Nelson's History of the War

Volume III

John Buchan
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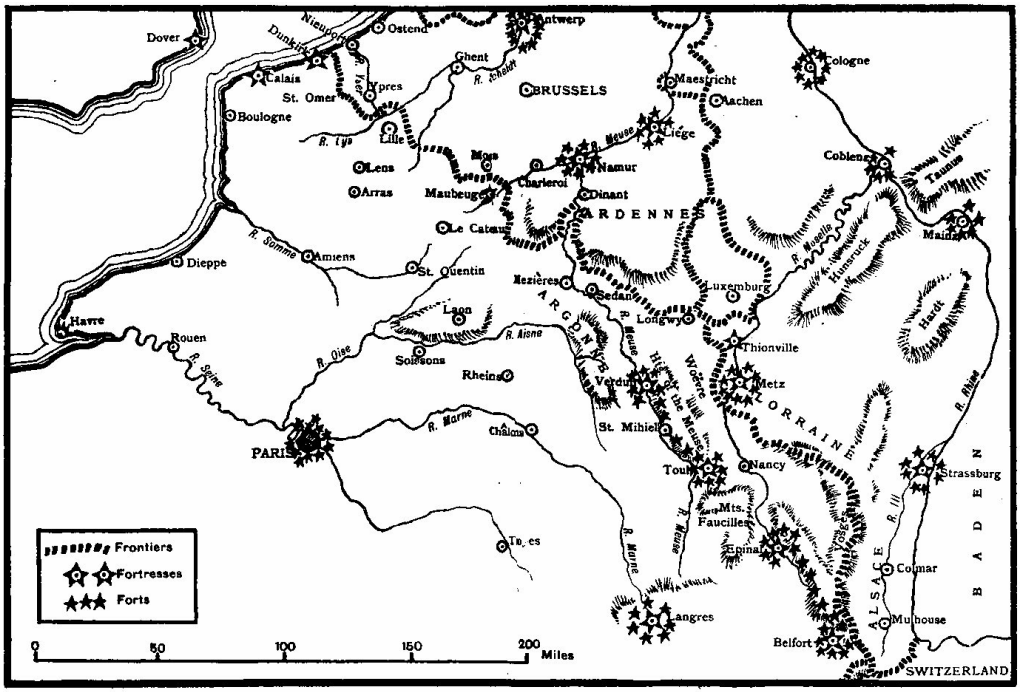

1. The Western Theatre of War.

NELSON'S
HISTORY OF THE WAR

VOLUME III.

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

Volume III. The Battle of the Aisne and the Events down to the Fall of Antwerp.

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CHAPTER XVIII.
THE WAR AT SEA: THE BATTLE OF THE BIGHT OF HELIGOLAND.

The Task of the Navy—Battle of Bight of Heligoland—Composition of British Force—Preliminary Reconnaissance—Concentration on Morning of 28th August—The First Phase of the Battle—Doings of the *Arethusa*—The Second Phase—Arrival of Battle Cruisers—German and British Losses—Strategy and Tactics of Fight—German Mine-fields—Loss of *Cressy*, *Hogue*, and *Aboukir*; Admiralty Memorandum—The *Emden* and the *Koenigsberg*—Attacks on German Converted Liners—Smallness of British Losses—The Declarations of Paris and London.

The work of the British navy during the first two months of war was so completely successful in its main purpose that the ordinary man scarcely recognized it. He expected a theatrical *coup*, a full-dress battle, or a swift series of engagements with enemy warships. When he found that nothing happened, he began to think that something was amiss. But the proof of our success was that nothing happened—nothing startling, that is to say, for every day had its full record of quiet achievement. Three-fourths of the game was already ours without striking a blow. The British people depended for their very livelihood on their sea-borne commerce; that went on as if there were no war. The rates of marine insurance fell, and freights did not increase beyond the limits dictated by the law of supply and demand. We moved our armed forces about the world as we desired, not as our enemies permitted. Germany's foreign trade, on which she depended in the long run for munitions of war and the maintenance of most of her industries, ceased with dramatic suddenness. Our naval predominance was instantly proved by the impotence of our opponents.

The German policy was what the wiser among our people had always desired. No doubt if Admiral von Ingenohl had sailed forth with his Grand Fleet in the early

days of August and been summarily sent to the bottom, it would have been even more convenient. But, short of such a wholesale destruction, things could not have fallen out more opportunely than they did. Assume that they had gone otherwise, and that the German admiral, instead of sheltering in the Elbe, had sent out some of his best cruisers and battle cruisers to scour the high seas. The performances of the *Emden*, which we shall later consider, would have been many times multiplied. We should have lost scores of merchantmen, and a number of our smaller fighting units. Marine insurance rates and freights would have mounted high, prices would have risen, and there would have been heard at home the first mutterings of commercial panic. The transport of troops from South Africa, Australia, and Canada would have been difficult, and we should have had to weaken dangerously our Grand Fleet to supply escorts. Indeed, with a dozen big German cruisers at large, it might have seemed for a week or two that the offensive had passed to the enemy, and that Britain, not Germany, was on her defence. Of course, we should have ended by destroying the raiders; the cruisers would have had a short life or a long life, but they would not have returned home. Nevertheless this weakening of the enemy's naval strength would have been dearly paid for by the congestion of our ordinary life at that most critical time, the first weeks of war, and by the inevitable interference with our military plans. Had Germany been bolder at sea there might have been no British force to hold the Allied left in the difficult days from the Sambre to the Marne.

One of the chief objects of a navy in war is to protect the commerce of its country. This purpose we achieved with ease, and it would have been mere folly to throw away capital ships in an assault on the retreat of an enemy which had virtually allowed our mastery of the sea to go unchallenged. On land an army fights its way yard by yard to a position from which it can deal a crushing blow. But a fleet needs none of these preliminaries. As soon as the enemy chooses to appear the battle can be joined. Hence von Ingenohl was right in saving his fleet for what he considered a better chance, and we were right in not forcing him unduly. Naval power should be used, not squandered, and the mightiest fleet on earth may be flung away on a fool's errand. It should not be forgotten that the strength of a fleet is a more brittle and less replaceable thing than the strength of an army. New levies can be called for on land, and tolerable infantry trained in a few months. But in the navy it takes six years to make a junior officer, it takes two years to build a cruiser, and three years to replace a battleship. A serious loss in fighting units is, for any ordinary naval war, an absolute, not a temporary, calamity.

It was the business, then, of the British fleet to perform its principal duty, the protection of British trade; it was not its business to break its head against the

defences of Wilhelmshaven or Kiel. At the same time, it had to watch incessantly for the emergence of German ships, and, if possible, entice them out of their sanctuary. Cautious and well-reasoned boldness was the quality demanded, and on 28th August, the day when Sir John French's retreat had reached the Oise, it earned its reward in the first important naval action of the war.

The Battle of the Bight of Heligoland was in its way such a little masterpiece of naval strategy and tactics that it deserves to be examined with some attention. First, we must realize the various forces engaged, which may be set down in the order of their appearance in the action.

1. *Eighth Submarine Flotilla* (Commodore Roger Keyes).—Parent ships: Destroyers *Lurcher* and *Firedrake*. Submarines: D2, D8, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9.

2. *Destroyer Flotillas* (Commodore R. Y. Tyrwhitt).—Flagship: Light cruiser *Arethusa*.

First Destroyer Flotilla: Light cruiser *Fearless* (Captain Blunt).—Destroyers: *Acheron*, *Archer*, *Ariel*, *Attack*, *Badger*, *Beaver*, *Defender*, *Ferret*, *Forester*, *Goshawk*, *Hind*, *Jackal*, *Lapwing*, *Lizard*, *Phœnix*, *Sandfly*.

Third Destroyer Flotilla: *Laertes*, *Laforey*, *Lance*, *Landrail*, *Lark*, *Laurel*, *Lawford*, *Legion*, *Leonidas*, *Lennox*, *Liberty*, *Linnet*, *Llewelyn*, *Louis*, *Lucifer*, *Lydiard*, *Lysander*.

3. *First Light-Cruiser Squadron* (Commodore W. R. Goodenough).—*Southampton*, *Falmouth*, *Birmingham*, *Lowestoft*, *Nottingham*.

4. *First Battle-Cruiser Squadron* (Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty).—*Lion*, *Princess Royal*, *Queen Mary*, *New Zealand*. Joined at sea by *Invincible* (Rear-Admiral Moore) and by destroyers: *Hornet*, *Hydra*, *Tigress*, and *Loyal*.

