lids were twitched off by concealed wires, and grievously stung our men. One of the North Lancashires had over a hundred stings extracted. Yet we managed to reach the town of Tanga, where the 101st Grenadiers attacked on the left with the bayonet, and the Kashmir Rifles and the North Lancashires effected an entrance on the right. There we met a deadly enfilading fire from the housetops, and were forced back with heavy losses. There was nothing for it but to retire to the coast and re-embark. Our casualties were nearly 800, and included 141 British officers and men, so that the Tanga reverse was the most costly of the minor African battles. General Aitken's force went north to the East African Plateau, where it continued during the next months to act as a garrison and watch the borders.

Nov. 4.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE WAR AT SEA—THE BATTLES OF CORONEL AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.

In a former chapter, we carried the history of the war at sea down to the end of September, a period during which we fought one successful action and made a large number of captures, but one in which—towards the close at any rate—Germany chose to fight solely with smaller craft, and all our casualties were due to the mine and the submarine. The same conditions held during October. Apart from the work of our cruisers in the outer seas, there is little to chronicle. We had one serious disaster, since one of our super-Dreadnoughts struck a mine off the north coast of Ireland and sank, with the loss of a single life. On 15th October, also, the old cruiser *Hawke* was torpedoed and sunk off Aberdeen, and nearly 500 men perished. We had one success, for on the afternoon of 17th October the new light cruiser *Undaunted*, Captain Cecil Fox, accompanied by the destroyers *Lance*, *Legion*, and *Loyal*, sank the four German destroyers S115, S117, S118, and S119 off the Dutch coast. Our total naval casualties during the first three months of war, leaving out of account the naval division interned in Holland, were just under 6,000, of which well over 4,000 were dead. In war by land the proportion of killed to wounded is usually about one to ten, in modern sea war it is almost ten to one.

But the opening of November saw a change in the situation. The centre of interest shifted to the Southern Pacific and the Southern Atlantic, and in two months we fought two important naval battles. To understand the events which led up to them, we must go back to what happened at the outbreak of war.

When Admiral von Spee, with the German Pacific Squadron, left Kiao-chau early in August, he succeeded in collecting seven vessels from the China and Australian stations. One of these, the *Emden*, was detached for commerce raiding in the Indian Ocean, with what success we have seen, while the light cruiser *Karlsruhe*, noted for its speed, became a privateer in the South Atlantic. There remained with him two armoured cruisers, the *Gneisenau* and the *Scharnhorst*, and three light cruisers, the *Dresden*, *Leipzig*, and *Nürnberg*. The first two were sister ships, both launched in 1906, with a tonnage of 11,400 and a speed of at least 23 knots. They carried 6-inch armour, and mounted eight 8.2-inch, six 5.9-inch, and eighteen 21-pounder guns. The *Dresden* was a sister ship

of the *Emden*—3,540 tons, 24½ knots, and ten 4.1-inch guns. The *Nürnberg* was slightly smaller—3,350 tons, her armament was the same, and her speed was about half a knot quicker. Smaller still was the *Leipzig*—3,200 tons, with the same armament as the other two, and a speed of over 22 knots. This squadron set itself to prey upon our commerce routes, remembering that the British navy was short in cruisers of the class best fitted to patrol and guard the great trade highways. Admiral von Spee sailed for the western coast of South America, and found coaling and provisioning bases on the coast of Ecuador and Colombia, and in the Galapagos Islands. The duties of neutrals were either imperfectly understood or slackly observed by some of the South American states at the beginning of the war, and the German admiral seems to have been permitted the use of wireless stations which gave him valuable information as to the enemy's movements.

Early in August a small British squadron set sail to protect the southern trade routes thus menaced. It was commanded by Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock, a capable and most popular sailor, who had served in the Sudan and at the relief of Peking, and had distinguished himself in the work of saving life at the wreck of the *Delhi*. He had in his squadron, when formed, a twelve-year-old battleship, the *Canopus*, two armoured cruisers, the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*, the light cruiser *Glasgow*, and an armed liner, the *Otranto*, belonging to the Orient Steam Navigation Company. None of his vessels was very strong either in speed or armament. The *Canopus* belonged to a class which had been long obsolete, her tonnage was 12,950, her speed 19 knots, and her armament four 12-inch, twelve 6-inch, and ten 12-pounder guns, all of an old-fashioned pattern. Her armour belt was only six inches thick. The *Good Hope* was also twelve years old; her tonnage was 14,100, her speed 23 knots, and her armament two 9.2-inch, sixteen 6-inch, and twelve 12-pounder guns. The *Monmouth* was a smaller vessel of 9,800 tons, with the same speed, and mounting fourteen 6-inch and eight 12-pounder guns. The *Glasgow*, which was stationed on the south-east coast of America, was a much newer vessel, and had a speed of 25 knots. Her tonnage was 4,800, and her armament two 6-inch and ten 4-inch guns.

Aug. 14.

Admiral Cradock's squadron began by sweeping the North Atlantic, and on 14th August reached Halifax, where the admiral moved his flag to the *Good Hope*. It then sailed to Bermuda, and through the West Indies to the coasts of Venezuela and Brazil. Then it cruised for a little about the Horn, and visited the Falkland Islands. By the third week of October it was in the Pacific, moving up the coast of Chile on the look-out for Admiral von Spee. The officers knew well that the enemy were

the stronger, for something had happened to the *Canopus*, which had dropped behind for repairs, and the *Otranto* was, of course, no match for even a small cruiser. Reinforcements were hourly expected from Britain or the Mediterranean, but for some reason, still unexplained, these were not forthcoming. One officer wrote on 12th October: "From now to the end of the month is the critical time, as it will decide whether we shall have to fight a superior German force coming from the Pacific before we can get reinforcements from home or the Mediterranean. We feel that the Admiralty ought to have a better force here, and take advantage of our three to two superiority. But we shall fight cheerfully whatever odds we have to face." And the surgeon of the *Good Hope* wrote on 25th October: "We think the Admiralty have forgotten their trade route squadron 10,000 miles from London town. Five German cruisers against us. What's the betting on the field? Pray to your Penates we may prevent them concentrating." Admiral Cradock did not fall into a trap, as was at one time suggested; he knew that when he met von Spee he would meet an enemy more than his match.

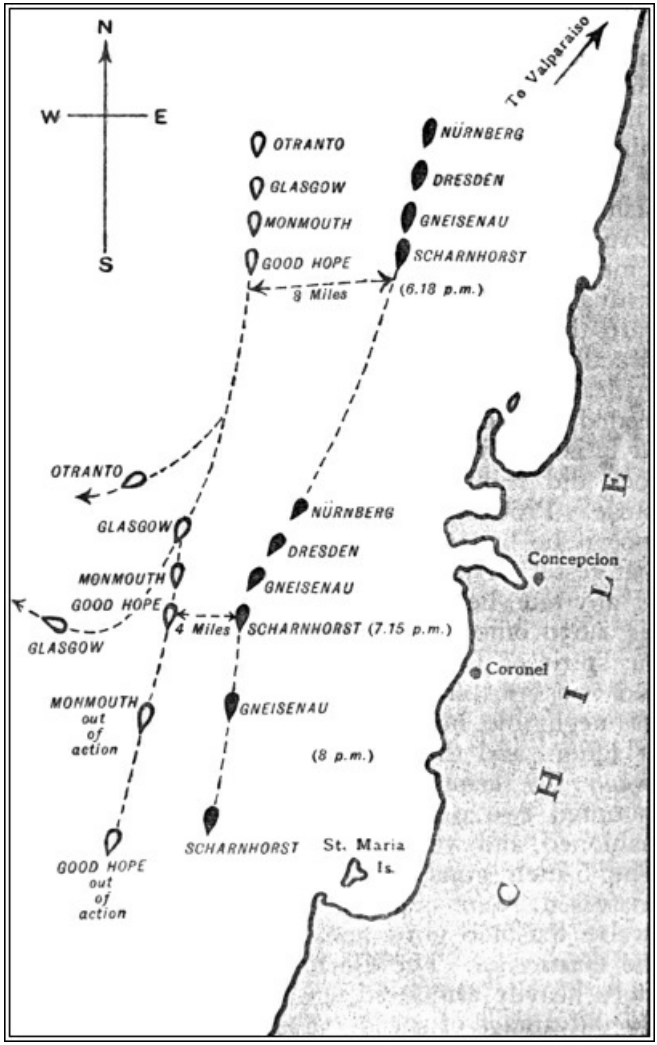
Nov. 1.

He went first to Coronel, then on to Valparaiso, and then back to Coronel to send off some cables. The *Glasgow*, to whose officers we owe the story of the fight, left Coronel at 9 o'clock on the morning of 1st November, sailing north, and about 4 o'clock in the afternoon sighted the enemy. She made out the two big armoured cruisers leading, and the light cruisers[22] following in open order, and at once sent a wireless signal to the flagship, which the Germans seem to have jammed. By 5 o'clock, however, the *Good Hope* came up, and the *Monmouth* had already joined the *Glasgow* and the *Otranto*. Both squadrons were now moving southward, the Germans having the in-shore course. The British were led by the *Good Hope*, with the *Monmouth*, *Glasgow*, and *Otranto* following in order; the Germans by the *Scharnhorst*, with the *Gneisenau*, *Dresden*, and *Nürnberg* following.

We can reconstruct something of the picture. To the east was the land, with the snowy heights of the southern Andes fired by the evening glow. To the west burned one of those flaming sunsets which the Pacific knows, and silhouetted against its crimson and orange were the British ships, like woodcuts in a naval handbook. A high sea was running from the south, and half a gale was blowing. At first some twelve miles separated the two squadrons, but the distance rapidly shrank till it was eight miles about 6.18 p.m. About 7 o'clock the squadrons were converging, and the enemy's leading cruiser opened fire at seven miles. By this time the sun had gone down behind the horizon, but the lemon afterglow showed up the British ships, while the German were shrouded in the in-shore

twilight. Presently the enemy got the range, and shell after shell hit the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*, while the bad light and the spray from the head seas made good gunnery for them almost impossible.

At 7.50 there was a great explosion on the *Good Hope*, which had already been set on fire. The flames leaped to an enormous height in the air, and the doomed vessel, which had been drifting towards the enemy's lines, soon disappeared below the water. The *Monmouth* was also on fire and down by the head, and turned away seaward in her distress. Meantime the *Glasgow* had received only stray shots, for the battle so far had been waged between the four armoured cruisers. But as the *Good Hope* sank and the *Monmouth* was obviously near her end, the enemy cruisers fell back and began to shell the *Glasgow* at a range of two and a half miles. That the *Glasgow* escaped was something of a miracle. She was scarcely armoured at all, and was struck by five shells at the water line, but her coal seems to have saved her.



Battle of Coronel, November 1.

The moon was now rising, and the *Glasgow*, which had been trying to stand by the *Monmouth*, saw the whole German squadron bearing down upon her. The *Monmouth* was past hope, so she did the proper thing and fled. By ten minutes to nine she was out of sight of the enemy, though she occasionally saw flashes of gun-fire and the play of searchlights, for fortunately a flurry of rain had hidden the unwelcome moon. She steered at first W.N.W., but gradually worked round to south, for she desired to warn the *Canopus*, which was coming up from the direction of Cape Horn. Next day she found that battleship, two hundred miles off, and the two proceeded towards the Straits of Magellan.

It is not for us to judge whether Admiral Cradock did rightly in entering

upon this desperate battle. Probably it would have made small difference if he had waited for the *Canopus*, for though that vessel carried big guns, she was hopelessly slow. At any rate, he took the heroic course, and he and his 1,650 officers and men went to their death in the spirit of Drake and Grenville. The Germans had two light cruisers to our one, for the *Otranto* was negligible, but these vessels were never seriously in action, and the battle was won in the duel between the armoured cruisers. The *Good Hope* mounted two 9.2-inch guns, but these were old-fashioned, and were put out of action at the start. The 6-inch guns, which she and the *Monmouth* possessed, were no match for the broadsides of twelve 8.2-inch guns fired by the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*. The German vessels were also far more heavily armoured, and they had the inestimable advantage of speed. They were able to get the requisite range first and crippled Cradock before he could reply, and they had a superb target in his hulls silhouetted against the afterglow of sunset. The Battle of Coronel was fought with all conceivable odds against us.

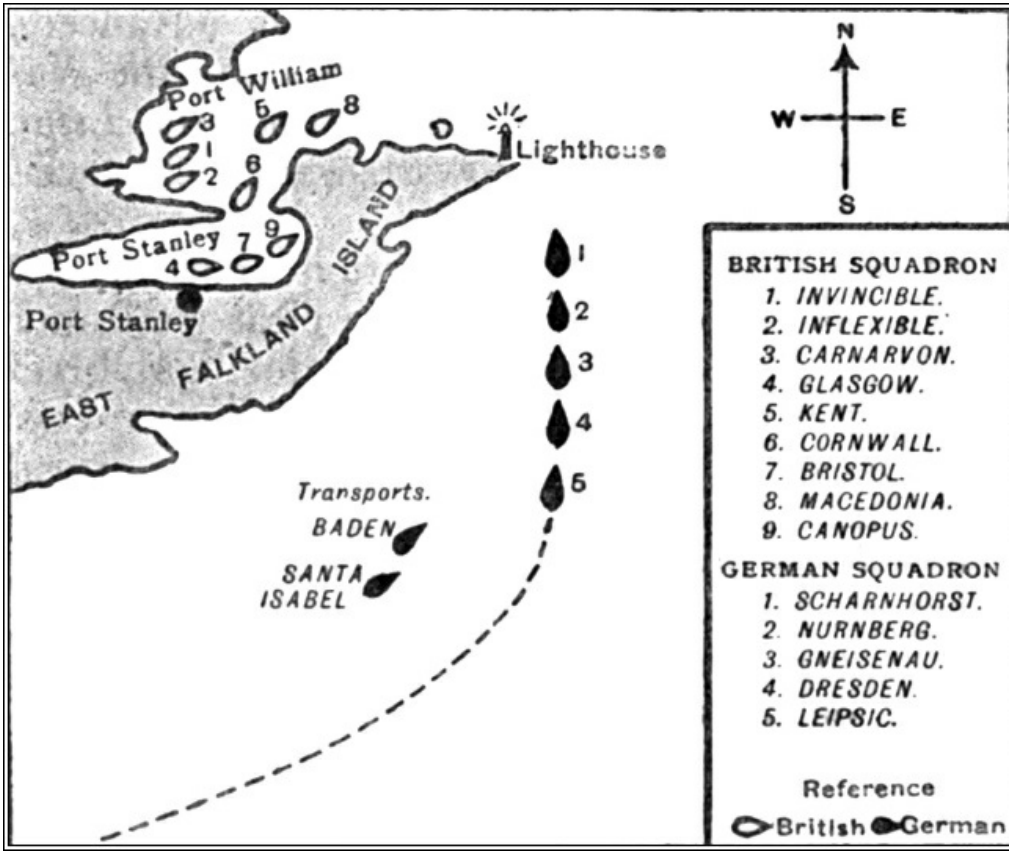
The news woke the British Admiralty up to the necessity of dealing finally with Admiral von Spee. Lord Fisher had succeeded Prince Louis of Battenberg as First Sea Lord, and one of the earliest acts of his administration was the dispatch of Rear-Admiral Sir Frederick Doveton Sturdee, who had been chief of the War Staff at the Admiralty, with a squadron to the South Atlantic. He had with him the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible*, the two first battle cruisers built by Britain. These vessels had a tonnage of 17,250, a normal speed of 25 knots, which could be increased under pressure to 28, and were each armed with eight 12-inch guns, so placed that all eight could be fired on either broadside. Their armour was 7-inch plates. He had also three armoured cruisers, the *Carnarvon* —10,850 tons, 22-3 knots, and an armament of four 7.5-inch and six 6-inch guns; the *Kent* and the *Cornwall*, each of 9,800 tons, 23 knots, and an armament of fourteen 6-inch and eight 12-pounder guns. At sea he was joined by the light cruiser *Bristol*, which belonged to the West Atlantic station, and was of the same class as the *Glasgow*, and he was accompanied by the armed liner *Macedonia*. Somewhere in the South Atlantic he picked up the *Glasgow*, which had made her way through the Magellan Straits.