5. *Seventh Cruiser Squadron* (Rear-Admiral A. H. Christian).—Armoured cruisers: *Euryalus*, *Cressy*, *Hogue*, *Aboukir*, *Sutlej*, *Bacchante*, and light cruiser *Amethyst*.

The battle cruisers were the largest and newest of their class, displacing some 27,000 tons, with a speed of 29 knots, and an armament each of eight 13.5 and sixteen 4-inch guns. The First Light-Cruiser Squadron contained ships of the "town" class—5,500 tons, 25 to 26 knots, and eight or nine 6-inch guns. The Seventh

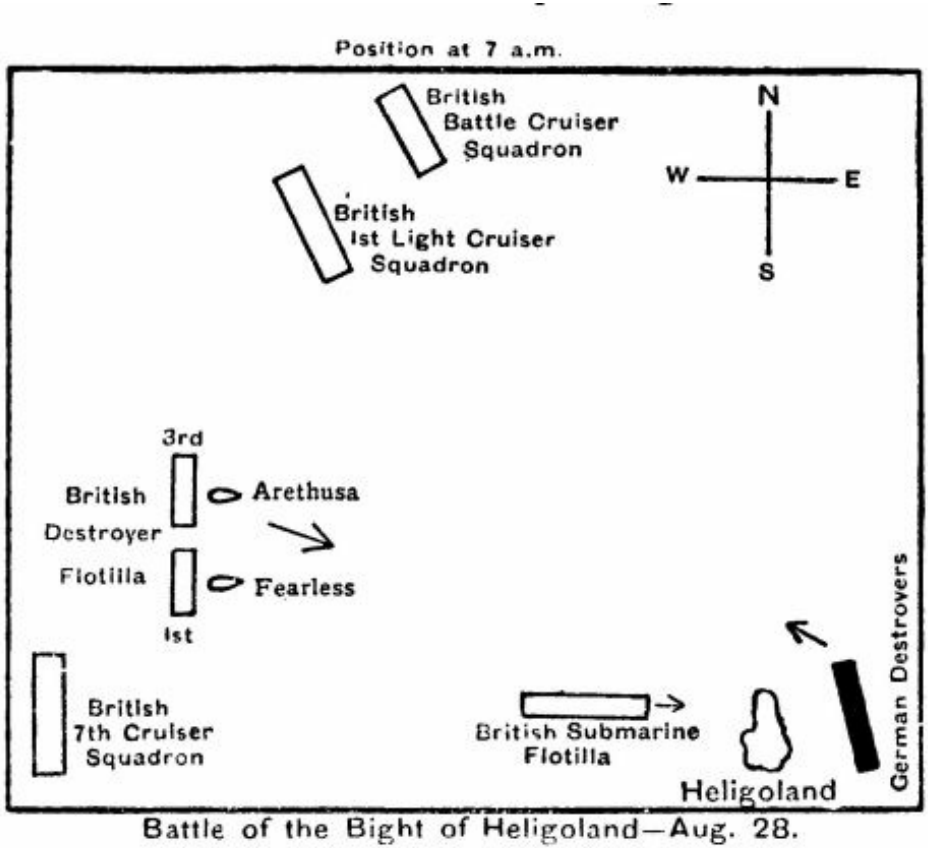
Cruiser Squadron were older ships from the Third Fleet—12,000 tons and 21 knots. The First Destroyer Flotilla contained destroyers each of about 800 tons, 30 knots, and two 4-inch and two 12-pounder guns. The Third Flotilla was composed only of the largest and latest type—965 tons, 32 knots, and three 4-inch guns. Of the accompanying cruisers the *Arethusa*—the latest of an apostolical succession of vessels of that name—was the first ship of a new class; her tonnage was 3,750, her speed 30 knots, and her armament two 6-inch and six 4-inch guns. Her companion, the *Fearless*, had 3,440 tons, 26 knots, and ten 4-inch guns. The two small destroyers which accompanied the submarines, the *Lurcher* and the *Firedrake*, had 765 tons, 35 knots, and two 4-inch and two 12-pounder guns.

Ever since the 9th of August the seas around Heligoland had been assiduously scouted by the submarines E6 and E8. German cruisers—apparently the *Strassburg* and the *Stralsund*—had shown a certain activity, and had succeeded in sinking a number of British trawlers; but the several "drives" which we organized had sent them back to their territorial waters. The *Fearless* had also been on patrol work, and on 21st August had come under the enemy's shell fire. By the 26th our intelligence was complete, and at midnight the submarine flotilla, under Commodore Keyes, sailed from Harwich for the Bight of Heligoland. All the next day, the 27th, the *Lurcher* and the *Firedrake* scouted for the submarines. At five o'clock on the evening of the 27th the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas, under Commodore Tyrwhitt, left Harwich, and some time during that day the Battle-Cruiser Squadron, the First Light-Cruiser Squadron, and the Seventh Cruiser Squadron also put to sea. The rendezvous appointed was reached early on the morning of the 28th, the waters having been searched for hostile submarines before dawn by the *Lurcher* and the *Firedrake*.

Aug. 21.

Aug. 26.

Aug. 27.



Position at 7 a.m.
Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

The chronicle must now concern itself with hours and minutes. The first phase of the action began just before 7 a.m. on the 28th. The morning had broken windless and calm, with a haze which limited the range of vision to under three miles. The water was like a millpond, and out of the morning mist rose the gaunt rock of Heligoland, with its forts and painted lodging-houses and crumbling sea-cliffs. It was the worst conceivable weather for the submarines, since in a calm sea their periscopes were easily visible. The position at seven o'clock was as follows. Close to Heligoland, and well within German territorial waters, were Commodore Keyes' eight submarines, with his two small destroyers in attendance. Approaching rapidly from the north-west were Commodore Tyrwhitt's two destroyer flotillas, while behind them, at some distance and a little to the east, was Commodore Goodenough's First Light-Cruiser

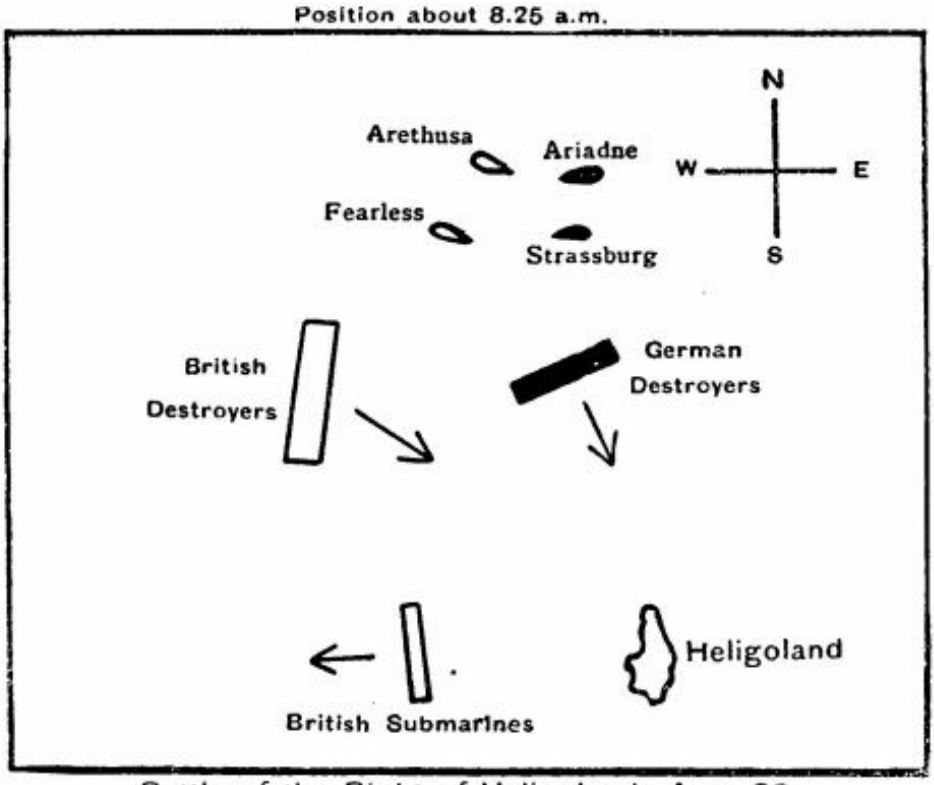
Aug. 28.

Squadron. Behind it lay Sir David Beatty's battle cruisers, with the four destroyers in attendance. A good deal to the south, and about due west of Heligoland, lay Admiral Christian's Seventh Cruiser Squadron, to stop all exit towards the west.