A trap was cunningly laid for the victorious von Spee. If all tales be true, a device was employed which forms an excellent example of the "double-bluff." A wireless message was sent to the *Canopus*, bidding her proceed to Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands, where, she was informed, she would be perfectly safe, since the new guns for the forts had already arrived. This message was intercepted by the Germans, as it was meant to be, and, as was also intended, they regarded it as a ruse, designed to mislead them as to the

security of the *Canopus*. They believed that all talk of forts and guns was nonsense, as it was, and that the *Canopus* lay in Port Stanley an easy prey. Admiral von Spee, therefore, resolved to make a prize of her, and at the same time to capture the wireless station at Port Stanley, which would give him a real strategic advantage. After the Battle of Coronel, he had lingered for some time on the coast of Chile, probably waiting for his colliers, but on 15th November he left the island of Juan Fernandez, and headed for Cape Horn. The Japanese fleet was beginning to make things awkward for him in the Pacific. His intention, after he had disposed of the *Canopus*, was to sail across the Atlantic to the South African coast, where he might have caught the Union force which had landed at Luderitz Bay, and interfered, with disastrous effects, in the local war.

Dec. 7.

Admiral Sturdee's expedition was kept a complete secret, a wonderful achievement when we remember that our ports were full of German spies and that naval information had a knack of finding its way very speedily to the enemy. On the morning of 7th December the British squadron arrived at Port Stanley, which lies at the eastern corner of the East Island. The Falklands, with their bare brown moors shining with quartz, their endless lochans, their prevailing mists, their grey stone houses, and their population of Scots shepherds, look like a group of the Orkneys or Outer Hebrides set down in the southern seas. Port Stanley is a deeply-cut gulf leading to an inner harbour on the shores of which stands the little capital. The low shores on the south side almost give a vessel a sight of the outer sea. The entrance had been defended to some extent by mines. December the 7th was spent by the British squadron in coaling. The *Canopus*, the *Glasgow*, and the *Bristol* were in the inner harbour, while the *Invincible*, *Inflexible*, *Carnarvon*, *Kent*, and *Cornwall* lay in the outer gulf.



First Phase—8 a.m.

Battle of the Falkland Islands—Dec. 8.

Dec. 8.

About daybreak on the morning of the 8th, Admiral von Spee arrived from the direction of Cape Horn. He sent one of his light cruisers ahead to scout, and this vessel reported the presence of two British ships, probably the *Macedonia* and the *Kent*, which would be the first vessels visible to a ship rounding the islands. Upon this von Spee gave the order to prepare for battle, expecting to find only the remnants of Cradock's squadron. The Germans advanced in line, the *Gneisenau* leading, followed by the *Nürnberg*, the *Scharnhorst*, the *Dresden*, and the *Leipzig*, and steered north-east towards the entrance of the port.

8 a.m.

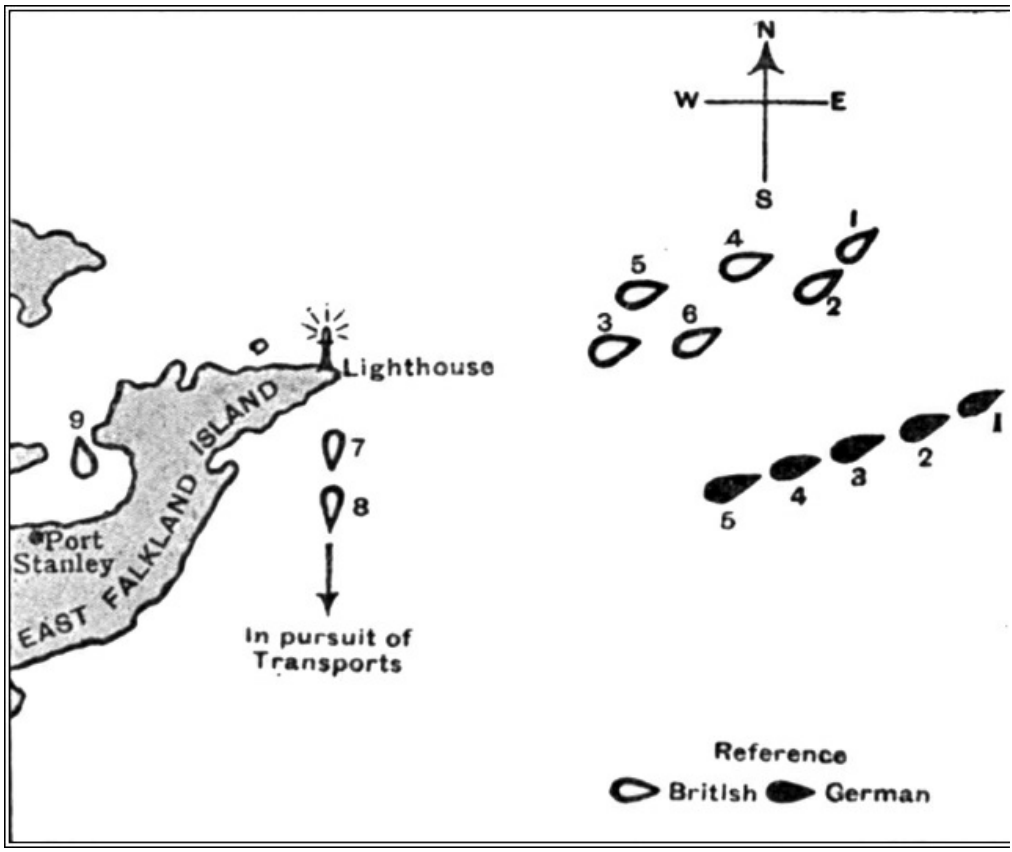
At 8 o'clock the signal station announced the presence of the enemy. It was a clear fresh morning with a bright sun, and light breezes from the north-west. All our vessels had finished coaling, except the battle cruisers, which had begun only half an hour before. Orders were at once given to get up steam for full speed. The battle cruisers

raised steam with oil fuel, and made so dense a smoke that the German look-outs did not detect them. The Germans fired a shell at the wireless station about 9, and the *Canopus* had a shot at the *Scharnhorst* over the neck of land, directed by signal officers on shore. At 9.30 von Spee came abreast the harbour mouth, and was able to see the strength of the British squadron. He at once altered his course and put to sea, while Admiral Sturdee's command streamed out in pursuit.

9.30 a.m.

First went the *Kent* and then the *Glasgow*, followed by the *Carnarvon*, the battle cruisers, and the *Cornwall*. The Germans had two transports with them, the *Baden* and the *Santa Isabel*, and these fell back to the south of the island, with the *Bristol* and the *Macedonia* in pursuit. The *Canopus* remained in the harbour. At about 10 o'clock the two forces were some twelve miles apart, von Spee steering about due east. The *Invincible* and the *Inflexible* quickly drew ahead, but had to slacken speed to 20 knots to allow the cruisers to keep up with them. At 11 o'clock about eleven miles separated the two forces. At five minutes to one we had drawn closer, and opened fire upon the *Leipzig*, which was last of the German line.

11 a.m.



Second Phase—11 a.m.

Battle of the Falkland Islands—Dec. 8.

Von Spee, seeing that flight was impossible, prepared to give battle. So far as the battle cruisers were concerned, it was a foregone conclusion, for they had the greater speed and the longer range. His three light cruisers turned and made off to the south, followed by the *Kent*, the *Glasgow*, and the *Cornwall*, while the *Invincible*, the *Inflexible*, and the *Carnarvon* engaged the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*. About 2 o'clock our battle cruisers had the range of the German flagship, and a terrific artillery duel began. The smoke was getting in our way, and Admiral Sturdee used his superior speed to get to the other side of the enemy. We simply pounded the *Scharnhorst* to pieces, and just after 4 o'clock she listed to port and then turned bottom upwards with her propeller still going round. The battle cruisers and the *Carnarvon* then concentrated on the *Gneisenau*, which was sheering off to the south-east, and at 6

2 p.m.

4 p.m.

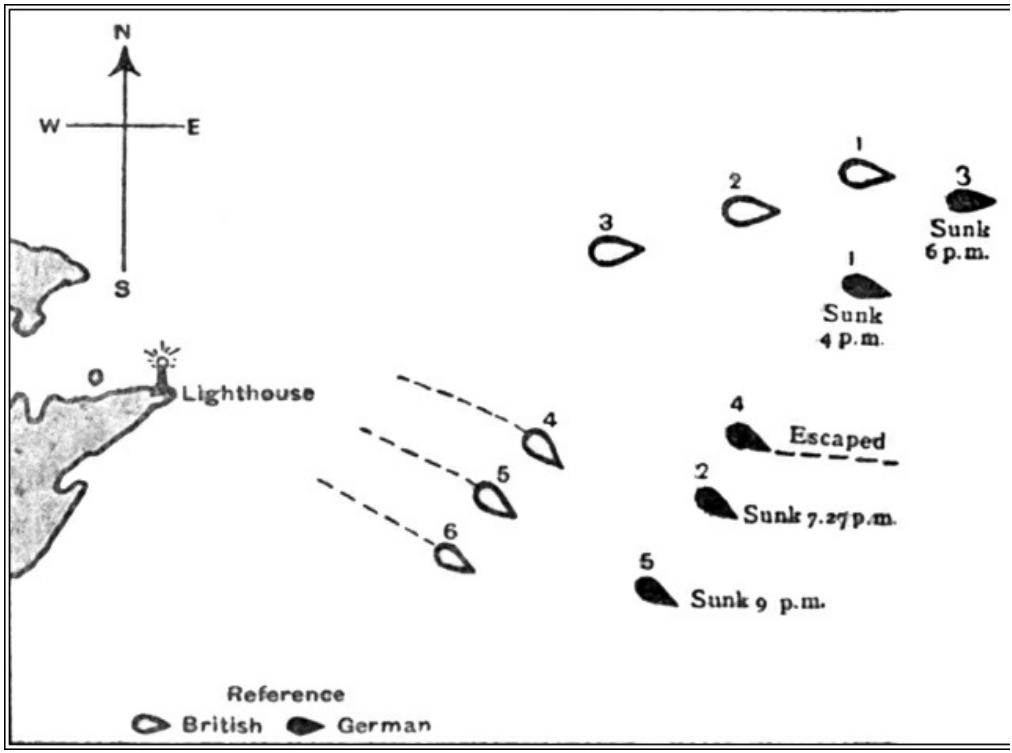
6 p.m.

o'clock she too listed and went under.

Meanwhile the *Kent*, *Glasgow*, and *Cornwall* were hot in pursuit of the three light cruisers, and here was a more equally matched battle. The *Dresden*, which was farthest to the east, managed to escape. The other two had slightly the advantage of speed of the British ships, but our engineers and stokers worked magnificently, and managed to get 25 knots out of the *Kent*. It was now a thick misty day, with a drizzle of rain, and each duel had consequently the air of a separate battle. The news of the sinking of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* put new spirit into our men, and at 7.27 p.m. the *Nürnberg*, which had been set on fire by the *Kent*, went down with her guns still firing. The *Leipzig*, which had to face the *Glasgow* and the *Cornwall*, kept afloat till 9 p.m., when she too heeled over and sank. As the wet night closed in, the battle died away. Only the *Dresden*, battered and fleeing far out in the southern waters, remained of the proud squadron which at dawn had sailed to what it believed to be an easy victory. The defeat of Cradock in the murky sunset off Coronel had been amply avenged.

7.27 p.m.

9 p.m.



Last Phase.

Battle of the Falkland Islands—Dec 8.

The Battle of the Falkland Islands was a brilliant piece of strategy, for a plan, initiated more than a month before and involving a journey across the world, was executed with complete secrecy and precision. The honours must be divided between Sir Frederick Sturdee and the Admiralty at home, which conceived the enterprise. Technically, the sole blemish was the escape of the *Dresden*, which could scarcely have been prevented, for the *Carnarvon*, owing to her inadequate speed, could not join her sister ships in the pursuit of the lighter German vessels, and the *Glasgow*, the only ship which might have overhauled her, was busy with the *Leipzig*. The fight had a vital bearing on the position of Germany. It annihilated the one squadron left to her outside the North Sea, and it removed a formidable menace to our trade routes. After the 8th of December, the *Dresden*[23] and the *Karlsruhe* were the sole enemy cruisers left at large, for the *Bremen*, never very fortunate in her efforts, seemed to have temporarily disappeared. These, with the armoured merchantmen, the *Kronprinz Wilhelm* and the *Prince Eitel Friedrich*, were the only privateers still at work on the High Seas.

The British losses were small considering the magnitude of the victory. The *Invincible* was hit by eighteen shells, but had no casualties. The *Inflexible* was hit thrice, and had one man killed. The cruisers suffered more heavily, the *Kent*, for example, having four men killed and twelve wounded, and the *Glasgow* nine killed and four wounded. Unlike the Germans at Coronel, every effort was made by our ships to save life. The only sign of a lost vessel was at first the slightly discoloured water. Then the wreckage floated up with men clinging to it, and boats were lowered, and sailors let down the sides on bow-lines to try to rescue the sur vivors who floated past. The water was icy cold—about 40 degrees—and presently many of the swimmers grew numb and went under. Albatrosses, too, attacked some of those clinging to the wreckage, pecking at their eyes and forcing them to let go. Altogether we must have saved a couple of hundred men, including the captain of the *Gneisenau*. Admiral von Spee went down, with two of his sons.

From a graphic description[24] of the action by an officer of the *Kent*, Commander Eric Wharton, we take this extract:—

> "It is near dusk now, 7.30, and we have been two hours in action. Up comes every one from below, from casemates and turrets, to stare and rejoice, but they are all immediately hustled away to do what can be done to save life. All our boats are riddled, and none of them

can be repaired for an hour. We do what we can with life-buoys and lumps of wood paid astern, but it's mighty little; it's a loppy sea, and dreadfully cold. All this part was beastly. There were so many of them in sight, and we could do so little till our boats were patched. At last we could lower one cutter and the galley, and even then life-saving was no easy job. I was in the galley, and plunged about for twenty minutes to get one man. Altogether we got on board about a dozen, five of whom were really 'goners' when we hoisted them on board. The other seven have flourished and are really quite normal again now. Early in these life-saving operations the *Nürnberg* heeled over on her side and sank. They were a brave lot; one man stood aft and held the ensign flying in his hands till the ship went under. It was strange and weird, all this aftermath, the wind rapidly arising from the westward, darkness closing in, one ship heaving to the swell, well battered, the foretop-gallant-mast gone. Of the other, nothing to be seen but floating wreckage, with here and there a man clinging, and the 'Mollyhawks' (vultures of the sea) swooping by. The wind moaned, and death was on the air. Then, see! out of the mist loomed a great four-masted barque under full canvas. A great ghost-ship she seemed. Slowly, majestically she sailed by and vanished in the night."

Let us do honour to a gallant enemy. The German admiral fought as Cradock had fought, the German sailors died as Cradock's men had died, and there can be no higher praise. They went down with colours flying, and at the last the men seem to have lined up on the decks of the doomed ships. They continued to resist after their vessels had become shambles. One captured officer reported that before the end his ship had no upper deck left, every man there having been killed, and one turret blown bodily overboard by a 12-inch lyddite shell. But in all this hell of slaughter, which lasted for half a day, there was never a thought of surrender. Von Spee and Cradock lie beneath the same waters, in the final concord of those who have looked unshaken upon death.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.

Sir John French's Fourth Dispatch.

THE CAMPAIGN IN WEST FLANDERS.

France, *20th November 1914*.

My Lord,

I have the honour to submit a further dispatch recounting the operations of the Field Force under my command throughout the battle of Ypres-Armentières.

The Movement to the North.

Early in October a study of the general situation strongly impressed me with the necessity of bringing the greatest possible force to bear in support of the northern flank of the Allies, in order to effectively outflank the enemy and compel him to evacuate his positions.

At the same time, the position on the Aisne, as described in the concluding paragraphs of my last dispatch, appeared to me to warrant a withdrawal of the British Forces from the positions they then held.

The enemy had been weakened by continual abortive and futile attacks, whilst the fortification of the position had been much improved.

I represented these views to General Joffre, who fully agreed.

Arrangements for withdrawal and relief having been made by the French General Staff, the operation commenced on the 3rd October; and the 2nd Cavalry Division, under General Gough, marched for Compiègne *en route* for the new theatre.

The Army Corps followed in succession at intervals of a few days, and the move was completed on the 19th October, when the First Corps, under Sir Douglas Haig, completed its detrainment at St. Omer.

That this delicate operation was carried out so successfully is in great measure due to the excellent feeling which exists between the French and British

Armies; and I am deeply indebted to the Commander-in-Chief and the French General Staff for their cordial and most effective co-operation.

As General Foch was appointed by the Commander-in-Chief to supervise the operations of all the French troops north of Noyon, I visited his headquarters at Doullens on 8th October and arranged joint plans of operations as follows:

> The Second Corps to arrive on the line Aire-Bethune on the 11th October, to connect with the right of the French 10th Army, and, pivoting on its left, to attack in flank the enemy who were opposing the 10th French Corps in front.
>
> The Cavalry to move on the northern flank of the Second Corps and support its attack until the Third Corps, which was to detrain at St. Omer on the 12th, should come up. They were then to clear the front and to act on the northern flank of the Third Corps in a similar manner, pending the arrival of the First Corps from the Aisne.
>
> The 3rd Cavalry Division and 7th Division, under Sir Henry Rawlinson, which were then operating in support of the Belgian Army, and assisting its withdrawal from Antwerp, to be ordered to co-operate as soon as circumstances would allow.
>
> In the event of these movements so far overcoming the resistance of the enemy as to enable a forward movement to be made, all the Allied Forces to march in an easterly direction. The road running from Bethune to Lille was to be the dividing line between the British and French Forces, the right of the British Army being directed on Lille.

The Second Corps at La Bassée.

2. The great battle, which is mainly the subject of this dispatch, may be said to have commenced on October 11th, on which date the 2nd Cavalry Division, under General Gough, first came into contact with the enemy's cavalry who were holding some woods to the north of the Bethune-Aire Canal. These were cleared of the enemy by our cavalry, which then joined hands with the

Divisional Cavalry of the 6th Division in the neighbourhood of Hazebrouck. On the same day the right of the 2nd Cavalry Division connected with the left of the Second Corps, which was moving in a north-easterly direction after crossing the above-mentioned canal.

By the 11th October Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien had reached the line of the canal between Aire and Bethune. I directed him to continue his march on the 12th, bringing up his left in the direction of Merville. Then he was to move east to the line Laventie-Lorgies, which would bring him on the immediate left of the French Army and threaten the German flank.

On the 12th this movement was commenced. The 5th Division connected up with the left of the French Army north of Annequin. They moved to the attack of the Germans who were engaged at this point with the French; but the enemy once more extended his right in some strength to meet the threat against his flank. The 3rd Division, having crossed the canal, deployed on the left of the 5th; and the whole Second Corps again advanced to the attack, but were unable to make much headway owing to the difficult character of the ground upon which they were operating, which was similar to that usually found in manufacturing districts, and was covered with mining works, factories, buildings, etc. The ground throughout this country is remarkably flat, rendering effective artillery support very difficult.

Before nightfall, however, they had made some advance, and had successfully driven back hostile counter-attacks with great loss to the enemy and destruction of some of his machine guns.

On and after the 13th October the object of the General Officer Commanding the Second Corps was to wheel to his right, pivoting on Givenchy to get astride the La Bassée-Lille Road in the neighbourhood of Fournes, so as to threaten the right flank and rear of the enemy's position on the high ground south of La Bassée.

This position of La Bassée has throughout the battle defied all attempts at capture, either by the French or the British.

On this day Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien could make but little progress. He particularly mentions the fine fighting of the Dorsets, whose Commanding Officer, Major Roper, was killed. They suffered no less than 400 casualties, 130 of them being killed, but maintained all day their hold on Pont Fixe. He also refers to the gallantry of the Artillery.

The fighting of the Second Corps continued throughout the 14th in the same direction. On this day the Army suffered a great loss, in that the Commander of

the 3rd Division, General Hubert Hamilton, was killed.

On the 15th the 3rd Division fought splendidly, crossing the dykes, with which this country is intersected, with planks; and driving the enemy from one entrenched position to another in loopholed villages, till at night they pushed the Germans off the Estaires-La Bassée Road, and establishing themselves on the line Pont de Ham-Croix Barbée.

On the 16th the move was continued until the left flank of the Corps was in front of the village of Aubers, which was strongly held. This village was captured on the 17th by the 9th Infantry Brigade; and at dark on the same day the Lincolns and Royal Fusiliers carried the village of Herlies at the point of the bayonet after a fine attack, the Brigade being handled with great dash by Brigadier-General Shaw.

At this time, to the best of our information, the Second Corps were believed to be opposed by the 2nd, 4th, 7th, and 9th German Cavalry Divisions, supported by several battalions of Jaegers and a part of the 14th German Corps.

On the 18th powerful counter-attacks were made by the enemy all along the front of the Second Corps, and were most gallantly repulsed; but only slight progress could be made.

From the 19th to the 31st October the Second Corps carried on a most gallant fight in defence of their position against very superior numbers, the enemy having been reinforced during that time by at least one division of the 7th Corps, a brigade of the 3rd Corps, and the whole of the 14th Corps, which had moved north from in front of the French 21st Corps.

On the 19th the Royal Irish Regiment, under Major Daniell, stormed and carried the village of Le Pilly, which they held and entrenched. On the 20th, however, they were cut off and surrounded, suffering heavy losses.

On the morning of the 22nd the enemy made a very determined attack on the 5th Division, who were driven out of the village of Violaines; but they were sharply counter-attacked by the Worcesters and Manchesters, and prevented from coming on.

The left of the Second Corps being now somewhat exposed, Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien withdrew the line during the night to a position he had previously prepared, running generally from the eastern side of Givenchy, east of Neuve Chapelle to Fauquissart.

On the 24th October the Lahore Division of the Indian Army Corps, under Major-General Watkis, having arrived, I sent them to the neighbourhood of

Lacon to support the Second Corps.

Very early on this morning the enemy commenced a heavy attack; but owing to the skilful manner in which the artillery was handled and the targets presented by the enemy's infantry as it approached, they were unable to come to close quarters. Towards the evening a heavy attack developed against the 7th Brigade, which was repulsed, with very heavy loss to the enemy, by the Wiltshires and the Royal West Kents. Later, a determined attack on the 18th[25] Infantry Brigade drove the Gordon Highlanders out of their trenches, which were retaken by the Middlesex Regiment, gallantly led by Lieutenant-Colonel Hull.

The 8th Infantry Brigade (which had come into line on the left of the Second Corps) was also heavily attacked, but the enemy was driven off.

In both these cases the Germans lost very heavily, and left large numbers of dead and prisoners behind them.

The Second Corps was now becoming exhausted, owing to the constant reinforcements of the enemy, the length of line which it had to defend, and the enormous losses which it had suffered.

The Third Corps at Armentières.

3. By the evening of the 11th October the Third Corps had practically completed its detrainment at St. Omer, and was moved east to Hazebrouck, where the Corps remained throughout the 12th.

On the morning of the 13th the advanced guard of the Corps, consisting of the 19th Infantry Brigade and a Brigade of Field Artillery, occupied the position of the line Strazeele Station-Caestre-St. Sylvestre.

On this day I directed General Pulteney to move towards the line Armentières-Wytschaete; warning him, however, that should the Second Corps require his aid he must be prepared to move south-east to support it.

A French Cavalry Corps under General Conneau was operating between the Second and Third Corps.

The Fourth German Cavalry Corps, supported by some Jaeger Battalions, was known to be occupying the position in the neighbourhood of Meteren; and they were believed to be further supported by the advanced guard of another German Army Corps.

In pursuance of his orders, General Pulteney proceeded to attack the enemy

in his front.

The rain and fog which prevailed prevented full advantage being derived from our much superior artillery. The country was very much enclosed and rendered difficult by heavy rain.

The enemy were, however, routed, and the position taken at dark, several prisoners being captured.

During the night the Third Corps made good the attacked position and entrenched it.

As Bailleul was known to be occupied by the enemy, arrangements were made during the night to attack it; but reconnaissances sent out on the morning of the 14th showed that they had withdrawn, and the town was taken by our troops at 10 a.m. on that day, many wounded Germans being found and taken in it.

The Corps then occupied the line St. Jans Cappel-Bailleul.

On the morning of the 15th the Third Corps were ordered to make good the line of the Lys from Armentières to Sailly, which, in the face of considerable opposition and very foggy weather, they succeeded in doing, the 6th Division at Sailly-Bac St. Maur and the 4th Division at Nieppe.

The enemy in its front having retired, the Third Corps on the night of the 17th occupied the line Bois Grenier-Le Gheir.

On the 18th the enemy were holding a line from Radinghem on the south, through Perenchies and Frelinghien on the north, whence the German troops which were opposing the Cavalry Corps occupied the east bank of the river as far as Wervicq.

On this day I directed the Third Corps to move down the valley of the Lys and endeavour to assist the Cavalry Corps in making good its position on the right bank. To do this it was necessary first to drive the enemy eastward towards Lille. A vigorous offensive in the direction of Lille was assumed; but the enemy was found to have been considerably reinforced, and but little progress was made.

The situation of the Third Corps on the night of the 18th was as follows:

The 6th Division was holding the line Radinghem-La Vallée-Emnetières-Capinghem-Premesques-Railway Line 300 yards east of Halte. The 4th Division were holding the line from L'Epinette to the river at a point 400 yards south of Frelinghien, and thence to a point half a mile south-east of Le Gheir. The Corps Reserve was at Armentières Station, with right and left flanks of Corps in close

touch with French Cavalry and the Cavalry Corps.

Since the advance from Bailleul the enemy's forces in front of the Cavalry and Third Corps had been strongly reinforced, and on the night of the 17th they were opposed by three or four divisions of the enemy's cavalry, the 19th Saxon Corps and at least one division of the 7th Corps. Reinforcements for the enemy were known to be coming up from the direction of Lille.

Movements of Allenby's Cavalry Corps.

4. Following the movements completed on the 11th October, the 2nd Cavalry Division pushed the enemy back through Flêtre and Le Coq de Paille, and took Mont des Cats, just before dark, after stiff fighting.

On the 14th the 1st Cavalry Division joined up, and the whole Cavalry Corps, under General Allenby, moving north, secured the high ground above Berthen, overcoming considerable opposition.

With a view to a further advance east, I ordered General Allenby, on the 15th, to reconnoitre the line of the River Lys, and endeavour to secure the passages on the opposite bank, pending the arrival of the Third and Fourth Corps.

During the 15th and 16th this reconnaissance was most skilfully and energetically carried out in the face of great opposition, especially along the lower line of the river.

These operations were continued throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th; but although valuable information was gained, and strong forces of the enemy held in check, the Cavalry Corps was unable to secure passages or to establish a permanent footing on the eastern bank of the river.

Movements of Sir H. Rawlinson's Fourth Corps.

5. At this point in the history of the operations under report it is necessary that I should return to the co-operation of the forces operating in the neighbourhood of Ghent and Antwerp under Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Rawlinson, as the action of his force about this period exercised, in my opinion, a great influence on the course of the subsequent operations.

This force, consisting of the 3rd Cavalry Division, under Major-General the Hon. Julian Byng, and the 7th Division, under Major-General Capper, was

placed under my orders by telegraphic instructions from your Lordship.

On receipt of these instructions I directed Sir Henry Rawlinson to continue his operations in covering and protecting the withdrawal of the Belgian Army, and subsequently to form the left column in the eastward advance of the British Forces. These withdrawal operations were concluded about the 16th October, on which date the 7th Division was posted to the east of Ypres, on a line extending from Zandvoorde through Gheluvelt to Zonnebeke. The 3rd Cavalry Division was on its left towards Langemarck and Poelcapelle.

In this position Sir Henry Rawlinson was supported by the 87th French Territorial Division in Ypres and Vlamertinghe, and by the 89th French Territorial Division at Poperinghe.

On the night of the 16th I informed Sir Henry Rawlinson of the operations which were in progress by the Cavalry Corps and the Third Corps, and ordered him to conform to those movements in an easterly direction, keeping an eye always to any threat which might be made against him from the north-east.

A very difficult task was allotted to Sir Henry Rawlinson and his command. Owing to the importance of keeping possession of all the ground towards the north which we already held, it was necessary for him to operate on a very wide front, and until the arrival of the First Corps in the northern theatre—which I expected about the 20th—I had no troops available with which to support or reinforce him.

Although on this extended front he had eventually to encounter very superior forces, his troops, both Cavalry and Infantry, fought with the utmost gallantry, and rendered very signal service.

On the 17th four French Cavalry Divisions deployed on the left of the 3rd Cavalry Division, and drove back advanced parties of the enemy beyond the Forêt d'Houthulst.

As described above, instructions for a vigorous attempt to establish the British Forces east of the Lys were given on the night of the 17th to the Second, Third, and Cavalry Corps.

I considered, however, that the possession of Menin constituted a very important point of passage, and would much facilitate the advance of the rest of the Army. So I directed the General Officer commanding the Fourth Corps to advance the 7th Division upon Menin, and endeavour to seize that crossing on the morning of the 18th.

The left of the 7th Division was to be supported by the 3rd Cavalry Brigade,

and farther north by the French Cavalry in the neighbourhood of Roulers.

Sir Henry Rawlinson represented to me that large hostile forces were advancing upon him from the east and north-east, and that his left flank was severely threatened.

I was aware of the threats from that direction, but hoped that at this particular time there was no greater force coming from the north-east than could be held off by the combined efforts of the French and British Cavalry and the Territorial troops supporting them until the passage at Menin could be seized and the First Corps brought up in support.

Sir Henry Rawlinson probably exercised a wise judgment in not committing his troops to this attack in their somewhat weakened condition; but the result was that the enemy's continued possession of the passage at Menin certainly facilitated his rapid reinforcement of his troops, and thus rendered any further advance impracticable.

On the morning of the 20th October the 7th Division and 3rd Cavalry Division had retired to their old position extending from Zandvoorde through Kruiseik and Gheluvelt to Zonnebeke.

6. On the 19th October the First Corps, coming from the Aisne, had completed its detrainment, and was concentrated between St. Omer and Hazebrouck.

A question of vital importance now arose for decision.

I knew that the enemy were by this time in greatly superior strength on the Lys, and that the Second, Third, Cavalry, and Fourth Corps were holding a much wider front than their numbers and strength warranted.

Taking these facts alone into consideration, it would have appeared wise to throw the First Corps in to strengthen the line; but this would have left the country north and east of Ypres and the Ypres Canal open to a wide turning movement by the 3rd Reserve Corps and at least one Landwehr Division which I knew to be operating in that region. I was also aware that the enemy was bringing large reinforcements up from the east which could only be opposed for several days by two or three French Cavalry Divisions, some French Territorial troops, and the Belgian Army.