The submarines, foremost among them E6, E7, and E8, performed admirably the work of a decoy. They were apparently first observed by a German seaplane, and presently from behind Heligoland came a number of German destroyers. These were presently followed by two cruisers, and the submarines and their attendant destroyers fled westwards, while the British destroyer flotillas came swiftly down from the north-west. At the sight of the latter the German destroyers turned to make for home; but the British flotillas, led by the Third, along with the *Arethusa*, altered their course to port in order to head them off. "The principle of the movement," says the official report, "was to cut the German light craft from home and engage them at leisure in the open sea." The destroyers gave little trouble, and our own ships of that class were quite competent to deal with them. But between our two attendant cruisers and the two German cruisers a fierce battle was waged. About eight o'clock the *Arethusa*—*praeclarum et venerabile nomen*—was engaged with the German *Ariadne*, while the *Fearless* was busy with a four-funnelled vessel which some of our men thought was the *Yorck*, but which was probably the *Strassburg*. The *Arethusa*, till the *Fearless* drew the *Strassburg's* fire, was exposed to the broadsides of the two vessels, and was considerably damaged. About 8.25, however, one of her shots shattered the forebridge of the *Ariadne* and killed the captain, and the shattered vessel drew off towards Heligoland, whither the *Strassburg* soon followed.

7-8.25 a.m.

Meantime the destroyers had not been idle. They had sunk the leading boat of the German flotilla, V187, and had damaged a dozen more. With great heroism they attempted to save the German sailors now struggling in the water, and lowered boats for the purpose. These boats, as we shall see, came into deadly peril during the next phase of the action.

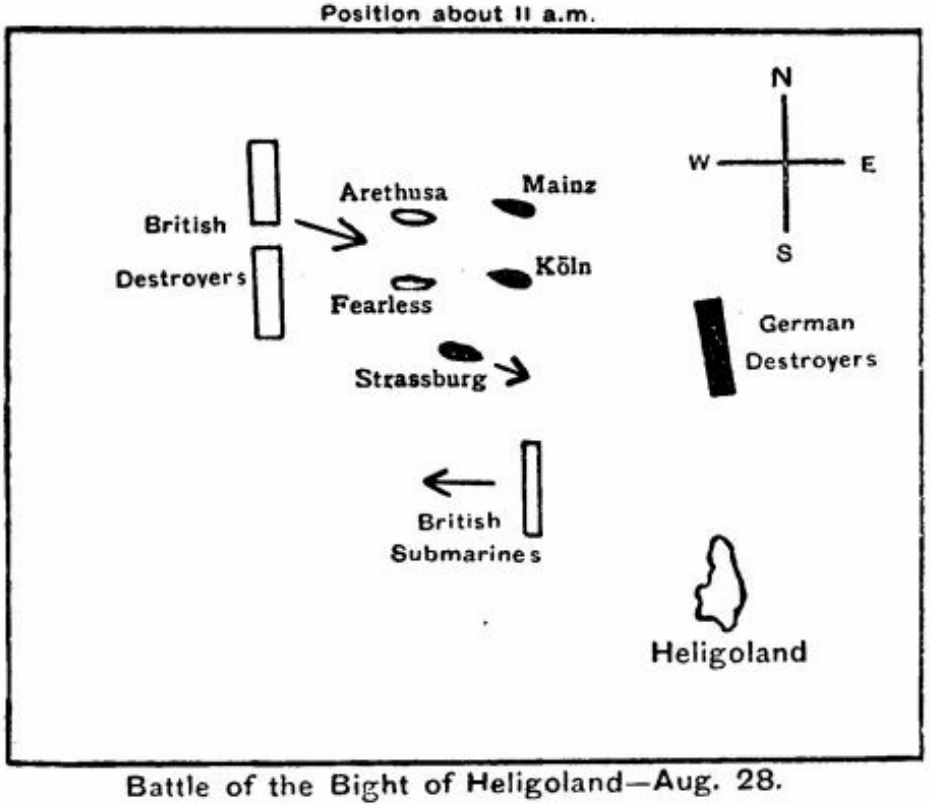


Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

Position about 8.25 a.m.
Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

8.25-10 a.m.

On the retreat of the *Ariadne* and the *Strassburg* the destroyer flotillas were ordered to turn westward. The gallant *Arethusa* was in need of attention, for a water-tank had been hit, and all her guns save one were temporarily out of action. She was soon repaired, and only two of her 4-inch guns were left still out of order. Between nine and ten o'clock, therefore, there was a lull in the fight, which we may take as marking the break between the first and second phases of the battle. The submarines, with their attendants, *Lurcher* and *Firedrake*, were still in the immediate vicinity of Heligoland, as well as some of the destroyers which had boats out to save life.



Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

Position about 11 a.m.
Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

About ten o'clock the second phase began. The Germans believed that the only hostile vessels in the neighbourhood were the submarines, destroyers, the *Arethusa* and the *Fearless*, and they resolved to take this excellent chance of annihilating them.

About ten Commodore Tyrwhitt received a wireless message from Commodore Keyes that the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* were being chased by three German cruisers. These were the *Mainz*, the *Köln*, and a heavier vessel, which may have been the *Yorck* or the *Strassburg*. The German cruisers came on the boats of the First Flotilla busy saving life, and thinking apparently that the British had adopted the insane notion of boarding, opened a heavy fire on them. The small destroyers were driven away, and two boats, belonging to the *Goshawk* and the *Defender*, were cut off under the guns of

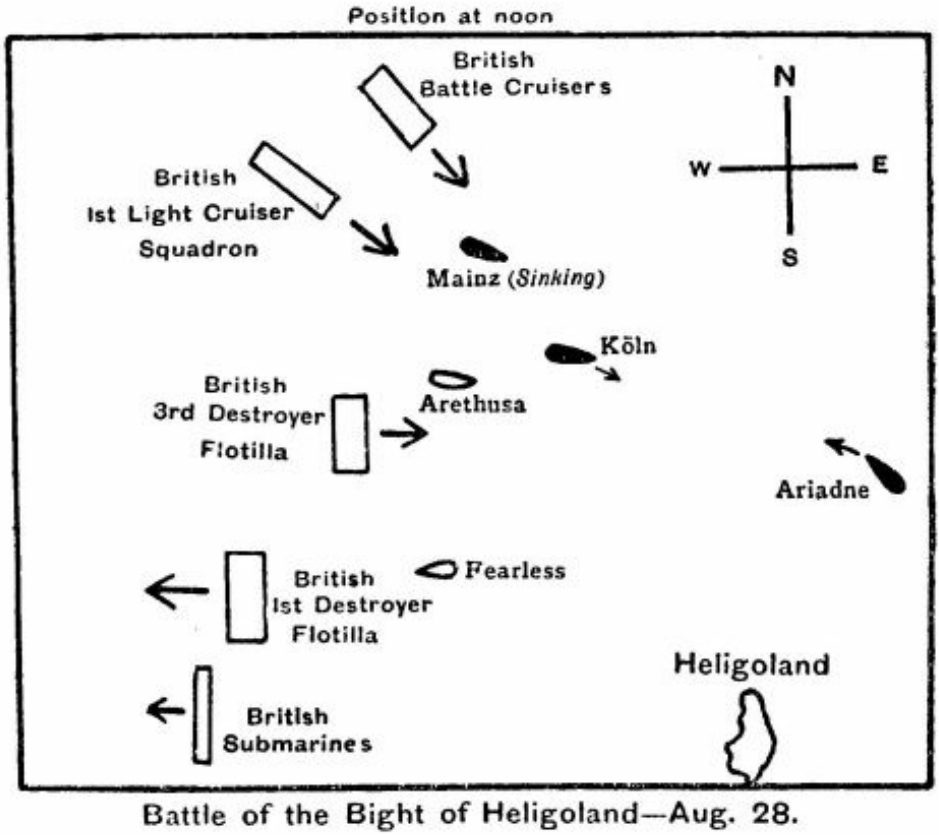
10 a.m.-noon.

Heligoland. At this moment submarine E4 (Lieutenant-Commander E. W. Leir) appeared alongside. By the threat of a torpedo attack he drove off the German cruiser for a moment, and took on board the British seamen.

The *Arethusa*, the *Fearless*, and the destroyers boldly engaged the three enemy cruisers, and for a little were in a position of great peril. They had already suffered considerably, and their speed and handiness must have been reduced. The first incident was an artillery duel between the *Arethusa* and the vessel which we may call the *Strassburg*, which resulted in the retirement of the latter. Then came the *Mainz*, which was so severely handled that her boilers blew up, and she became little better than a wreck. There remained the *Köln*, which began a long-range duel with the *Arethusa*. So far the destroyer flotillas had covered themselves with glory, but their position was far from comfortable. They were in German home waters, not far from the guns of Heligoland (which the fog seems to have made useless at that range); they were a good deal crippled, though still able to fight; and they did not know but that at any moment the blunt noses of Admiral von Ingenohl's great battleships might come out of the mist. The battle had now lasted for five hours—ample time for the ships in the Elbe to come up. Commodore Tyrwhitt about eleven had sent a wireless signal to Sir David Beatty asking for help, and by twelve o'clock that help was sorely needed.

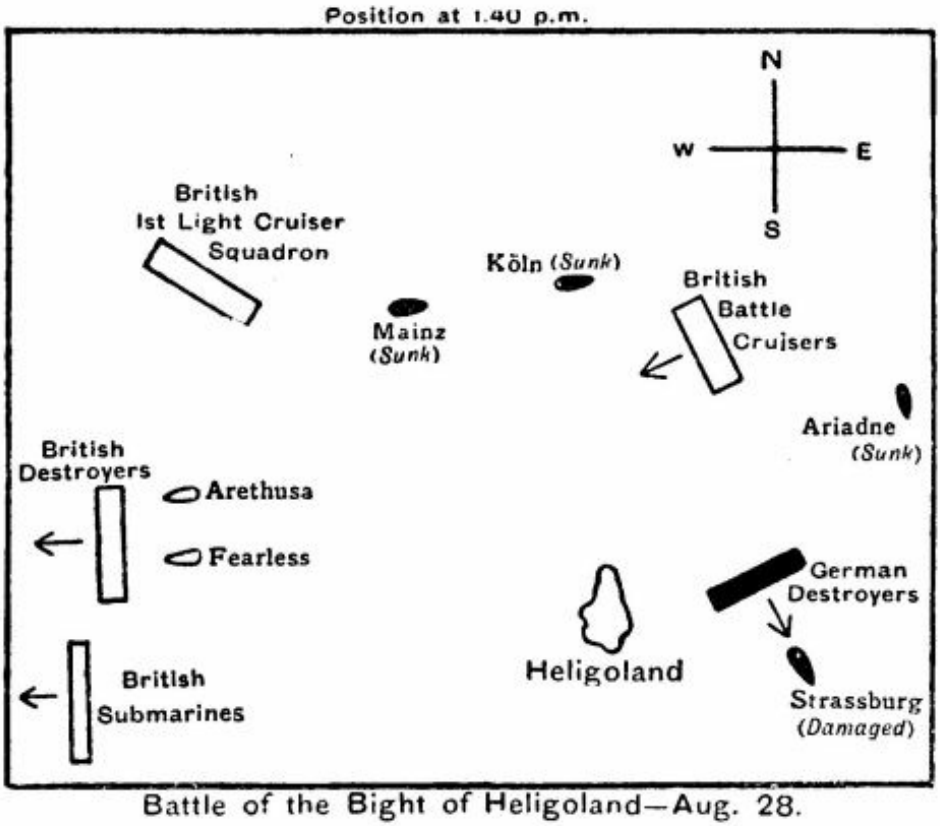
It was on its way. Admiral Beatty, on receipt of the signal, at once sent the First Light-Cruiser Squadron south-eastwards. The first vessels, the *Falmouth* and the *Nottingham*, arrived on the scene of action about twelve o'clock, and proceeded to deal with the damaged *Mainz*. By this time the First Destroyer Flotilla had retired westward, but the Third Flotilla and the *Arethusa* were still busy with the *Köln*. Admiral Beatty had to take a momentous decision. There was every likelihood that some of the enemy's great armoured and battle cruisers were close at hand, and he wisely judged that "to be of any value the support must be overwhelming." It was a risky business to take his vessels through a mine-strewn and submarine-haunted sea; but in naval warfare the highest risks must be run. Hawke pursued Conflans in a stormy dusk into Quiberon Bay, and Nelson before Aboukir risked in the darkness the shoals and reefs of an uncharted sea. So Admiral Beatty gave orders at 11.30 for the battle cruisers to steam E.S.E. at full speed. They were several times attacked by submarines, but their pace saved them, and when later the *Queen Mary* was in danger she avoided it by a skilful use of the helm. By 12.15 the smoke-blackened eyes of the *Arethusa's* men saw the huge shapes of our battle cruisers emerging from the northern mists.

Noon-1.40 p.m.



Position at noon
Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

Their advent decided the battle. They found the *Mainz* on fire and sinking by the head, and steered north-eastward to where the *Arethusa* and the *Köln* were hard at work. The *Lion* came first, and she alone among the battle cruisers seems to have used her guns. Her immense fire power and admirable gunnery beat down all opposition. The *Köln* fled before her, but the *Lion's* guns at extreme range hit her and set her on fire. Presently the luckless *Ariadne* hove in sight from the south—the forerunner, perhaps, of a new squadron. Two salvos from the terrible 13.5-inch guns sufficed for her, and, burning furiously, she disappeared into the haze. Then the battle cruisers circled north again, and in ten minutes finished off the *Köln*. She sank like a plummet with every soul on board.



Position at 1.40 p.m.
Battle of the Bight of Heligoland—Aug. 28.

At twenty minutes to two Admiral Beatty turned homeward. The submarines and the destroyer flotillas had already gone westward, and the Light-Cruiser Squadron, in a fan-shaped formation, preceded the battle cruisers. Admiral Christian's squadron was left to escort the damaged ships and defend the rear. By that evening the whole British force was in our own waters without the loss of a single unit. The *Arethusa* had been badly damaged, but in a week was ready for sea again. Our casualties were thirty-two killed and fifty-two wounded, among the former being two brilliant officers, Lieutenant-Commander Nigel Barttelot of the destroyer *Liberty*, and Lieutenant Eric Westmacott of the *Arethusa*.

The Germans lost two new cruisers, the *Mainz* and the *Köln*, and one older cruiser, the *Ariadne*. A four-funnelled cruiser, the *Strassburg* or the *Yorck*,[1] was

seriously damaged, as were at least seven destroyers. Only one destroyer, the V187, was actually sunk, though our Admiralty mentioned two. The broken destroyers which put into Kiel some days later did not suffer, as we at first believed, from the Heligoland fight, but from a misadventure in the Baltic. At least 700 of the German crews perished, and there were 300 prisoners.

Of the Battle of the Bight it may fairly be said that it was creditable to both victors and vanquished. The Germans fought in the true naval spirit, and the officers stood by their ships till they went down. The gallantry of our own men was conspicuous, as was their readiness to run risks in saving life, a readiness which the enemy handsomely acknowledged. The submarine flotilla fought under great disadvantages, but the crews never wavered, and their attendant destroyers, the *Lurcher* and the *Firedrake*, were constantly engaged with heavier vessels. The two destroyer flotillas were not less prominent, and, having taken the measure of the German destroyers, did not hesitate to engage the enemy's cruisers. But the chief glory belongs to the *Arethusa* and the *Fearless*, who for a critical hour bore the chief brunt of the battle. For a time they were matched against three German cruisers, which between them had a considerably greater force of fire. Nowadays much of naval fighting is a mathematical certainty, for, given the guns and the speed, you can calculate the result. But it was the good fortune of the *Arethusa* to show her mettle in a conflict which more resembled the audacious struggles of Nelson's day. It is a curious fact that though we had some sixty vessels in the action from first to last, only four or five were hit. The light-cruiser squadron and the battle cruisers decided the battle, and while their blows were deadly, the enemy never got a chance of retaliation. From twelve o'clock onward it was scientific modern destruction; before that it was any one's fight.

The strategy which devised the action was admirable in conception and execution, and not less admirable was the tactical skill which provided for the co-operation of different classes of vessels, proceeding from different bases, within a narrow area and at the right moment. Had the German battleships emerged it may be presumed that we were prepared for that eventuality. Undoubtedly the action justified to the full three classes of our recent naval constructions—the big battle cruisers, the new light cruisers of the *Arethusa* type, and the large destroyers that belonged to the Third Flotilla. It proved, too, that the largest ships might safely operate among the enemy's submarines if only their speed was high—a lesson of immense importance for future naval warfare.