After the hard fighting it had undergone the Belgian Army was in no condition to withstand, unsupported, such an attack; and unless some substantial resistance could be offered to this threatened turning movement, the Allied flank must be turned and the Channel Ports laid bare to the enemy.

I judged that a successful movement of this kind would be fraught with such disastrous consequences that the risk of operating on so extended a front must be undertaken; and I directed Sir Douglas Haig to move with the First Corps to the north of Ypres.

From the best information at my disposal I judged at this time that the considerable reinforcements which the enemy had undoubtedly brought up during the 16th, 17th, and 18th had been directed principally on the line of the Lys and against the Second Corps at La Bassée; and that Sir Douglas Haig would probably not be opposed north of Ypres by much more than the 3rd Reserve Corps, which I knew to have suffered considerably in its previous operations, and perhaps one or two Landwehr Divisions.

At a personal interview with Sir Douglas Haig on the evening of the 19th October I communicated the above information to him, and instructed him to advance with the First Corps through Ypres to Thourout. The object he was to have in view was to be the capture of Bruges, and subsequently, if possible, to drive the enemy towards Ghent. In case of an unforeseen situation arising, or the enemy proving to be stronger than anticipated, he was to decide, after passing Ypres, according to the situation, whether to attack the enemy lying to the north or the hostile forces advancing from the east: I had arranged for the French Cavalry to operate on the left of the First Corps, and the 3rd Cavalry Division, under General Byng, on its right.

The Belgian Army were rendering what assistance they could by entrenching themselves on the Ypres Canal and the Yser River; and the troops, although in the last stage of exhaustion, gallantly maintained their positions, buoyed up with the hope of substantial British and French support.

I fully realized the difficult task which lay before us, and the onerous rôle which the British Army was called upon to fulfil.

That success has been attained, and all the enemy's desperate attempts to break through our line frustrated, is due entirely to the marvellous fighting power and the indomitable courage and tenacity of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men.

No more arduous task has ever been assigned to British soldiers; and in all their splendid history there is no instance of their having answered so magnificently to the desperate calls which of necessity were made upon them.

Having given these orders to Sir Douglas Haig, I enjoined a defensive rôle upon the Second and Third and Cavalry Corps, in view of the superiority of force which had accumulated in their front. As regards the Fourth Corps, I

directed Sir Henry Rawlinson to endeavour to conform generally to the movements of the First Corps.

The Battle of Ypres.

On the 20th October they reached the line from Elverdinghe to the cross-roads one and a half miles north-west of Zonnebeke.

On the 21st the Corps was ordered to attack and take the line Poelcapelle-Passchendaele.

Sir Henry Rawlinson's Command was moving on the right of the First Corps, and French troops, consisting of Cavalry and Territorials, moved on their left under the orders of General Bidon.

The advance was somewhat delayed owing to the roads being blocked; but the attack progressed favourably in face of severe opposition, often necessitating the use of the bayonet.

Hearing of heavy attacks being made upon the 7th Division and the 2nd Cavalry Division on his right, Sir Douglas Haig ordered his reserve to be halted on the north-eastern outskirts of Ypres.

Although threatened by a hostile movement from the Forêt d'Houthulst, our advance was successful until about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, when the French Cavalry Corps received orders to retire west of the canal.

Owing to this and the demands made on him by the Fourth Corps, Sir Douglas Haig was unable to advance beyond the line Zonnebeke-St. Julien-Langemarck-Bixschoote.

As there was reported to be congestion with French troops at Ypres, I went there on the evening of the 21st, and met Sir Douglas Haig and Sir Henry Rawlinson. With them I interviewed General de Mitry, Commanding the French Cavalry, and General Bidon, Commanding the French Territorial Divisions.

They promised me that the town would at once be cleared of the troops, and that the French Territorials would immediately move out and cover the left of the flank of the First Corps.

I discussed the situation with the General Officers Commanding the First and Fourth Army Corps, and told them that, in view of the unexpected reinforcements coming up of the enemy, it would probably be impossible to carry out the original rôle assigned to them. But I informed them that I had that

day interviewed the French Commander-in-Chief, General Joffre, who told me that he was bringing up the 9th French Army Corps to Ypres, that more French troops would follow later, and that he intended—in conjunction with the Belgian troops—to drive the Germans east. General Joffre said that he would be unable to commence this movement before the 24th; and I directed the General Officers Commanding the First and Fourth Corps to strengthen their positions as much as possible, and be prepared to hold their ground for two or three days, until the French offensive movement on the north could develop.

It now became clear to me that the utmost we could do to ward off any attempts of the enemy to turn our flank to the north, or to break in from the eastward, was to maintain our present very extended front, and to hold fast our posi tions until French reinforcements could arrive from the south.

During the 22nd the necessity of sending support to the Fourth Corps on his right somewhat hampered the General Officer Commanding the First Corps; but a series of attacks all along his front had been driven back during the day with heavy loss to the enemy. Late in the evening the enemy succeeded in penetrating a portion of the line held by the Cameron Highlanders north of Pilkem.

At 6 a.m. on the morning of the 23rd a counter-attack to recover the lost trenches was made by the Queen's Regiment, the Northamptons, and the King's Royal Rifles, under Major-General Bulfin. The attack was very strongly opposed, and the bayonet had to be used. After severe fighting during most of the day the attack was brilliantly successful, and over six hundred prisoners were taken.

On the same day an attack was made on the 3rd Infantry Brigade. The enemy advanced with great determination, but with little skill, and consequently the loss inflicted on him was exceedingly heavy: some fifteen hundred dead were seen in the neighbourhood of Langemarck. Correspondence found subsequently on a captured German Officer stated that the effectives of this attacking Corps were reduced to 25 per cent. in the course of the day's fighting.

In the evening of this day a division of the French 9th Army Corps came up into line and took over the portion of the line held by the 2nd Division, which, on the 24th, took up the ground occupied by the 7th Division from Poelzelhoek to the Becelaere-Passchendaele Road.

On the 24th and 25th October repeated attacks by the enemy were brilliantly repulsed.

On the night of the 24th-25th the 1st Division was relieved by French Territorial troops, and concentrated about Zillebeke.

During the 25th the 2nd Division, with the 7th on its right and the French 9th Corps on its left, made good prog ress towards the north-east, capturing some guns and prisoners.

On the 27th October I went to the headquarters of the First Corps at Hooge to personally investigate the condition of the 7th Division.

Owing to constant marching and fighting, ever since its hasty disembarkation, in aid of the Antwerp Garrison, this division had suffered great losses, and were becoming very weak. I therefore decided temporarily to break up the Fourth Corps and place the 7th Division with the First Corps under the command of Sir Douglas Haig.

The 3rd Cavalry Division was similarly detailed for service with the First Corps.

I directed the Fourth Corps Commander to proceed, with his Staff, to England, to watch and supervise the mobilization of his 8th Division, which was then proceeding.

On receipt of orders, in accordance with the above arrangement, Sir Douglas Haig redistributed the line held by the First Corps as follows:

(*a*) 7th Division from the Château east of Zandvoorde to the Menin Road.

(*b*) 1st Division from the Menin Road to a point immediately west of Reytel Village.

(*c*) 2nd Division to near Moorslede-Zonnebeke Road.

On the early morning of the 29th October a heavy attack developed against the centre of the line held by the First Corps, the principal point of attack being the cross-roads one mile east of Gheluvelt. After severe fighting—nearly the whole of the Corps being employed in counter-attack—the enemy began to give way at about 2 p.m.; and by dark the Kruiseik Hill had been recaptured and the 1st Brigade had re-established most of the line north of the Menin Road.

Shortly after daylight on the 30th another attack began to develop in the direction of Zandvoorde, supported by heavy artillery fire. In face of this attack the 3rd Cavalry Division had to withdraw to the Klein Zillebeke ridge. This withdrawal involved the right of the 7th Division.

Sir Douglas Haig describes the position at this period as serious, the Germans being in possession of Zandvoorde Ridge.

Subsequent investigation showed that the enemy had been reinforced at this point by the whole German Active Fifteenth Corps.

The General Officer Commanding First Corps ordered the line Gheluvelt to the corner of the canal to be held at all costs. When this line was taken up the 2nd Brigade was ordered to concentrate in rear of the 1st Division and the 4th Brigade line. One battalion was placed in reserve in the woods one mile south of Hooge.

Further precautions were taken at night to protect this flank, and the Ninth French Corps sent three battalions and one Cavalry Brigade to assist.

The First Corps' communications through Ypres were threatened by the advance of the Germans towards the canal; so orders were issued for every effort to be made to secure the line then held and, when this had been thoroughly done, to resume the offensive.

An order taken from a prisoner who had been captured on this day purported to emanate from the German General, von Beimling, and said that the Fifteenth German Corps, together with the 2nd Bavarian and Thirteenth Corps, were entrusted with the task of breaking through the line to Ypres; and that the Emperor himself considered the success of this attack to be one of vital importance to the successful issue of the war.

Perhaps the most important and decisive attack (except that of the Prussian Guard on 15th November) made against the First Corps during the whole of its arduous experiences in the neighbourhood of Ypres took place on the 31st October.

General Moussy, who commanded the detachment which had been sent by the French Ninth Corps on the previous day to assist Sir Douglas Haig on the right of the First Corps, moved to the attack early in the morning, but was brought to a complete standstill, and could make no further progress.

After several attacks and counter-attacks during the course of the morning along the Menin-Ypres Road, south-east of Gheluvelt, an attack against that place developed in great force, and the line of the 1st Division was broken. On the south the 7th Division and General Bulfin's detachment were being heavily shelled. The retirement of the 1st Division exposed the left of the 7th Division, and owing to this the Royal Scots Fusiliers, who remained in their trenches, were cut off and surrounded. A strong infantry attack developed against the right of the 7th Division at 1.30 p.m.

Shortly after this the Headquarters of the 1st and 2nd Divisions were

shelled. The General Officer Commanding 1st Division was wounded, three Staff Officers of the 1st Division and three of the 2nd Division were killed. The General Officer Commanding the 2nd Division also received a severe shaking, and was unconscious for a short time. General Landon assumed command of the 1st Division.

On receiving a report about 2.30 p.m. from General Lomax that the 1st Division had moved back and that the enemy was coming on in strength, the General Officer Commanding the First Corps issued orders that the line, Frezenberg-Westhoek-bend of the main road-Klein Zillebeke-bend of canal, was to be held at all costs.

The 1st Division rallied on the line of the woods east of the bend of the road, the German advance by the road being checked by enfilade fire from the north.

The attack against the right of the 7th Division forced the 22nd Brigade to retire, thus exposing the left of the 2nd Brigade. The General Officer Commanding the 7th Division used his reserve, already posted on his flank, to restore the line; but, in the meantime, the 2nd Brigade, finding their left flank exposed, had been forced to withdraw. The right of the 7th Division thus advanced as the left of the 2nd Brigade went back, with the result that the right of the 7th Division was exposed, but managed to hold on to its old trenches till nightfall.

Meantime, on the Menin Road, a counter-attack delivered by the left of the 1st Division and the right of the 2nd Division against the right flank of the German line was completely successful, and by 2.30 p.m. Gheluvelt had been retaken with the bayonet, the 2nd Worcestershire Regiment being to the fore in this, admirably supported by the 42nd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. The left of the 7th Division, profiting by their capture of Gheluvelt, advanced almost to its original line; and connection between the 1st and 7th Divisions was re-established. The recapture of Gheluvelt released the 6th Cavalry Brigade, till then held in support of the 1st Division. Two regiments of this brigade were sent at once to clear the woods to the south-east, and close the gap in the line between the 7th Division and 2nd Brigade. They advanced with much dash, partly mounted and partly dismounted; and, surprising the enemy in the woods, succeeded in killing large numbers and materially helped to restore the line. About 5 p.m. the French Cavalry Brigade also came up to the cross-roads just east of Hooge, and at once sent forward a dismounted detachment to support our 7th Cavalry Brigade.

Throughout the day the extreme right and left of the First Corps' line held

fast, the left being only slightly engaged, while the right was heavily shelled and subjected to slight infantry attacks. In the evening the enemy were steadily driven back from the woods on the front of the 7th Division and 2nd Brigade; and by 10 p.m. the line as held in the morning had practically been reoccupied.

During the night touch was restored between the right of the 7th Division and left of the 2nd Brigade, and the Cavalry were withdrawn into reserve, the services of the French Cavalry being dispensed with.

As a result of the day's fighting eight hundred and seventy wounded were evacuated.

I was present with Sir Douglas Haig at Hooge between 2 and 3 o'clock on this day, when the 1st Division were retiring. I regard it as the most critical moment in the whole of this great battle. The rally of the 1st Division and the recapture of the village of Gheluvelt at such a time was fraught with momentous consequences. If any one unit can be singled out for especial praise it is the Worcesters.

Work of the Third and Cavalry Corps.

7. In the meantime the centre of my line, occupied by the Third and Cavalry Corps, was being heavily pressed by the enemy in ever-increasing force.

On the 20th October advanced posts of the 12th Brigade of the 4th Division, Third Corps, were forced to retire, and at dusk it was evident that the Germans were likely to make a determined attack. This ended in the occupation of Le Gheir by the enemy.

As the position of the Cavalry at St. Yves was thus endangered, a counter-attack was decided upon and planned by General Hunter-Weston and Lieutenant-Colonel Anley. This proved entirely successful, the Germans being driven back with great loss and the abandoned trenches reoccupied. Two hundred prisoners were taken and about forty of our prisoners released.

In these operations the staunchness of the King's Own Regiment and the Lancashire Fusiliers was most commendable. These two battalions were very well handled by Lieutenant-Colonel Butler of the Lancashire Fusiliers.

I am anxious to bring to special notice the excellent work done throughout this battle by the Third Corps under General Pulteney's command. Their position in the right central part of my line was of the utmost importance to the general success of the operations. Besides the very undue length of front which

the Corps was called upon to cover (some 12 or 13 miles), the position presented many weak spots, and was also astride of the river Lys, the right bank of which from Frelinghein downwards was strongly held by the enemy. It was impossible to provide adequate reserves, and the constant work in the trenches tried the endurance of officers and men to the utmost. That the Corps was invariably successful in repulsing the constant attacks, sometimes in great strength, made against them by day and by night is due entirely to the skilful manner in which the Corps was disposed by its Commander, who has told me of the able assistance he has received throughout from his Staff, and the ability and resource displayed by Divisional, Brigade, and Regimental leaders in using the ground and the means of defence at their disposal to the very best advantage.

The courage, tenacity, endurance, and cheerfulness of the men in such unparalleled circumstances are beyond all praise.

During the 22nd and 23rd and 24th October frequent attacks were made along the whole line of the Third Corps, and especially against the 16th Infantry Brigade; but on all occasions the enemy was thrown back with loss.

During the night of the 25th October the Leicestershire Regiment were forced from their trenches by shells blowing in the pits they were in; and after investigation by the General Officers Commanding the 16th and 18th Infantry Brigades it was decided to throw back the line temporarily in this neighbourhood.

On the evening of the 29th October the enemy made a sharp attack on Le Gheir, and on the line to the north of it, but were repulsed.

About midnight a very heavy attack developed against the 19th Infantry Brigade south of Croix Maréchal. A portion of the trenches of the Middlesex Regiment was gained by the enemy and held by him for some hours till recaptured with the assistance of the detachment from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders from Brigade Reserve. The enemy in the trenches were all bayoneted or captured. Later information from prisoners showed that there were twelve battalions opposite the 19th Brigade. Over two hundred dead Germans were left lying in front of the Brigade's trenches, and forty prisoners were taken.

On the evening of the 30th the line of the 11th Infantry Brigade in the neighbourhood of St. Yves was broken. A counter-attack carried out by Major Prowse with the Somerset Light Infantry restored the situation. For his services on this occasion this officer was recommended for special reward.

On the 31st October it became necessary for the 4th Division to take over the extreme right of the 1st Cavalry Division's trenches, although this measure

necessitated a still further extension of the line held by the Third Corps.

8. On October 20th, while engaged in the attempt to force the line of the river Lys, the Cavalry Corps was attacked from the south and east. In the evening the 1st Cavalry Division held the line St. Yves-Messines: the 2nd Cavalry Division from Messines through Garde Dieu along the Wambeck to Houthem and Kortewilde.

At 4 p.m. on the 21st October, a heavy attack was made on the 2nd Cavalry Division, which was compelled to fall back to the line Messines-9th kilo stone on the Warneton-Oostaverne Road-Hollebeke.

On the 22nd I directed the 7th Indian Infantry Brigade, less one battalion, to proceed to Wulverghem in support of the Cavalry Corps. General Allenby sent two battalions to Wytschaete and Voormezeele to be placed under the orders of General Gough, Commanding the 2nd Cavalry Division.

On the 23rd, 24th, and 25th several attacks were directed against the Cavalry Corps and repulsed with loss to the enemy.

On the 26th October I directed General Allenby to endeavour to regain a more forward line, moving in conjunction with the 7th Division. But the latter being apparently quite unable to take the offensive, the attempt had to be abandoned.

On 20th October heavy infantry attacks, supported by powerful artillery fire, developed against the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Divisions, especially against the trenches about Hollebeke, held by the 3rd Cavalry Brigade. At 1.30 p.m. this Brigade was forced to retire, and the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, less one regiment, was moved across from the 1st Cavalry Division to a point between Oostaverne and St. Eloi in support of the 2nd Cavalry Division.

The 1st Cavalry Division in the neighbourhood of Messines was also threatened by a heavy infantry column.

General Allenby still retained the two Indian Battalions of the 7th Indian Brigade, although they were in a somewhat exhausted condition.

After a close survey of the positions and consultations with the General Officer Commanding the Cavalry Corps, I directed four battalions of the Second Corps, which had lately been relieved from the trenches by the Indian Corps, to move to Neuve Eglise under General Shaw, in support of General Allenby.

The London Scottish Territorial Battalion was also sent to Neuve Eglise.

It now fell to the lot of the Cavalry Corps, which had been much weakened

by constant fighting, to oppose the advance of two nearly fresh German Army Corps for a period of over forty-eight hours, pending the arrival of a French reinforcement. Their action was completely successful. I propose to send shortly a more detailed account of the operation.

After the critical situation in front of the Cavalry Corps, which was ended by the arrival of the head of the French 16th Army Corps, the 2nd Cavalry Division was relieved by General Conneau's French Cavalry Corps and concentrated in the neighbourhood of Bailleul.

The 1st Cavalry Division continued to hold the line of trenches east of Wulverghem.

From that time to the date of this dispatch the Cavalry Divisions have relieved one another at intervals, and have supported by their artillery the attacks made by the French throughout that period on Hollebeke, Wytschaete, and Messines.

The Third Corps in its opposition on the right of the Cavalry Corps continued throughout the same period to repel constant attacks against its front, and suffered severely from the enemy's heavy artillery fire.

The artillery of the 4th Division constantly assisted the French in their attacks.

The General Officer Commanding Third Corps brings specially to my notice the excellent behaviour of the East Lancashire Regiment, the Hampshire Regiment, and the Somersetshire Light Infantry in these latter operations; and the skilful manner in which they were handled by General Hunter-Weston, Lieutenant-Colonel Butler, and the Battalion Commanders.

Work of Indian Corps.

9. The Lahore Division arrived in its concentration area in rear of the Second Corps on the 19th and 20th October.

I have already referred to the excellent work performed by the battalions of this Division which were supporting the Cavalry. The remainder of the Division from the 25th October onwards were heavily engaged in assisting the 7th Brigade of the Second Corps in fighting round Neuve Chapelle. Another brigade took over some ground previously held by the French 1st Cavalry Corps, and did excellent service.

On the 28th October especially the 47th Sikhs and the 20th and 21st

Companies of the 3rd Sappers and Miners distinguished themselves by their gallant conduct in the attack on Neuve Chapelle, losing heavily in officers and men.

After the arrival of the Meerut Division at Corps Headquarters the Indian Army Corps took over the line previously held by the Second Corps, which was then partially drawn back into reserve. Two and a half brigades of British Infantry and a large part of the Artillery of the Second Corps still remained to assist the Indian Corps in defence of this line. Two and a half battalions of these brigades were returned to the Second Corps when the Ferozepore Brigade joined the Indian Corps after its support of the Cavalry further north.

The Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade arrived in the area during the 1st and 2nd November, and the Jodhpur Lancers came about the same time. They were all temporarily attached to the Indian Corps.

Up to the date of the present dispatch the line held by the Indian Corps has been subjected to constant bombardment by the enemy's heavy artillery, followed up by infantry attacks.

On two occasions these attacks were severe.

On the 31st October the 8th Gurkha Rifles of the Bareilly Brigade were driven from their trenches, and on the 2nd November a serious attack was developed against a portion of the line west of Neuve Chapelle. On this occasion the line was to some extent pierced, and was consequently slightly bent back.

The situation was prevented from becoming serious by the excellent leadership displayed by Colonel Norie, of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles.

Since their arrival in this country, and their occupation of the line allotted to them, I have been much impressed by the initiative and resource displayed by the Indian troops. Some of the ruses they have employed to deceive the enemy have been attended with the best results, and have doubtless kept superior forces in front of them at bay.

The Corps of Indian Sappers and Miners have long enjoyed a high reputation for skill and resource. Without going into detail, I can confidently assert that throughout their work in this campaign they have fully justified that reputation.

The General Officer Commanding the Indian Army Corps describes the conduct and bearing of these troops in strange and new surroundings to have been highly satisfactory, and I am enabled, from my own observation, to fully corroborate his statement.

Honorary Major-General H.H. Sir Pratap Singh Bahadur, G.C.S.I., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., A.D.C., Maharaja-Regent of Jodhpur; Honorary Lieutenant H.H. The Maharaja of Jodhpur; Honorary Colonel H.H. Sir Ganga Singh Bahadur, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., A.D.C., Maharaja of Bikanir; Honorary Major H.H. Sir Madan Singh Bahadur, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., Maharaja-Dhiraj of Kishengarh; Honorary Captain The Honourable Malik Umar Hayat Khan, C.I.E., M.V.O., Tiwana; Honorary Lieutenant Raj-Kumar Hira Singh of Panna; Honorary Lieutenant Maharaj-Kumar Hitendra Narayan of Cooch Behar; Lieutenant Malik Mumtaz Mahomed Khan, Native Indian Land Forces; Resaldar Khwaja Mahomed Khan Bahadur, Queen Victoria's Own Corps of Guides; Honorary Captain Shah Mirza Beg, are serving with the Indian contingents.

Later Stages of the Battle of Ypres.

10. Whilst the whole of the line has continued to be heavily pressed, the enemy's principal efforts since the 1st November have been concentrated upon breaking through the line held by the First British and 9th French Corps, and thus gaining possession of the town of Ypres.

From the 2nd November onwards the 27th, the 15th, and parts of the Bavarian 13th and 2nd German Corps, besides other troops, were all directed against this northern line.

About the 10th instant, after several units of these Corps had been completely shattered in futile attacks, a division of the Prussian Guard, which had been operating in the neighbourhood of Arras, was moved up to this area with great speed and secrecy. Documents found on dead officers prove that the Guard had received the Emperor's special commands to break through and succeed where their comrades of the line had failed.

They took a leading part in the vigorous attacks made against the centre on the 11th and 12th; but, like their comrades, were repulsed with enormous loss.

Throughout this trying period Sir Douglas Haig, ably assisted by his Divisional and Brigade Commanders, held the line with marvellous tenacity and undaunted courage.

Words fail me to express the admiration I feel for their conduct, or my sense of the incalculable services they rendered. I venture to predict that their deeds during these days of stress and trial will furnish some of the most brilliant chapters which will be found in the military history of our time.

The First Corps was brilliantly supported by the 3rd Cavalry Division under

General Byng. Sir Douglas Haig has constantly brought this officer's eminent services to my notice. His troops were repeatedly called upon to restore the situation at critical points, and to fill gaps in the line caused by the tremendous losses which occurred.

Both Corps and Cavalry Division Commanders particularly bring to my notice the name of Brigadier-General Kavanagh, Commanding the 7th Cavalry Brigade, not only for his skill but his personal bravery and dash. This was particularly noticeable when the 7th Cavalry Brigade was brought up to support the French troops when the latter were driven back near the village of Klein Zillebeke on the night of the 7th November. On this occasion I regret to say Colonel Gordon Wilson, Commanding the Royal Horse Guards, and Major the Hon. Hugh Dawnay, Commanding the 2nd Life Guards, were killed.

In these two officers the Army has lost valuable cavalry leaders.

Another officer whose name was particularly mentioned to me was that of Brigadier-General FitzClarence, V.C. Commanding the 1st Guards Brigade. He was, unfortunately, killed in the night attack of the 11th November. His loss will be severely felt.

The First Corps Commander informs me that on many occasions Brigadier-General the Earl of Cavan, Commanding the 4th Guards Brigade, was conspicuous for the skill, coolness, and courage with which he led his troops, and for the successful manner in which he dealt with many critical situations.

I have more than once during this campaign brought forward the name of Major-General Bulfin to Your Lordship's notice. Up to the evening of the 2nd November, when he was somewhat severely wounded, his services continued to be of great value.

On the 5th November I dispatched eleven battalions of the Second Corps, all considerably reduced in strength, to relieve the infantry of the 7th Division, which was then brought back into general reserve.

Three more battalions of the same Corps, the London Scottish and Hertfordshire Battalions of Territorials, and the Somersetshire and Leicestershire Regiments of Yeomanry, were subsequently sent to reinforce the troops fighting to the east of Ypres.

General Byng in the case of the Yeomanry Cavalry Regiments and Sir Douglas in that of the Territorial Battalions speak in high terms of their conduct in the field and of the value of their support.

The battalions of the Second Corps took a conspicuous part in repulsing the

heavy attacks delivered against this part of the line. I was obliged to dispatch them immediately after their trying experiences in the southern part of the line and when they had had a very insufficient period of rest; and, although they gallantly maintained these northern positions until relieved by the French, they were reduced to a condition of extreme exhaustion.

General Remarks.

The work performed by the Royal Flying Corps has continued to prove of the utmost value to the success of the operations.

I do not consider it advisable in this dispatch to go into any detail as regards the duties assigned to the Corps and the nature of their work, but almost every day new methods for employing them, both strategically and tactically, are discovered and put into practice.

The development of their use and employment has indeed been quite extraordinary, and I feel sure that no effort should be spared to increase their numbers and perfect their equipment and efficiency.

In the period covered by this dispatch Territorial troops have been used for the first time in the Army under my command.

The units actually engaged have been the Northumberland, Northamptonshire, North Somerset, Leicestershire, and Oxfordshire Regiments of Yeomanry Cavalry; and the London Scottish, Hertfordshire, Honourable Artillery Company, and the Queen's Westminster Battalions of Territorial Infantry.

The conduct and bearing of these units under fire, and the efficient manner in which they carried out the various duties assigned to them, have imbued me with the highest hope as to the value and help of Territorial troops generally.

Units which I have mentioned above, other than these, as having been also engaged, have by their conduct fully justified these hopes.

Regiments and battalions as they arrive come into a temporary camp of instruction, which is formed at Headquarters, where they are closely inspected, their equipment examined, so far as possible perfected, and such instruction as can be given to them in the brief time available in the use of machine guns, etc., is imparted.

Several units have now been sent up to the front besides those I have already named, but have not yet been engaged.

I am anxious in this dispatch to bring to Your Lordship's special notice the splendid work which has been done throughout the campaign by the Cyclists of the Signal Corps.

Carrying dispatches and messages at all hours of the day and night in every kind of weather, and often traversing bad roads blocked with transport, they have been conspicuously successful in maintaining an extraordinary degree of efficiency in the service of communications.

Many casualties have occurred in their ranks, but no amount of difficulty or danger has ever checked the energy and ardour which has distinguished their Corps throughout the operations.

11. As I close this dispatch there are signs in evidence that we are possibly in the last stages of the battle of Ypres-Armentières.

For several days past the enemy's artillery fire has considerably slackened, and infantry attack has practically ceased.

In remarking upon the general military situation of the Allies as it appears to me at the present moment, it does not seem to be clearly understood that the operations in which we have been engaged embrace nearly all the Continent of Central Europe from East to West. The combined French, Belgian, and British Armies in the West, and the Russian Army in the East are opposed to the united forces of Germany and Austria acting as a combined army between us.

Our enemies elected at the commencement of the war to throw the weight of their forces against the armies in the West, and to detach only a comparatively weak force, composed of very few first-line troops and several corps of the second and third lines, to stem the Russian advance till the Western Forces could be completely defeated and overwhelmed.

Their strength enabled them from the outset to throw greatly superior forces against us in the West. This precluded the possibility of our taking a vigorous offensive, except when the miscalculations and mistakes made by their commanders opened up special opportunities for a successful attack and pursuit.

The battle of the Marne was an example of this, as was also our advance from St. Omer and Hazebrouck to the line of the Lys at the commencement of this battle. The rôle which our armies in the West have consequently been called upon to fulfil has been to occupy strong defensive positions, holding the ground gained and inviting the enemy's attack; to throw these attacks back, causing the enemy heavy losses in his retreat and following him up with powerful and successful counter-attacks to complete his discomfiture.

The value and significance of the rôle fulfilled since the commencement of hostilities by the Allied Forces in the West lies in the fact that at the moment when the Eastern Provinces of Germany are in imminent danger of being overrun by the numerous and powerful armies of Russia, nearly the whole of the active army of Germany is tied down to a line of trenches extending from the Fortress of Verdun on the Alsatian Frontier round to the sea at Nieuport, east of Dunkirk (a distance of 260 miles), where they are held, much reduced in numbers and *morale* by the successful action of our troops in the West.

I cannot speak too highly of the valuable services rendered by the Royal Artillery throughout the battle.

In spite of the fact that the enemy has brought up guns in support of his attacks of great range and shell power ours have succeeded throughout in preventing the enemy from establishing anything in the nature of an artillery superiority. The skill, courage, and energy displayed by their commanders have been very marked.

The General Officer Commanding Third Corps, who had special means of judging, makes mention of the splendid work performed by a number of young Artillery Officers, who in the most gallant manner pressed forward in the vicinity of the firing line in order that their guns may be able to shoot at the right targets at the right moment.

The Royal Engineers have, as usual, been indefatigable in their efforts to assist the infantry in field fortification and trench work.

I deeply regret the heavy casualties which we have suffered; but the nature of the fighting has been very desperate, and we have been assailed by vastly superior numbers. I have every reason to know that throughout the course of the battle we have placed at least three times as many of the enemy *hors de combat* in dead, wounded, and prisoners.

Throughout these operations General Foch has strained his resources to the utmost to afford me all the support he could; and an expression of my warm gratitude is also due to General d'Urbal, Commanding the 8th French Army on my left, and General Maud'huy, Commanding the 10th French Army on my right.

I have many recommendations to bring to Your Lordship's notice for gallant and distinguished service performed by officers and men in the period under report. These will be submitted shortly, as soon as they can be collected.

I have the honour to be,
Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

(Signed) J. D. P. FRENCH, Field-Marshal,
Commander-in-Chief,
the British Forces in the Field.

APPENDIX II.

THE WORK OF THE THIRD CAVALRY DIVISION.