The immediate consequence of the Battle of the Bight was a change in German

naval policy. Von Ingenohl was confirmed in his resolution to keep his battleships in harbour, and not even a daring sweeping movement of the British early in September, when our vessels came within hearing of the church bells on the German coast, could goad him into action. But he retaliated by an increased activity in mine-laying and the use of submarines. In the land warfare of the Middle Ages there came a time when knights and horses were so heavily armoured that they lost mobility, and what had been regarded as the main type of action ended in stalemate. Wherefore, since men must find some way of conquering each other, came the chance for the hitherto despised lighter troops, and the archers and spearmen began to win battles like Courtrai and Bannockburn. A similar stalemate was now reached as between the capital ships of the rival navies. The British battleships were vast and numerous; the German fleet, less powerful at sea, was strong in its fenced harbour. No decision could be reached by the heavily armed units, so the war passed into the hands of the lesser craft. For a space of more than two months the Germans fought almost wholly with mines and submarines.

One truth should be remembered, which at this period was somewhat forgotten by the British people. Command of the sea, unless the enemy's navy is totally destroyed, does not mean complete protection. This has been well stated in a famous passage by Admiral Mahan[2]:—

> "The control of the sea, however real, does not imply that an enemy's single ships or small squadrons cannot steal out of ports, and cross more or less frequented tracts of ocean, make harassing descents upon unprotected points of a long coast-line, enter blockaded harbours. On the contrary, history has shown that such evasions are always possible, to some extent, to the weaker party, however great the inequality of naval strength."

This has been true in all ages, and is especially true now that the mine and submarine have come to the assistance of the weaker combatant. Our policy was to blockade Germany, so that she should suffer and our own life go on unhindered. But the blockade could only be a watching blockade; it could not seal up every unit of the enemy's naval strength. To achieve the latter we should have had to run the risk of missing the very goal at which we aimed. It was our business to see that Germany did nothing without our knowledge, and to encourage her ships to come out that we might fall upon them. Her business was to make our patrolling as difficult as possible. To complain of British losses in such a task was to do precisely what Germany

wished us to do, in order that caution might take the place of a bold and aggressive vigilance.

Germany had laid in the first days of the war a large mine-field off our eastern coasts, and early in September, by means of trawlers disguised as neutrals, she succeeded in dropping mines off the north coast of Ireland, which endangered our Atlantic commerce and the operations of our Grand Fleet. The right precaution—the closing of the North Sea to neutral shipping, unless specially accompanied—was not taken till too late in the day, and even then was too perfunctorily organized. A section of the Royal Naval Reserve was detached for the task of mine-sweeping, and trawlers, manned by East Coast fishermen, were busy at all hours off our shores. It was a hard and perilous employment, how perilous the many casualties revealed; and the work of these crews, inconspicuous and unadvertised as it was, deserves to be ranked along with more sounding deeds among the heroisms of the war. The mine-field, for all its terrors, was not productive of much actual loss to our fighting strength. During the first two months of war, apart from the *Amphion*, the only casualty was the old gunboat *Speedy*, which struck a mine and foundered in the North Sea on 3rd September.

Sept. 3.

The submarine was a graver menace. On 5th September the *Pathfinder*, a light cruiser of 2,940 tons, with a crew of 268, was torpedoed off the Lothian coast and sunk, with great loss of life. Eight days later the German light cruiser *Hela*, a vessel slightly smaller than the *Pathfinder*, was sunk by the British submarine E9 (Lieutenant Max Horton) in wild weather between Heligoland and the Frisian coast—an exploit of exceptional boldness and difficulty. During that fortnight a great storm raged, and our patrols found it hard to keep the seas, many of the smaller destroyers being driven to port. This storm led indirectly to the first serious British loss of the war. Three cruisers of an old pattern, the *Cressy*, *Hogue*, and *Aboukir*, which had been part of Admiral Christian's Seventh Cruiser Squadron in the Battle of the Bight of Heligoland, had for three weeks been engaged in patrolling off the Dutch coast. It does not appear why three large ships carrying heavy crews were employed on a duty which could have been performed better and more safely by lighter vessels. No screen of destroyers was with them at the moment, owing to the storm. On the 22nd of September the sky had cleared and the seas fallen, and about half-past six in the morning, as the cruisers proceeded to their posts, the *Aboukir* was torpedoed, and began to settle down. Her sister ships believed she had struck a mine, and closed in on her to save life. Suddenly the *Hogue* was struck by two

Sept. 5.

Sept. 13.

Sept. 22.

torpedoes, and began to sink. Two of her boats had already been got away to the rescue of the *Aboukir's* men, and as she went down she righted herself for a moment, with the result that her steam pinnace and steam picket-boat floated off. The *Cressy* now came up to the rescue, but she also was struck by two torpedoes, and sank rapidly. Three trawlers in the neighbourhood at the time picked up the survivors in the water and in the boats, but of the total crews of 1,459 officers and men only 779 were saved. In that bright, chilly morning, when all was over within a quarter of an hour, the British sailor showed his unsurpassed discipline and courage. Men swimming in the frosty sea or clinging naked to boats or wreckage cheered each other with songs and jokes. "The men on the *Hogue*," wrote an eye-witness, "stood quietly by waiting for the order to jump, and passing the time in slipping off their clothes." The survivors were positive that they saw at least three submarines, but the German official account mentions only one—the U9, under Captain-lieutenant Otto Weddigen.

The fate of the three cruisers was not only a disaster; it was a mistake, of the kind which is inevitable at the beginning of a naval war, before novel conditions are adequately realized. Faulty staff work somewhere at headquarters was to blame. There was no reason why three such vessels should have been employed at all on patrol duty; and if they were to be employed they should never have been sent out without a screen of destroyers. Again, they had been kept promenading on the same beat for some time, which was simply an invitation to submarines to come out and attack them. Lastly, no instructions had been given them as to what to do in the case of one of their number being torpedoed, with the result that the *Hogue* went to assist the *Aboukir*, and the *Cressy* to assist the *Hogue*, and all three perished. The Admiralty realized this grave omission too late, and a few days after the disaster issued a statement, from which we quote:—

> "The sinking of the *Aboukir* was, of course, an ordinary hazard of patrolling duty. The *Hogue* and *Cressy*, however, were sunk because they proceeded to the assistance of their consort, and remained with engines stopped endeavouring to save life, thus presenting an easy and certain target to further submarine attacks. The natural promptings of humanity have in this case led to heavy losses which would have been avoided by a strict adhesion to military considerations. Modern naval war is presenting us with so many new and strange situations that an error of judgment of this character is pardonable. But it has become necessary to point out for the future guidance of His Majesty's ships, that the conditions which

prevail when one vessel of a squadron is injured in a mine-field, or is exposed to submarine attack, are analogous to those which occur in an action, and that the rule of leaving ships to their own resources is applicable so far at any rate as large vessels are concerned."

The Admiralty correctly attributed the catastrophe to an error of judgment, but the error was not that of the captains of the lost vessels.

The third method of weakening British sea power was by the attack upon merchantmen by light cruisers. Apparently Germany sent forth no new vessels of this type after the outbreak of war, and her activities were confined to those which were already outside the Narrow Seas, especially those under Admiral von Spee's command at Kiao-chau. So far as September is concerned, we need mention only the *Emden* and the *Koenigsberg*. The former was to provide the world with a genuine tale of romantic adventure, always welcome among the grave realities of war, and in her short life to emulate the achievements and the fame of the *Alabama*. She appeared in the Bay of Bengal on 10th September, and within a week had captured seven large merchantmen, six of which she sank. Next week she arrived at Rangoon, where her presence cut off all sea communication between India and Burma. On 22nd September she was at Madras, and fired a shell or two into the environs of the city, setting an oil tank on fire. On the 29th she was off Pondicherry, and the last day of the month found her running up the Malabar coast. There for the present we leave her, for the tale of her subsequent adventures belongs to another chapter. The *Koenigsberg* had her beat off the East Coast of Africa. Her chief exploit was a dash into Zanzibar harbour, where, on 20th September, she caught the British cruiser *Pegasus* while in the act of repairing her boilers. The *Pegasus* was a seventeen-year-old ship of 2,135 tons, and had no chance against her assailant. She was destroyed by the *Koenigsberg's* long-range fire.

Sept. 10.

Sept. 22.

Sept. 29.

Sept. 20.