The following Special Order of the Day has been issued by Major-General the Hon. J. H. G. Byng, C.B., M.V.O., commanding the 3rd Cavalry Division:—

In circulating the short diary of the operations in which the Division has taken part, I wish to take the opportunity of conveying to all ranks my gratitude and admiration for their conduct. With little or no experience of trench work, exposed to every vagary of weather, and under a persistent and concentrated shelling, the regimental officers, N.C.O.'s, and men have undertaken this most arduous and demoralizing work with a keenness and courage which I place on record with the greatest pride.

With the exception of October 30th, when the Zandvoorde trenches, held by the Household Cavalry, and the Château de Hollebeke, held by a Squadron of the Royal Dragoons, were attacked by a German Army Corps, no trench has been lost and no ground evacuated. On eight occasions Brigades were sent in support of the line which had been partially penetrated, and on nearly every occasion either I or one of the Brigadiers have received the thanks and congratulations of the Commander of that zone of defence for the gallant behaviour of our troops.

The 6th Cavalry Brigade may well be proud of their action at St. Pieter on October 19; Kruiseik, October 26; Château de Hollebeke, October 30; Hooge Woods, October 31; and the Zillebeke trenches on November 17; while the actions of the 7th Cavalry Brigade at Oostnieuwkerke, October 16; Moorslede, October 19; Zonnebeke, October 21; Zandvoorde, October 26; Zandvoorde trenches, October 30; Veldhoek, November 2; Klein Zillebeke, November 6, have been the subject of official recognition and well-merited praise.

Each Regiment, Battery, R.E., and Signal Squadron and Administrative and Medical Service has more than maintained its historic reputation, and during the last six weeks has added to the renown of the British soldier as a magnificent fighter, and it is with the utmost confidence in their steadfast courage that I

contemplate a continuance of the campaign until our enemy receives his final overthrow.

(Signed) J. BYNG,
Major-General,
Commanding 3rd Cavalry Division.

November 23, 1914.

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS.

Oct. 6.—After mobilizing at Ludgershall Camp the division was railed to Southampton, and sailed on October 6 for Ostend and Zeebrugge, where it disembarked early on the 8th, and came under the orders of the IV. Corps.

Oct. 9.—On the 9th the division concentrated at Bruges, marching from there to Thourout (6th Cavalry Brigade) and Ruddervoorde (7th Cavalry Brigade) on the following day.

Oct. 11.—On the 11th divisional headquarters, which had stayed in Oostcamp on the previous night, moved to Thourout. The armoured motors, which had joined the division on the previous day, succeeded in drawing first blood, capturing two officers and five men in the direction of Ypres.

Oct. 12.—On the 12th headquarters moved to Roulers, the 6th Cavalry Brigade to the line Oostnieuwkerke-Roulers, and the 7th Cavalry Brigade to Rumbeke-Iseghem.

Oct. 13.—The enemy were reported to have fought an action near Hazebrouck and to be retiring towards Bailleul, and our 2nd Cavalry Division to have captured a place some 10 miles south-west of Ypres. Accordingly, on the 13th, the division reconnoitred towards Ypres and Menin with patrols towards Comines and Wervicq, but no signs of the enemy were found, and after a long day, during which many of the troops must have done at least 50 miles, the division withdrew to the line Dadizeele-Iseghem, the 7th Infantry Division having in the meantime moved to Roulers.

Clearing the Country round Ypres.

Oct. 14.—Considerable hostile forces, believed to be in the 12th Corps, were reported to be moving from the vicinity of Bailleul towards Wervicq and Menin. In consequence of this the division, followed by the 7th Infantry

Division, was ordered to move on Ypres and to reconnoitre to the south-west. This necessitated a very early start. The division reached Ypres at 9 a.m., and the 6th Cavalry Brigade, which formed the advanced guard, moved on toward the line La Clytte-Lindenhook. Shortly after leaving Ypres this brigade, assisted by rifle and revolver fire from everybody in Ypres, succeeded in bringing down a Taube aeroplane. Its pilot and observer escaped into some woods, but were captured later on in the day. The advance guard, assisted by the armed motors, pushed on towards Neuve Eglise and succeeded in killing or capturing a considerable number of the enemy during the day, but no formed bodies were met with, though heavy firing was heard from the direction of Bailleul. At dusk the division moved into billets at Kemmel (7th Cavalry Brigade) and Wytschaete (remainder of the division) in touch with the 2nd Cavalry Division, with whom communication had been established during the day.

Oct. 16.—No movement took place on the 15th, but on the following day the division, with the 7th Cavalry Brigade as advance guard, moved via Ypres and Wieltje to the line Bixschoote-Poelcapelle. The enemy were reported in con siderable numbers in the Forêt d'Houthulst and Oostnieuwkerke, and a patrol of the 2nd Life Guards was obliged to withdraw from Staden. Intermittent fighting took place during the afternoon, and at dusk French troops, having relieved the 7th Cavalry Brigade, the division moved into billets at Passchendaele (7th Cavalry Brigade), Nieuwemolen (6th Cavalry Brigade), and Zonnebeke (Divisional Troops). The 7th Cavalry Brigade are known to have accounted for some 10 or 12 killed during the day, and it is probable that considerably more were wounded.

Capture of Ledeghem.

Oct. 19.—Our outposts remained on the line Westroosebeke (in touch with the French) Moorslede-Broogenbroodhoek (in touch with our 7th Infantry Division) until the 19th, when the division was ordered to operate towards the Roulers-Menin road in order to cover the left flank of the 7th Infantry Division in a projected attack against Menin. By 10 a.m. the 7th Cavalry Brigade was in touch with considerable bodies of the enemy advancing from Roulers, and had to fall back some three-quarters of a mile to a stronger position. "K" Battery, R.H.A., which had been attached to the brigade, came into action north of Moorslede, and was able to give the brigade great assistance during a most resolute defence against considerably greater numbers. Meanwhile the 6th Cavalry Brigade, ably supported by "C" Battery, which had been posted to the division on the previous day, advanced from St. Pieter, and after a brisk little

action captured Ledeghem and Rolleghem-capelle. The enemy continued to press on from Roulers in large numbers, and it was found necessary to withdraw the 7th Cavalry Brigade to the high ground east of Moorslede. As this would leave the 6th Cavalry Brigade somewhat isolated, and the advance of considerable hostile forces was reported from Courtrai, the 6th Cavalry Brigade was ordered to fall back gradually on Moorslede, and thence to withdraw to billets at Poelcapelle. The 7th Cavalry Brigade, having covered the withdrawal of the 6th Cavalry Brigade, eventually retired under a heavy shell fire to Zonnebeke, where it went into billets, the French taking over Passchendaele. Considering the amount of opposition encountered during the day against largely superior numbers our casualties were small, whilst there is no doubt that the enemy suffered very severely at our hands. This smallness was largely due to the skilful manner in which each brigade was withdrawn.

Moved to Right of 7th Division.

Oct. 20.—The following morning the division took up a defensive position in support of the French on the left of the 7th Division on the line Passchendaele-Westroosebeke. Desultory firing commenced soon after 8 a.m., and was succeeded by an artillery duel until noon. The Germans were reported to be advancing in large numbers, but the situation remained perfectly satisfactory until the French troops were ordered to withdraw, thus exposing our flanks and obliging the division to swing back its left to the line Poelcapelle-St. Julien-Zonnebeke. Later in the afternoon Poelcapelle was subjected to a heavy shell fire, which caused the French to withdraw and obliged us to fall back still farther to Langemarck. During the evening (Oct. 21) the 4th Guards Brigade arrived and took over our line, and the —— moved early next morning to the vicinity of Hooge. Shortly after arriving there it was reported that the 7th Infantry Division was being very heavily attacked in Zonnebeke, and the 7th Cavalry Brigade had to be sent to its assistance. This support enabled the 22nd Infantry Brigade to maintain its position on the outskirts of the village, where its left flank had been seriously endangered. About 1.30 p.m. news was received that the 2nd Cavalry Division was having a bad time, and that a gap had occurred on its left in the vicinity of Zandvoorde. The 6th Cavalry Brigade hurried off to fill this and occupied the two canal crossings north of Hollebeke. Later in the evening, on a further readjustment of the line, this brigade moved a little to its left and occupied the line Zandvoorde to the canal by the Château de Hollebeke, the 7th Cavalry Brigade billeting at Voormezeele and St. Eloi.

Oct. 22.—On the 22nd the 7th Cavalry Brigade moved to Klein Zillebeke,

and for the next few days little change occurred in the situation, one brigade occupying the Zandvoorde trenches and the other brigade being held in reserve at Klein Zillebeke, the trenches being more or less severely shelled each day, with occasional infantry attacks as well. Snipers also caused considerable annoyance.

Oct. 26.—During the afternoon of the 26th the 7th Cavalry Brigade, which was in reserve on that day, was ordered to demonstrate towards Kruiseik with the idea of relieving the pressure against the right flank of the 7th Division, which was causing the 20th Infantry Brigade to withdraw. This operation was most smartly carried out by the Royal Horse Guards under Colonel Wilson (since killed in action). The conduct of Captain Lord Alastair Innes-Ker's squadron, which formed the advance guard, was in particular brought to the notice of the General Officer Commanding. Trooper Nevin was subsequently awarded the Distinguished Conduct medal for his gallantry in this action.

Oct. 27.—On the 27th, owing to the reorganization of the 7th Division on our left (which was placed under the orders of the I. Corps from this date), it was found necessary to extend our line slightly to the north-east.

Oct. 29.—On the 29th the 7th Division attacked on the front Kruiseik cross-roads south-east of Cheluvelt to endeavour to regain some trenches which had been lost the previous day. The 6th Cavalry Brigade supported the right flank of this attack most ably, and in turn was assisted by covering fire from the 7th Cavalry Brigade trenches. The enemy, who were found to be part of the XXIV. Army Corps from Lille, appeared to have suffered heavy casualties during the above operation.

The Zandvoorde Ridge.

Oct. 30.—On the 30th a terrific artillery fire was opened against the Zandvoorde ridge. The 7th Cavalry Brigade held on most gallantly for some time, but many of the trenches having been completely blown in, it was eventually found necessary to withdraw it through the 6th (which had occupied the reserve trenches) to Klein Zillebeke. At about the same time the Cavalry Corps commander moved the Greys and the 3rd and 4th Hussars up to the same place as a reserve. The enemy continued to press his attack, a large number of guns being brought into action against us, and the 6th Cavalry Brigade deserve congratulating on their stubborn defence, in which they were assisted by the Greys and the 3rd Hussars on their left, and by the 4th Hussars on the right. Little change took place in the situation, and at dusk our line was taken over by

the 4th Infantry Brigade (Lord Cavan).

Oct. 31.—Soon after 8 a.m. the division concentrated in the vicinity of Hooge, where it formed a mobile reserve to the 1st Corps, under whose orders it had been placed. Zillebeke, where our headquarters had been since the 22nd, came in for a heavy shelling before our transport had succeeded in clearing it. During this and the subsequent days the enemy succeeded in reducing it almost to ruins. Shortly after 9 a.m. a report from the Cavalry Corps that it was being heavily attacked caused the 7th Cavalry Brigade to be sent off to its assistance, and it remained until nightfall holding the line south of the canal near Hollebeke, in conjunction with the 4th Hussars, when (leaving two squadrons in the trenches) it withdrew to Verbranden Molen. Meanwhile, a most determined attack had been made against Gheluvelt, and portions of our infantry had been forced to retire. The 6th Cavalry Brigade accordingly occupied a line along the Veldhoek Road, ready to move up in support if necessary. Later in the afternoon it was found possible to withdraw this brigade, and employ it in assisting our infantry to clear the woods south of Hooge, where strong parties of the enemy had succeeded in penetrating. Dismounting under cover of the wood, the brigade advanced rapidly, and had a short, but most successful, engagement, and drove the enemy back. A considerable number of Germans were killed and wounded, and only darkness prevented a more decisive success. From reports received from Army Headquarters, the general result of the day's operations was most satisfactory. The troops opposed to us would appear to be drawn from the XV. Corps, II. Bavarian Army Corps, and the 26th Division, whilst the cavalry originally operating against Zandvoorde had been replaced by infantry.

Nov. 1.—On November 1 the enemy resumed their attack against our line, and it was found necessary to send the 6th Cavalry Brigade to support the 2nd Infantry Brigade (General Bulfin), south of Hooge, the 7th subsequently moving up to Lord Cavan's support and prolonging the line up to Klein Zillebeke. The fight gradually died down, and both brigades were able to withdraw to the neighbourhood of Hooge for the night.

Nov. 2.—The situation on the 2nd remained unchanged, and the attack against our line was resumed. About 1.30 p.m. the 7th Cavalry Brigade galloped up under a brisk shell fire to support a threatened attack near Veldhoek, but neither brigade became seriously engaged, and at dusk they were withdrawn to Hooge and the farms south of it. During the next few days the situation continued to improve, and but little of material interest occurred. On the night of the 5th-6th, the 6th Cavalry Brigade took over part of the trenches from the 3rd Infantry Brigade, which had had a rough time during the preceding few days.

Nov. 6.—All went well until the afternoon of the 6th, when news was received that the French on Lord Cavan's right (between Klein Zillebeke and the canal) were falling back. The 7th Cavalry Brigade at once hurried up in support. General Kavanagh deployed the 1st and 2nd Life Guards north of the Zillebeke-Klein Zillebeke Road, with the Blues in reserve behind the centre. His advance encouraged the French to resume the offensive, and all went well until near Klein Zillebeke, when the brigade was halted to allow the French to reoccupy their trenches along the road running north-east from that place through the woods. Suddenly the French returned at a run, reporting an advance of the Germans in strength. General Kavanagh doubled a couple of squadrons across the road to endeavour to stem the rush, and suffered a certain number of casualties in so doing. Considerable confusion ensued, and there was a *mêlée* of English, French, and Germans. The 7th Cavalry Brigade was obliged to retire some 150 yards to the reserve trenches before it could extricate itself. It occupied these trenches and protected Lord Cavan's right until he was able, with the assistance of the 22nd Infantry Brigade, to re-establish his line, the 1st Life Guards not being relieved until about 2 a.m. Lord Cavan reported that the brigade had behaved in a most gallant manner, and that its prompt and vigorous action had saved what threatened to be a very critical situation. Both Sir John French and Sir Douglas Haig thanked General Kavanagh for the way in which the operation had been carried out. Our casualties were severe, amongst others, the Commanding Officers of the 2nd Life Guards (Colonel H. Dawnay) and that of the Blues (Colonel Wilson) were both killed while leading their regiments, their gallantry being subsequently brought to the notice of the General Officer Commanding. It is satisfactory to know that the German casualties were very severe.

Nov. 7.—Lord Cavan, again assisted by the 7th Cavalry Brigade, counter-attacked the Germans at 5.30 a.m. the following day, and captured three machine guns, but was unable to hold on to the forward line of trenches. From November 8 the 3rd Cavalry Division took over the right section of Lord Cavan's trenches with 500 rifles, and also furnished for him a local reserve of 300 rifles, who bivouacked in support trenches near his headquarters. These men were all under his command. During the next few nights the 3rd Field Squadron, R.E., put in some excellent work improving and strengthening the trenches, and by day assisted the men to improvise shelters with hurdles, etc.

Nov. 11.—Little of interest occurred until the 11th, when the line was heavily attacked by fresh troops, amongst whom were portions of the Guards

Corps. With the exception of a small portion of the line near the Polygon Wood, no ground was lost, and all attacks were beaten back with heavy loss to the enemy. The behaviour of our troops in this attack was recognized by the Commander-in-Chief in a complimentary telegram.

The Battle dies away.

Nov. 13.—During the next few days there was little change in the situation, the enemy contenting themselves with shelling our trenches and the ground in rear. They had apparently been informed of the bivouac of the 6th Cavalry Brigade, for a sudden shrapnel fire on this area on the 13th resulted in 68 casualties amongst the horses; luckily, only two or three men were hit. The arrival of the North Somerset and Leicestershire Yeomanry now permitted of arrangements being made whereby the brigade not on duty could obtain more rest and all horses kept in a safer area. The brigade on duty was normally to find 800 rifles for the trenches and Lord Cavan's reserve, and 400 as a corps reserve, accommodated as far as possible in dug-outs in the railway cutting near Hooge. The other brigade was to be kept as a mobile reserve, if possible west of Ypres. On the 15th, however, in order to assist certain infantry units, which were reduced to skeleton battalions, the 6th Cavalry Brigade was obliged to take over an extra section of the trenches and find 1,200 rifles. The corps reserve had therefore to be found by the 7th Cavalry Brigade.

Nov. 17.—On the 17th our trenches were very heavily shelled, those occupied by the 3rd Dragoon Guards suffering in particular. The bombardment was succeeded by two distinct infantry attacks, the first at 1 p.m. and the second at 4 p.m. Although the enemy succeeded in getting within a few yards of our trenches they were everywhere beaten back with heavy losses. The excellent conduct of the 6th Cavalry Brigade and especially of the North Somerset Yeomanry, who were new to the game, called forth a congratulatory telegram from Sir Douglas Haig. On the night of the 17th the 7th Cavalry Brigade took over the trenches, which were again heavily shelled on the 18th-19th.

Nov. 20.—On the 20th Headquarters, most of the divisional troops, and the 6th Cavalry Brigade moved back to the vicinity of Hazebrouck, the remainder of the division following on the 21st after handing over the trenches to the French.

W. A. FEATHERSTONHAUGH,
Major, General Staff, 3rd Cavalry Division.

Hazebrouck, *November 22, 1914.*

APPENDIX III.

THE BATTLE OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS.

Admiral Sturdee's Dispatch.

Admiralty, *3rd March, 1915*.

The following dispatch has been received from Vice-Admiral Sir F. C. Doveton-Sturdee, K.C.B., C.V.O., C.M.G., reporting the action off the Falkland Islands on Tuesday, the 8th of December, 1914:—

"Invincible" at Sea,
19th December, 1914.

Sir,—I have the honour to forward a report on the action which took place on 8th December, 1914, against a German Squadron off the Falkland Islands.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
F. C. D. STURDEE,
Vice-Admiral, Commander-in-Chief.

The Secretary, Admiralty.

(*A.*)— Preliminary Movements.

The squadron, consisting of H.M. ships *Invincible*, flying my flag, Flag Captain Percy T. H. Beamish; *Inflexible*, Captain Richard F. Phillimore; *Carnarvon*, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Archibald P. Stoddart, Flag Captain Harry L. d'E. Skipwith; *Cornwall*, Captain Walter M. Ellerton; *Kent*, Captain John D. Allen; *Glasgow*, Captain John Luce; *Bristol*, Captain Basil H. Fanshawe; and *Macedonia*, Captain Bertram S. Evans, arrived at Port Stanley, Falkland Islands, at 10.30 a.m. on Monday, the 7th December 1914. Coaling was commenced at once, in order that the ships should be ready to resume the

search for the enemy's squadron the next evening, the 8th December.

At 8 a.m. on Tuesday, the 8th December, a signal was received from the signal station on shore:—

> "A four-funnel and two-funnel man-of-war in sight from Sapper Hill, steering northwards."

At this time the positions of the various ships of the squadron were as follows:—

Macedonia: At anchor as look-out ship.

Kent (guard ship): At anchor in Port William.

Invincible and *Inflexible*: In Port William.

Carnarvon: In Port William.

Cornwall: In Port William.

Glasgow: In Port Stanley.

Bristol: In Port Stanley.

The *Kent* was at once ordered to weigh, and a general signal was made to raise steam for full speed.

At 8.20 a.m. the signal station reported another column of smoke in sight to the southward, and at 8.45 a.m. the *Kent* passed down the harbour and took up a station at the entrance.

The *Canopus*, Captain Heathcoat S. Grant, reported at 8.47 a.m. that the first two ships were 8 miles off, and that the smoke reported at 8.20 a.m. appeared to be the smoke of two ships about 20 miles off.

At 8.50 a.m. the signal station reported a further column of smoke in sight to the southward.

The *Macedonia* was ordered to weigh anchor on the inner side of the other ships, and await orders.

At 9.20 a.m. the two leading ships of the enemy (*Gneisenau* and *Nürnberg*), with guns trained on the wireless station, came within range of the *Canopus*, who opened fire at them across the low land at a range of 11,000 yards. The enemy at once hoisted their colours and turned away. At this time the masts and smoke of the enemy were visible from the upper bridge of the *Invincible* at a range of approximately 17,000 yards across the low land to the south of Port William.

A few minutes later the two cruisers altered course to port, as though to close the *Kent* at the entrance to the harbour, but about this time it seems that the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* were seen over the land, as the enemy at once altered course and increased speed to join their consorts.

The *Glasgow* weighed and proceeded at 9.40 a.m. with orders to join the *Kent* and observe the enemy's movements.

At 9.45 a.m. the squadron—less the *Bristol*—weighed, and proceeded out of harbour in the following order:—*Carnarvon*, *Inflexible*, *Invincible*, and *Cornwall*. On passing Cape Pembroke Light, the five ships of the enemy appeared clearly in sight to the south-east, hull down. The visibility was at its maximum, the sea was calm, with a bright sun, a clear sky, and a light breeze from the north-west.

At 10.20 a.m. the signal for a general chase was made. The battle cruisers quickly passed ahead of the *Carnarvon* and overtook the *Kent*. The *Glasgow* was ordered to keep two miles from the *Invincible*, and the *Inflexible* was stationed on the starboard quarter of the flagship. Speed was eased to 20 knots at 11.15 a.m. to enable the other cruisers to get into station.

At this time the enemy's funnels and bridges showed just above the horizon.

Information was received from the *Bristol* at 11.27 a.m. that three enemy ships had appeared off Port Pleasant, probably colliers or transports. The *Bristol* was therefore directed to take the *Macedonia* under his orders and destroy transports.

The enemy were still maintaining their distance, and I decided, at 12.20 p.m., to attack with the two battle cruisers and the *Glasgow*.

At 12.47 p.m. the signal to "Open fire and engage the enemy" was made.

The *Inflexible* opened fire at 12.55 p.m. from her fore turret at the right-hand ship of the enemy, a light cruiser; a few minutes later the *Invincible* opened fire at the same ship.

The deliberate fire from a range of 16,500 to 15,000 yards at the right-hand light cruiser, who was dropping astern, became too threatening, and when a shell fell close alongside her at 1.20 p.m. she (the *Leipzig*) turned away, with the *Nürnberg* and *Dresden* to the south-west. These light cruisers were at once followed by the *Kent*, *Glasgow*, and *Cornwall*, in accordance with my instructions.

The action finally developed into three separate encounters, besides the

subsidiary one dealing with the threatened landing.

(*B.*)— Action with the Armoured Cruisers.

The fire of the battle cruisers was directed on the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. The effect of this was quickly seen, when at 1.25 p.m., with the *Scharnhorst* leading, they turned about 7 points to port in succession into line ahead and opened fire at 1.30 p.m. Shortly afterwards speed was eased to 24 knots, and the battle cruisers were ordered to turn together, bringing them into line ahead, with the *Invincible* leading.

The range was about 13,500 yards at the final turn, and increased, until, at 2 p.m., it had reached 16,450 yards.

The enemy then (2.10 p.m.) turned away about 10 points to starboard and a second chase ensued, until, at 2.45 p.m., the battle cruisers again opened fire; this caused the enemy, at 2.53 p.m., to turn into line ahead to port and open fire at 2.55 p.m.

The *Scharnhorst* caught fire forward, but not seriously, and her fire slackened perceptibly; the *Gneisenau* was badly hit by the *Inflexible*.

At 3.30 p.m. the *Scharnhorst* led round about 10 points to starboard; just previously her fire had slackened perceptibly, and one shell had shot away her third funnel; some guns were not firing, and it would appear that the turn was dictated by a desire to bring her starboard guns into action. The effect of the fire on the *Scharnhorst* became more and more apparent in consequence of smoke from fires, and also escaping steam; at times a shell would cause a large hole to appear in her side, through which could be seen a dull red glow of flame. At 4.04 p.m. the *Scharnhorst*, whose flag remained flying to the last, suddenly listed heavily to port, and within a minute it became clear that she was a doomed ship; for the list increased very rapidly until she lay on her beam ends, and at 4.17 p.m. she disappeared.

The *Gneisenau* passed on the far side of her late flagship, and continued a determined but ineffectual effort to fight the two battle cruisers.

At 5.08 p.m. the forward funnel was knocked over and remained resting against the second funnel. She was evidently in serious straits, and her fire slackened very much.

At 5.15 p.m. one of the *Gneisenau's* shells struck the *Invincible*; this was her last effective effort.

At 5.30 p.m. she turned towards the flagship with a heavy list to starboard, and appeared stopped, with steam pouring from her escape pipes and smoke from shell and fires rising everywhere. About this time I ordered the signal "Cease fire," but before it was hoisted the *Gneisenau* opened fire again, and continued to fire from time to time with a single gun.

At 5.40 p.m. the three ships closed in on the *Gneisenau*, and, at this time, the flag flying at her fore truck was apparently hauled down, but the flag at the peak continued flying.

At 5.50 p.m. "Cease fire" was made.

At 6 p.m. the *Gneisenau* heeled over very suddenly, showing the men gathered on her decks and then walking on her side as she lay for a minute on her beam ends before sinking.

The prisoners of war from the *Gneisenau* report that, by the time the ammunition was expended, some 600 men had been killed and wounded. The surviving officers and men were all ordered on deck and told to provide themselves with hammocks and any articles that could support them in the water.

When the ship capsized and sank there were probably some 200 unwounded survivors in the water, but, owing to the shock of the cold water, many were drowned within sight of the boats and ship.

Every effort was made to save life as quickly as possible, both by boats and from the ships; life-buoys were thrown and ropes lowered, but only a proportion could be rescued. The *Invincible* alone rescued 108 men, 14 of whom were found to be dead after being brought on board; these men were buried at sea the following day with full military honours.

(*C.*)— Action with the Light Cruisers.

At about 1 p.m., when the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* turned to port to engage the *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, the enemy's light cruisers turned to starboard to escape; the *Dresden* was leading and the *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig* followed on each quarter.

In accordance with my instructions, the *Glasgow*, *Kent*, and *Cornwall* at once went in chase of these ships; the *Carnarvon*, whose speed was insufficient to overtake them, closed the battle cruisers.

The *Glasgow* drew well ahead of the *Cornwall* and *Kent*, and at 3 p.m. shots were exchanged with the *Leipzig* at 12,000 yards. The *Glasgow's* object

was to endeavour to outrange the *Leipzig* with her 6-inch guns and thus cause her to alter course and give the *Cornwall* and *Kent* a chance of coming into action.

At 4.17 p.m. the *Cornwall* opened fire, also on the *Leipzig*.

At 7.17 p.m. the *Leipzig* was on fire fore and aft, and the *Cornwall* and *Glasgow* ceased fire.

The *Leipzig* turned over on her port side and disappeared at 9 p.m. Seven officers and eleven men were saved.

At 3.36 p.m. the *Cornwall* ordered the *Kent* to engage the *Nürnberg*, the nearest cruiser to her.

Owing to the excellent and strenuous efforts of the engine room department, the *Kent* was able to get within range of the *Nürnberg* at 5 p.m. At 6.35 p.m. the *Nürnberg* was on fire forward and ceased firing. The *Kent* also ceased firing and closed to 3,300 yards; as the colours were still observed to be flying in the *Nürnberg*, the *Kent* opened fire again. Fire was finally stopped five minutes later on the colours being hauled down, and every preparation was made to save life. The *Nürnberg* sank at 7.27 p.m., and, as she sank, a group of men were waving a German ensign attached to a staff. Twelve men were rescued, but only seven survived.

The *Kent* had four killed and twelve wounded, mostly caused by one shell.

During the time the three cruisers were engaged with the *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig*, the *Dresden*, who was beyond her consorts, effected her escape owing to her superior speed. The *Glasgow* was the only cruiser with sufficient speed to have had any chance of success. However, she was fully employed in engaging the *Leipzig* for over an hour before either the *Cornwall* or *Kent* could come up and get within range. During this time the *Dresden* was able to increase her distance and get out of sight.

The weather changed after 4 p.m., and the visibility was much reduced; further, the sky was overcast and cloudy thus assisting the *Dresden* to get away unobserved.

(*D.*)— Action with the Enemy's Transports.

A report was received at 11.27 a.m. from H.M.S. *Bristol* that three ships of the enemy, probably transports or colliers, had appeared off Port Pleasant. The *Bristol* was ordered to take the *Macedonia* under his orders and destroy the

transports.

H.M.S. *Macedonia* reports that only two ships, steamships *Baden* and *Santa Isabel*, were present; both ships were sunk after the removal of the crew.

I have pleasure in reporting that the officers and men under my orders carried out their duties with admirable efficiency and coolness, and great credit is due to the Engineer Officers of all the ships, several of which exceeded their normal full speed.

The names of the following are specially mentioned:—

OFFICERS.

Commander Richard Herbert Denny Townsend, H.M.S. *Invincible*.

Commander Arthur Edward Frederick Bedford, H.M.S. *Kent*.

Lieutenant-Commander Wilfred Arthur Thompson, H.M.S. *Glasgow*.

Lieutenant-Commander Hubert Edward Danreuther, First and Gunnery Lieutenant, H.M.S. *Invincible*.

Engineer-Commander George Edward Andrew, H.M.S. *Kent*.

Engineer-Commander Edward John Weeks, H.M.S. *Invincible*.

Paymaster Cyril Sheldon Johnson, H.M.S. *Invincible*.

Carpenter Thomas Andrew Walls, H.M.S. *Invincible*.

Carpenter William Henry Venning, H.M.S. *Kent*.

Carpenter George Henry Egford, H.M.S. *Cornwall*.

PETTY OFFICERS AND MEN.

Chief P.O. D. Leighton, O.N. 124238, H.M.S. *Kent*.

P.O., 2nd Class, M. J. Walton (R.F.R., A. 1756), O.N. 118358, H.M.S. *Kent*.

Leading Seaman F. S. Martin, O.N. 233301, H.M.S. *Invincible*, Gunner's Mate, Gunlayer, 1st Class.

Signalman F. Glover, O.N. 225731, H.M.S. *Cornwall*.

Chief E.R. Artificer, 2nd Class, J. G. Hill, O.N. 269646, H.M.S. *Cornwall*.

Acting Chief E.R. Artificer, 2nd Class, R. Snowdon, O.N. 270654, H.M.S. *Inflexible*.

E.R. Artificer, 1st Class, G. H. F. McCarten, O.N. 270023, H.M.S. *Invincible*.

Stoker P.O. G. S. Brewer, O.N. 150950, H.M.S. *Kent*.

Stoker P.O. W. A. Townsend, O.N. 301650, H.M.S. *Cornwall*.

Stoker, 1st Class, J. Smith, O.N. SS. 111915, H.M.S. *Cornwall*.

Shipwright, 1st Class, A. N. E. England, O.N. 341971, H.M.S. *Glasgow*.

Shipwright, 2nd Class, A. C. H. Dymott, O.N. M. 8047, H.M.S. *Kent*.

Portsmouth R.F.R.B./3307 Sergeant Charles Mayes, H.M.S. *Kent*.