The exploits of the two German commerce-raiders were magnified because they were the exceptions, while the British capture of German merchantmen was the rule. We did not destroy our captures, because we had many ports to take them to, and they were duly brought before our prize courts. In addition, we had made havoc of Germany's converted liners. The *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, which had escaped from Bremerhaven at the beginning of the war, and which had preyed for a fortnight on our South Atlantic commerce, was caught and sunk by the *Highflyer* near the

Cape Verde Islands. On 12th September the *Berwick* captured in the North Atlantic the *Spreewald*, of the Hamburg-Amerika line. On 14th September the *Carmania*, Captain Noel Grant, a British converted liner, fell in with a similar German vessel, the *Cap Trafalgar*, off the coast of Brazil. The action began at 9,000 yards, and lasted for an hour and three-quarters. The *Carmania* was skilfully handled, and her excellent gunnery decided the issue. Though the British vessel had to depart prematurely owing to the approach of a German cruiser, she left her antagonist sinking in flames.

Sept. 12.

Sept. 14.

Other instances might be quoted, but these will suffice to show how active British vessels were in all the seas. The loss of a few light cruisers and a baker's dozen of merchantmen was a small price to pay for an unimpaired foreign trade and the practical impotence of the enemy. Modern inventions give the weaker power a better chance for raiding than in the old days; but in spite of that our sufferings were small compared with any other of our great wars. It is instructive to contrast our fortunes during the struggle with Napoleon. Then, even after Trafalgar had been fought, French privateers made almost daily captures of English ships in our home waters. Our coasts were frequently attacked, and the inhabitants of the seaboard went for years in constant expectation of invasion. In the twenty-one years of war we lost 10,248 British ships. Further back in our history our inviolability was even more precarious. In the year after Agincourt the French landed in Portland. Seven years after the defeat of the Armada the Spanish burned Penzance and ravaged the Cornish coasts. In 1667 the Dutch were in the Medway and the Thames. In 1690 the French burned Teignmouth, and landed in Sussex; in 1760 they seized Carrickfergus; in 1797 they landed at Fishguard. In 1775 Paul Jones captured Whitehaven, and was the terror of our home waters. The most prosperous war has its casualties in unexpected places.

As for the alleged slowness in bringing the enemy's fleet to book, it should be remembered that in the Revolution Wars England had to wait a year for the first naval battle, Howe's victory of the 1st of June; while Nelson lay for two years before Toulon, and Cornwallis for longer before Brest. "They were dull, weary, eventless months"—to quote Admiral Mahan—"those months of waiting and watching of the big ships before the French arsenals. Purposeless they surely seemed to many, but they saved England. The world has never seen a more impressive demonstration of the influence of sea power upon its history. Those far-distant, storm-beaten ships, upon which the Grand Army never looked, stood between it and the dominion of the world."

In Nelson's day we had one advantage which is now lost to us. We were not hampered by a code of maritime law framed in the interests of unmaritime nations. The Declaration of Paris of 1856, among other provisions, enacted that a neutral flag covered enemy's merchandise except contraband of war, and that neutral merchandise was not capturable even under the enemy's flag. This Declaration, which was not accepted by the United States, has never received legislative ratification from the British Parliament; but we regarded ourselves as bound by it, though various efforts had been made to get it rescinded in times of peace by those who realized how greatly it weakened the belligerent force of a sea power. The Declaration of London of 1909 made a further effort to codify maritime law.[3] It was signed by the British plenipotentiaries, though Parliament refused to pass the statutes necessary to give effect to certain of its provisions. In some respects it was more favourable to Britain than the Declaration of Paris, but in others it was less favourable, and it was consistently opposed by many good authorities on the subject. Generally speaking, it was more acceptable to a nation like Germany than to a people situated like ourselves.[4] When war broke out the British Government announced that it accepted the Declaration of London as the basis of our maritime practice. The result was a position of some confusion, for the consequences of the new law had never been fully realized. Under it, for example, the captain of the *Emden* could justify his sinking of British ships instead of taking them to a port for adjudication. One provision, which seems to have been deduced from it, was so patently ridiculous that it was soon dropped—that belligerents (that is, enemy reservists) in neutral ships were not liable to arrest. Presently successive Orders in Council, instigated by sheer necessity, altered the Declaration of London beyond recognition. The truth was, that we were engaged in a war to which few *a priori* rules could be made to apply. Germany had become a law unto herself, and the wisest course for the Allies was to frame their own code, which should comply not only with the half-dozen great principles of international equity, but with the mandates of common sense.

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[1] The *Yorck* was destroyed by a mine on November 3. The *Strassburg* was one of the vessels engaged in the raid on Scarborough and Hartlepool in December.

[2] *Influence of Sea Power upon History*, p. 14.

[3] Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 4554 of 1909.

[4] The following are a few examples of the way in which it impaired our naval power: It was made easy to break a blockade, for the right of a blockading Power to capture a blockade-runner did not cover the whole period of her voyage and was confined to ships of the blockading force (Articles 14, 16, 17, 19, 20); stereotyped lists of contraband and non-contraband were drawn up, instead of the old custom of leaving the question to the discretion of the Prize Court (Articles 22, 23, 24, 25, 28); a ship carrying contraband could only be condemned if the contraband formed more than half its cargo; a belligerent warship could destroy a neutral vessel without taking it to a port for judgment; the transfer of an enemy vessel to a neutral flag was presumed to be valid if effected more than thirty days before the outbreak of war (Article 55); the question of the test of enemy property was left in high confusion (Article 58); a neutral vessel, if accompanied by any sort of warship of her own flag, was exempt from search; belligerents in neutral vessels on the high seas were exempt from capture (based on Article 45). With the Declaration of London would go most of the naval findings of the Hague Conference of 1907. The British delegates who assented to the Declaration of London proceeded on the assumption that in any war of the future Britain would be neutral, and so endeavoured to reduce the privileges of maritime belligerents.

CHAPTER XIX.
THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE—THE FIRST PHASE.

Meaning of "Initiative"—Nature of Valleys of Aisne and Suippe—German Position—Arrangement of Allied Armies—Crossing of the Vesle—Crossing of the Aisne, 13th September—Work of the Engineers—Sir Douglas Haig's Advance on the Ladies' Road, 14th September—Heavy British Casualties—French Repulse North of Soissons—Arrival of 6th British Division—Von Buelow's Attack on Rheims—Change of Allied Plans—End of Battle of the Aisne Proper, 18th September—Enveloping Movement up the Oise Valley—Creation of French 7th and 10th Armies.

What is the initiative in war? It is not the offensive, which is merely the power to attack. An army may consistently have the offensive and be the attacker throughout a whole campaign, and yet never possess the initiative. Perhaps it may be most simply defined as the power to dictate to the enemy the *form* of action; to lay down the type of the coming battle. When combined with the offensive it is a terrible weapon. Moltke had both at Sedan, as had Napoleon at Jena, and Lee at Chancellorsville and Thomas at Nashville. But a general acting on the defensive may have the initiative. Wellington never lost it during his early years in the Peninsula, though his main strategy was defensive. Kutusov when he led Napoleon to Moscow had the initiative, for he compelled his great enemy to conform to his own ideas of war. In the present campaign Tannenberg is a good example of a fight where the victor had both the offensive and the initiative. On the retreat from Mons the Germans had both; at the Marne the Allies snatched both from them; but, once the retreating forces were entrenched on the Aisne, General Joffre had only the offensive remaining. The Germans secured again the initiative—that is, they compelled their adversaries to adopt the form of battle on which they had decided: a trench battle, well suited to their own stubborn and mechanical genius. A war of entrenchments began which was to last for many weary months, and which can only be paralleled from the annals of mediæval contests.

Let us glance for a moment at the topography of those wide grassy vales of

Aisne and Suippe which are scored from west to east across Northern France. The Aisne, which enters the Oise at Compiègne, has on its north side, at an average of a mile or more from the stream, a line of steep ridges, the scarp of a great plateau. The valley floor is like much other French scenery—a sluggish stream, resembling the Trent, villages, farmhouses, unfenced fields of crops, poplar-lined roads, and a few little towns, the chief of which is Soissons, with its twelfth-century cathedral, the scene of many great doings in France's history. On the north the hills stand like a wall, and the spurs dip down sharply to the vale, while between them the short and rapid brooks have cut steep re-entrant combes in the plateau's edge. The height of the scarp varies from some 200 feet, where the uplands begin on the west above Compiègne from the Forest of the Eagle, to more than 450 feet thirty miles east in the high bluffs of Craonne. Beyond this latter place the Aisne takes a wide sweep to the north-east towards its source in the Argonne, and the banks fall to the lower level characteristic of the shallow dales of Champagne. The section from Compiègne to Craonne is everywhere of the same type, with sometimes a bolder spur and sometimes a deeper ravine. The top of the plateau cannot be seen from the valley, nor even from the high ground to the south. It is muffled everywhere by a cloak of woods—what are called in Hampshire "hangers"—which dip over the edge and descend for some distance towards the river. The lower slopes are, for the most part, steep and grassy, with enclosed coppices here and there. The plateau stretches back for some miles, till at La Fère and Laon it breaks down into the plains of north-eastern France.

Seven miles east of Soissons as the crow flies the river Vesle enters the Aisne on the south bank. It is the stream on which stands the city of Rheims, and its valley is a replica in miniature of the Aisne. At Neufchâtel-on-Aisne the river Suippe comes in from the south, flowing from the Argonne. It rolls its muddy white waters through a shallow depression in the chalk of Northern Champagne. Both its banks are long, gentle slopes of open ploughland, with a few raw new plantations to break the monotony. Beyond the southern slope and over the watershed we descend to where Rheims lies beautifully in its cincture of bold and forested hills.

The German armies had chosen for their stand, not the line of the Aisne, but the crest of the plateau beyond it, at an average of two miles from the stream side. Long before it had been decided upon, and as they advanced to the Marne, they left parties of sappers to prepare the trenches. A more perfect position could not be found.[1] It commanded all the crossings of the river and most of the roads on the south bank, and even if the enemy reached the north side the outjutting spurs gave excellent opportunities for an enfilading fire. The blindness of the crests made it

almost impossible for the German trenches to be detected. Eastward towards Neufchâtel, where the Aisne valley changed its character, the line crossed the river, and followed in a wide curve the course of the Suippe, keeping several miles back from the stream on the northern slopes. Here the position was still stronger. Before them they had a natural glacis, and across the river they could command the bare swelling downs for miles. The line crossed the Champagne-Pouilleuse, with the Bazancourt-Grand Pré railway behind it, and rested on the Argonne, to the east of which the army of the Imperial Crown Prince was ringing Verdun on north and east from Montfaucon to the shaggy folds of the Woëvre.

Von Kluck, with the 1st German Army, held the western section from the Forest of the Eagle to the plateau of Craonne. He had against him Maunoury's 6th French Army—whose left wing was also destined to work up the Oise towards Lassigny and Noyon—the British army, and the 5th French Army of d'Esperey. Von Buelow held the ground from von Kluck's left, from the Aisne crossing at Berry-au-Bac, along the line of the Suippe. The Saxon general, von Hausen, about this time fell sick, and was relieved of his command, and the Saxon troops seem to have been joined to von Buelow's forces. Against von Buelow was ranged the 9th Army of General Foch, some corps of which may have been detached for reserves elsewhere. The line of Northern Champagne was defended by the Duke of Wurtemberg, who joined hands in the Argonne with the Crown Prince. The French in Champagne were Langle's 4th Army, advancing against the Bazancourt-Grand Pré line. The Crown Prince was faced by Sarrail's 3rd Army, which at once set itself to entrenching and to enlarging the Verdun *enceinte*, with a clear perception of the truth that, if Verdun was to be held, the big German howitzers must be kept out of range. In the south of the Woëvre, linked with Sarrail by the forts of the Meuse, the 2nd Army of de Castelnau was fronting the Bavarians, while Dubail held a portion of the Vosges and rested his right on Belfort.

When the Allied troops on the 13th and 14th of September first became dimly cognizant of the nature of the German position they did not realize its full meaning. They could not know that they were on the glacis of the new type of fortress which Germany had built for herself, and which was presently to embrace about a fifth of Europe. On the 11th and the 12th they had believed the enemy to be in full retreat, and when they felt his strength their generals were puzzled to decide whether he meant to make a serious stand, or was only fighting delaying actions preparatory to a further retirement to the Sambre or beyond. Had General Joffre known the strength of the Aisne positions, he would probably from the beginning have endeavoured to turn them on the west, or—what would give far more decisive results—to break

through the Crown Prince's army in the east, and so get between them and their own country. As it was, he decided to make a frontal attack, which would be the natural course against an enemy in retreat who had merely halted to show his fangs. The fighting on the Aisne was to continue for many weary months, and to show a slow and confusing series of trench attacks sandwiched between long periods of stagnant cannonades. But the Battle of the Aisne in the proper sense of the word—the battle during which the Allied plan was a frontal assault—lasted strictly for six days only, and on the widest interpretation for no more than a fortnight. Of this conflict Sir John French's third dispatch gives us a full tactical account, so far as the work of his own army is concerned. Our information about certain parts of the Allied line is still defective; but the story of the whole operations must be attempted, for it was all one battle, and the real danger point did not lie in the British section.

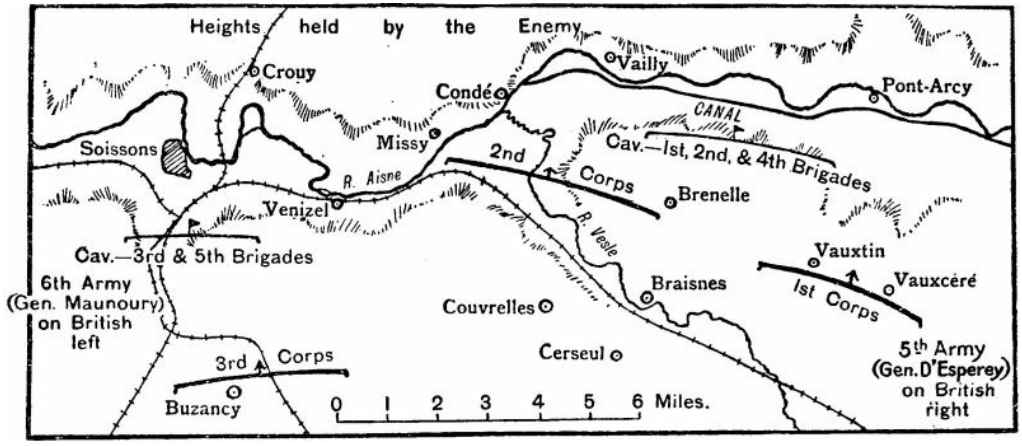
Sept. 12.

The first fighting was an affair of advanced Allied cavalry and strong German rearguards. On Saturday, 12th September, Maunoury's 6th Army was in the Forest of Compiègne, with its right fronting the enemy in the town of Soissons. It had secured several good artillery positions on the south bank, and spent the day in a long-range duel with the German guns across the river, in the endeavour to "prepare" a crossing. Practically all the bridges were down, and since the Aisne, though not very wide, is fully fifteen feet deep, the only transport must be by pontoons. It took some time to capture a German post on the Mont de Paris, south of Soissons. On Maunoury's right the British Third Corps was busy at the same tactics just to the east of Soissons. East of it, again, the two other British corps were advancing in echelon, while the cavalry was driving the enemy out of the ground around the Lower Vesle. On the day before our cavalry had arrived in the Aisne valley, the 3rd and 5th Brigades just south of Soissons, the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Brigades at Couvrelles and Cerseul in the tributary glen of the Vesle. On the 12th Allenby discovered that the Germans were holding Braisne and the surrounding heights in some force, and after a fight, in which the 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays) distinguished themselves, and much assistance was given by some advanced infantry of the 3rd Division, drove them out, and cleared the stream. Shortly after midday the rain began, and our advance in the afternoon was handicapped by transport difficulties in the heavy soil. In the evening the First Corps lay between Vauxcéré and Vauxtin; the Second astride the Vesle from Brenelle to near Missy, where the 5th Division on its left found the Aisne crossing strongly held; the Third Corps south of Soissons, chiefly in the neighbourhood of Buzancy, while its heavy batteries were assisting Maunoury. East of the British d'Esperey brought his army up to the Vesle, and Langle was moving down the Upper Suippe. The fighting

around Verdun must be left till later, for it did not belong to the present series of engagements.