F. C. D. STURDEE.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] See note at end of the chapter.

[2] There is some confusion in the numbering of the French armies. Foch's army at the Marne was at first called the 9th Army, both by the French and British, and de Castelnau's new army the 7th. Later the French papers took to calling it the 7th, and to giving the name of 9th indiscriminately to de Castelnau's force and to the whole of Foch's command in West Flanders. To avoid confusion it may be well to talk of the armies by the names of their generals. The following is the enumeration used from left to right—8th Army (d'Urbal), British Army, 10th Army (Maud'huy), 7th Army (de Castelnau), 6th Army (Maunoury), 5th Army (d'Esperey), 9th Army (Foch's successor not given), 4th Army (Langle), 3rd Army (Sarrail), 2nd Army (Dubail), 1st Army (only a division).

[3] He was succeeded in the command of the 3rd Division by Major-General J. A. L. Haldane. General Hamilton was buried in the little churchyard of Lacouture, but the body was afterwards removed to England. The scene, as described by a correspondent, recalls the burial of Sir John Moore. "Just at the moment when the priest was saying the last prayers, the guns began to roar again, and projectiles whistled over the heads of the mourners. The German attack was directed from a distance of a few hundred yards. The moment was well chosen, for the volleys fired by the troops of the Allies in honour of the dead, gloriously fallen for the common cause, were at the same time volleys of vengeance. Crackling reports of rifles continued round the ruined church, but the voice of the priest, reciting the last words of the Requiem, lost nothing of its calm and clearness."

[4] The Lahore Division included the Jullundur Brigade (Major-General P. M. Carnegy), the Sirhind Brigade (Major-General Brunker), the Ambala Cavalry Brigade (Major-General Pirie), and the Ferozepore Brigade (Brigadier-General Egerton). The Meerut Division included the Meerut Cavalry Brigade (Brigadier-General Edwards), the Bareilly Brigade (Major-General Macbean), the Dehra Dun Brigade (Brigadier-General Johnson), and the Garhwal Brigade (Major-General Keary). British battalions were in each case brigaded with the native troops. In the British contingent the following battalions were included: 1st Manchesters, 1st Highland Light Infantry, 1st Connaught Rangers, 2nd Leicesters, 2nd Black Watch, 1st Seaforths.

[5] 1st Division (General de Lisle), 1st and 2nd Brigades; 2nd Division (General Hubert Gough), 3rd, 4th, and 5th Brigades.

[6] The Fourth Corps was under the direction of the British War Office till it joined Sir John French's army at Ypres.

[7] Of these twelve battalions, three had come from South Africa, two from Gibraltar, two from Malta, one from Cairo, one from Guernsey, and three from home stations.

[8] A semi-official French estimate puts the German strength at the Battle of Flanders as fifty corps.

[9] The term "monitors" is not strictly accurate as applied to these vessels. The original *Monitor* was a low free-board, light-draft turret ship, invented by Ericsson, which fought the *Merrimac* in Hampton Roads during the American Civil War. Its

appearance, when cleared for action, was not unlike a big submarine operating on the surface. The vital feature of the *Monitor*, apart from its light draught, was that its guns were mounted in a central closed turret, so that they could be trained in any direction and used in narrow channels where broadsides would be impossible.

[10] These corps were, in the strictest sense, new formations, being composed of Landwehr, Landsturm, and volunteers of all ages, unstiffened by first-line troops.

[11] "The Germans came pouring through, and it soon became obvious that your position was untenable, and we were ordered to take up a position farther back. I tried to telephone to Colonel Baird Smith, but the wire had been cut by shrapnel. I then sent two orderlies with a message to withdraw, but the message was never received. Both orderlies must have been killed or wounded. Colonel Baird Smith, gallant soldier that he was, decided, and rightly, to hold his ground, and the Royal Scots Fusiliers fought and fought until the Germans absolutely surrounded and swarmed into the trenches. I think it was perfectly splendid. Mind you, it was not a case of 'hands up,' or any nonsense of that sort; it was a fight to a finish. What more do you want? Why, even a German general came to Colonel Baird Smith afterwards and congratulated him, and said he could not understand how his men had held out so long. You may well be proud to belong to such a regiment, and I am proud to have you in my brigade."—*Extract from an address by Brigadier-General Watts of the 21st Brigade.*

[12] The Worcesters—the old 29th and 36th—had a great record in the Peninsula. The 29th was at Talavera and Albuera, and Wellington called it "the best regiment in the army." The 36th lost a fourth of its numbers at Salamanca, and suffered heavily at Toulouse.

[13] Napier's *Peninsular War*, Book XII., ch. 6.

[14] *Peninsular War*, Book XVI., ch. 5.

[15] The brigades—thirteen battalions in all—comprised the 1st and 3rd regiments of Foot Guards, the Kaiser Franz Grenadier Regiment, No. 2, the Koenigen Augusta Grenadier Regiment, No. 4, and possibly the Jaeger battalion.

[16] The normal strength of the 1st Brigade was 153 officers and 5,000 men. It now numbered 8 officers and under 500 men, including non-combatants, such as cooks, transport men, etc.

[17] An instance is Davoust's performance on the French right at Austerlitz. With 11,000 men he held the Russian right—40,000 to 50,000 strong—while Napoleon stormed the Pratzen plateau and broke the Russian centre. But Austerlitz lasted for less than a day, and Ypres for more than three weeks.

[18] The 1st Coldstream were nearly annihilated at Malplaquet. The Royal Scots Fusiliers were at Ramillies, and, along with the Buffs, made the decisive movement on the British right.

[19] "I'll tell you where he beats me, and where he beats the world. He don't care a damn for what the enemy does out of his sight, but it scares me like hell." With this may be joined the verdict of a Wisconsin volunteer: "Ulysses doesn't scare worth a damn."

[20] Quoted by permission of the proprietors of *The Round Table*.

[21] Washburn, *Field Notes from the Russian Front*, p. 199.

[22] The evidence of the number of German light cruisers is conflicting, but on the

whole it seems probable that only the *Dresden* and the *Nürnberg* were present.

[23] The *Dresden* was caught off Juan Fernandez on March 14, 1915, by the *Kent* and the *Glasgow*, and sunk in five minutes. There is good reason to believe that the *Karlsruhe* was wrecked in the West Indies during the autumn of 1914.

[24] Printed in the *Oxford Magazine*.

[25] Query, the 8th Brigade, which contained the 1st Gordons. The 18th Brigade was in Pulteney's Third Corps.

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Transcribers' Notes:

Hyphenation has been standardised.

Illustrations have been moved to 'between paragraphs'. This has resulted in the page numbers referenced in the 'List of Maps' indicating pages which no longer exist. The hyperlinks to the maps however reflect their current location.

Changes made to the spelling of place names:

page 32: Poperinghe → Poperinge

page 35: Oostnieukerke → Oostnieuwkerke

page 39: Rolleghemcapelle → Rolleghem-capelle

page 60: Middelkirke → Middelkerke

page 71: Faugissant → Fauquissart

page 81: Kruseik → Kruiseik

page 93: Kruseik → Kruiseik

page 94: Kruseik → Kruiseik

page 97: Kruseik → Kruiseik (twice)

page 136: Nova Alexandria → Nowa Aleksandria (twice) = Pulawy

page 190: Waterburg → Waterberg

page 204: Waterburg → Waterberg

page 249: Frelinghein → Frelinghien

page 264: Rolleghamcapelle → Rolleghem-capelle

Notes on place names (eastern front) referred to in the text:

Donajetz = Dunajec

Glovaczov = Głowaczów

Inovolodz = Inowłódz

Ivangorod (till 1915) thence Dęblin

Jaroslav = Jaroslaw

Josefov = Jozefow

Kazimirjev = Kazimierz

Lemberg = Lviv

Novo Georgievsk = Novogeorgievsk = Modlin Fortress, situated within the town of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki

Novo Sandek = Nowy Sacz

Ostrowiecs = Ostrowiec

Petrikov = Piotrkow

Pilitza = Pilica

Pleschen = Pleszew

Prushkov = Pruszków

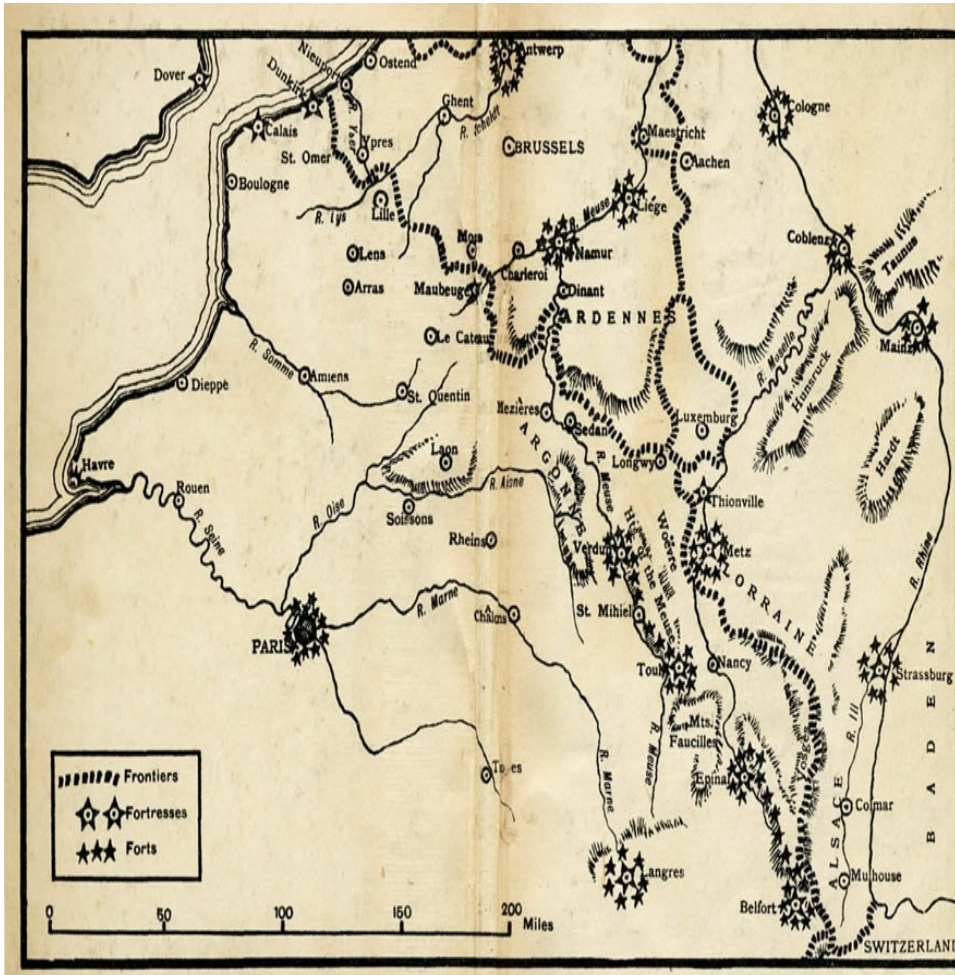
Rava Russka = Rava-Ruska

Sambor = Sambir

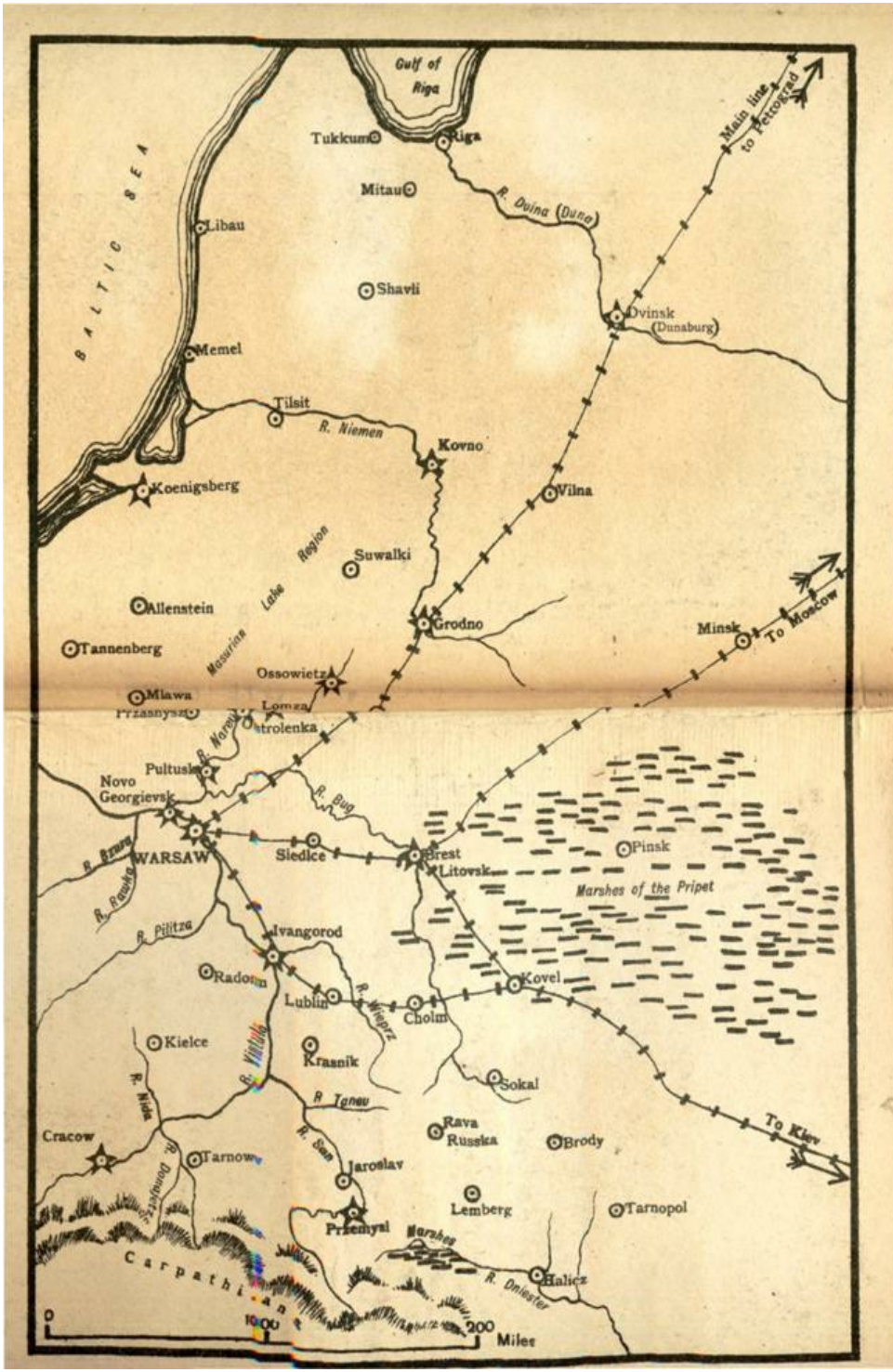
Sandomirz = Sandomierz

Thorn = Torun

Wielitza = Wieliczka



1. The Western Theatre of War.


Gulf of Riga
BALTIC SEA
Tukkum
Riga
Mitau
Libau
Shavli
Memel
Tilsit
R. Niemen
Kovno
Koenigsberg
Suwalki
Region
Lake
Masurian
Allenstein
Tannenberg
Grodno
Ossowietz
Mlawa
Przasnysz
Lomza
Ostrolenka
R. Narew
Pultusk
Novo Georgievsk
WARSAW
R. Bzura
R. Rawka
R. Pilitza
Siedlce
R. Bug
Brest Litovsk
Pinsk
Marshes of the Pripet
Ivangorod
Radom
Lublin
R. Wieprz
Cholm
Kovel
Kielce
R. Nida
R. Vistula
Krasnik
Sokal
R. Ianev
Cracow
R. Dunajec
Tarnow
R. San
Jaroslav
Rava Russka
Brody
Lemberg
Tarnopol
Przemysl
Marshes
Halicz
R. Dniester
Carpathians
0
100
200
Miles
Main line to Petrograd
Dvinsk (Dunaburg)
R. Duina (Duna)
Vilna
Minsk
To Moscow
To Kiev

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