Sunday, the 13th, was the beginning of the passage of the Aisne. The 6th French Army constructed pontoons at various places under a heavy fire, and several divisions were got over. Vic and Fontenoy were the chief crossings, for a pontoon bridge at Soissons itself was made impossible by the guns on the northern heights. A number of French infantry did succeed in making a passage by means of the single girder which was all that was now left of the narrow-gauge railway bridge. To the east the British operations during the day were full of interest. The Third Corps attempted the section between Soissons and Venizel. The Aisne was in high flood, and the heavy rain made every movement difficult. Its bridging train attempted to build a heavy pontoon bridge on the French right, but this failed, like the similar French attempt, owing to the fire of the German howitzers. The 19th Brigade was left behind in reserve at Billy, while the 11th Brigade seems to have got across the river either during the night or very early in the morning, for during the day it held a position on the northern slopes east of Bucy. At Venizel there was a road bridge, not completely destroyed, which was mended sufficiently to allow of the passage of field-guns. A pontoon bridge was built beside it, and early in the afternoon the whole of the 4th Division was across, and co-operating with the left of the Second Corps against the German positions at Chivres and Vregny.

Sept. 13.



British Position on September 12, on the eve of the crossing of the Aisne.

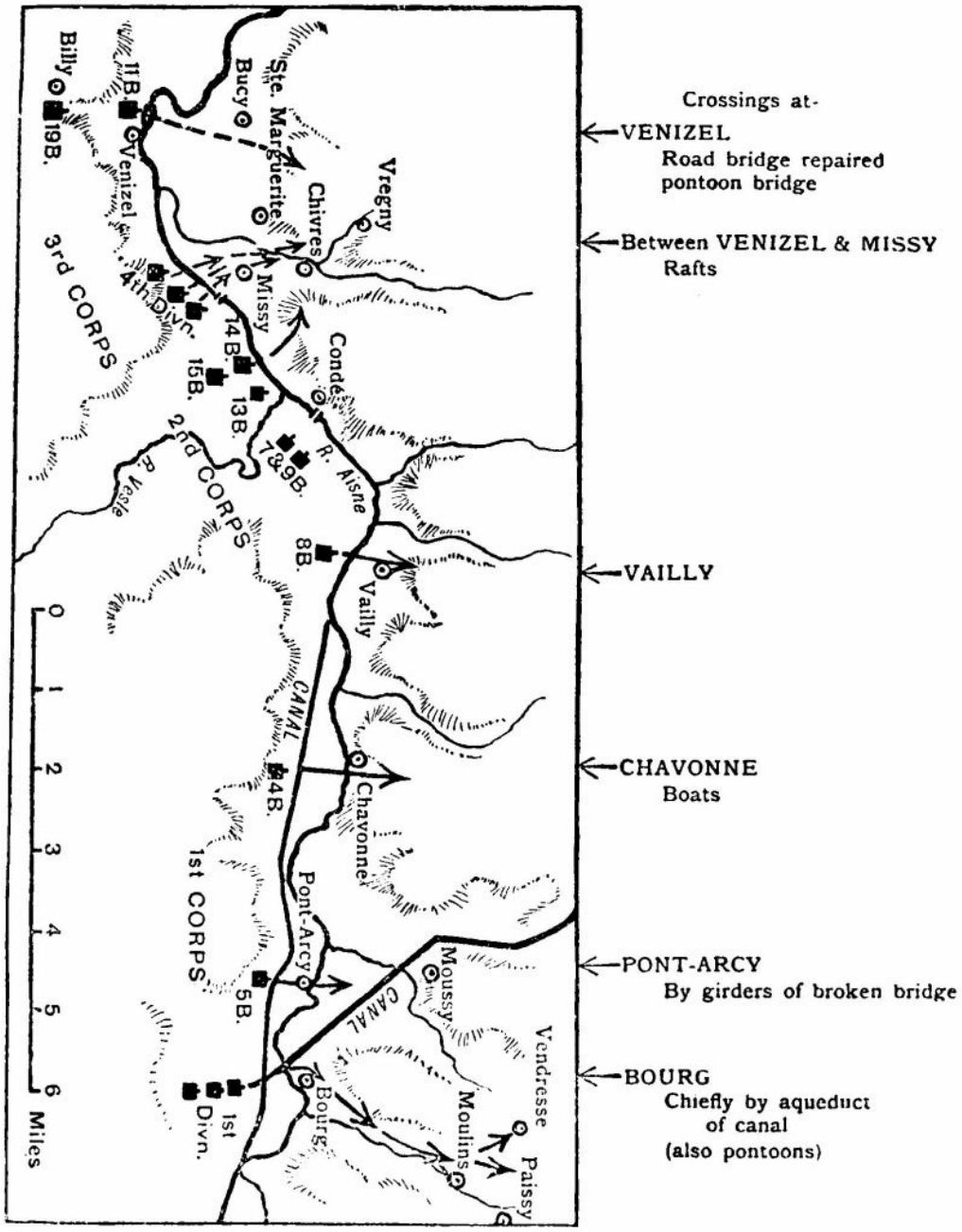
Farther east the Second Corps had been in difficulties. The 5th Division on its left found the open space between the river and the heights opposite Missy a death-

trap from the German guns. Its 13th Brigade could not advance, but its 14th and 15th Brigades succeeded in crossing by means of rafts between Missy and Venizel, and took up positions around the village of Ste. Marguerite. The 3rd Division had a still harder task. One of its brigades, the 8th, managed to cross at Vailly; but the 9th and 7th Brigades, making the attempt at Condé, found the bridge there still standing, and in German hands. This bridge remained in the possession of the Germans long after the British forces were on the north bank, a point of danger between the two divisions of the Second Corps. We find Sir John French five days later discussing with General Smith-Dorrien the desirability of making an effort to seize it, and deciding that it was unnecessary, since the enemy could make no real use of it, and would be forced out of it automatically by any Allied advance.

The British First Corps, with some of the cavalry, were concerned with the section between Chavonne and Bourg. Here there were both the river and a canal on the south bank to be passed, and not only was there heavy shell fire to be faced from the northern heights, but most of the possible crossing-places were guarded by strong detachments of German infantry with machine-guns. The 2nd Division were in trouble from the start. Only one battalion of Cavan's 4th (Guards) Brigade succeeded in crossing in boats at Chavonne, while the 5th Brigade crossed by the broken girders of the bridge at Pont-Arcy, where the flooded river washed over their precarious foothold. The 1st Division crossed principally by the aqueduct which carries a small canal over the Aisne at Bourg, and which by some miracle was weakly held, while an advanced body of infantry preceded them by pontoons. By the evening it had occupied the positions of Paissy, Moulins, and Vendresse, on the northern bank.

On the evening of that difficult Sunday we may summarize the situation by saying that, on the fifteen miles of front allotted to the British, we had crossed the river at most points, and had entrenched ourselves well up the farther slopes. Only the 19th Brigade of the Third Corps, and of the Second Corps the 4th (three battalions), 6th, 7th, 9th, and 13th Brigades bivouacked on the southern bank. The British army has been familiar with difficult river crossings, like the Alma, the Modder, and the Tugela, but never before had it forced a passage so quickly in the face of so great and so strongly posted an enemy. High honour was won by our artillery, working under desperate conditions, and most notably by the Royal Engineers, who wrought with all the coolness they had once shown at the Delhi Gate, and went on calmly with their work of flinging across pontoon bridges and repairing damaged girders in places where it seemed as if no human being could live. Next day, at Missy, Captain W. H. Johnston of the Royal Engineers worked with his own hands two rafts,

carrying ammunition and bringing back wounded, and by his efforts alone enabled the 11th and 15th Brigades to maintain their position across the river. For this service he was awarded the Victoria Cross.



Battle of the Aisne.
British crossing of the Aisne, September 13.

During the night of the 13th, while the German searchlights played upon the sodden riverside fields, Sir John French decided that the following day must be made to reveal the nature of the German plans. Accordingly, while our engineers were busy strengthening the new bridges and repairing some of the old for heavy traffic, a general advance was begun along the whole western section of the front. Maunoury carried the line of the river between Compiègne and Soissons, and attacked vigorously right up to the edges of the plateau. From Vic the Zouaves advanced up the deep cleft of Morsain through St. Christophe, and seized the villages of Autrèches and Nouvron on the containing spurs. By the evening, or early the next morning, he had won his way far up the heights, and was suddenly brought up against the main German position on the plateau itself. There he found himself held, and of all the Allied commanders was the first to realize the nature of the defensive trenches which the enemy had prepared. The fate of the British Third and Second Corps was much the same. The 4th Division could make no advance on the Bucy uplands between Vregny and Chivres because of the merciless shell fire from the hidden German trenches. The 5th Division was in like case north of Condé, and the 3rd Division, which made a gallant attempt to advance on Aize, was driven back to its old ground at Vailly. Everywhere as soon as we felt the enemy we began to dig ourselves in on the slopes—our first real experience of a task which was soon to become our staple military duty.

Sept. 14.

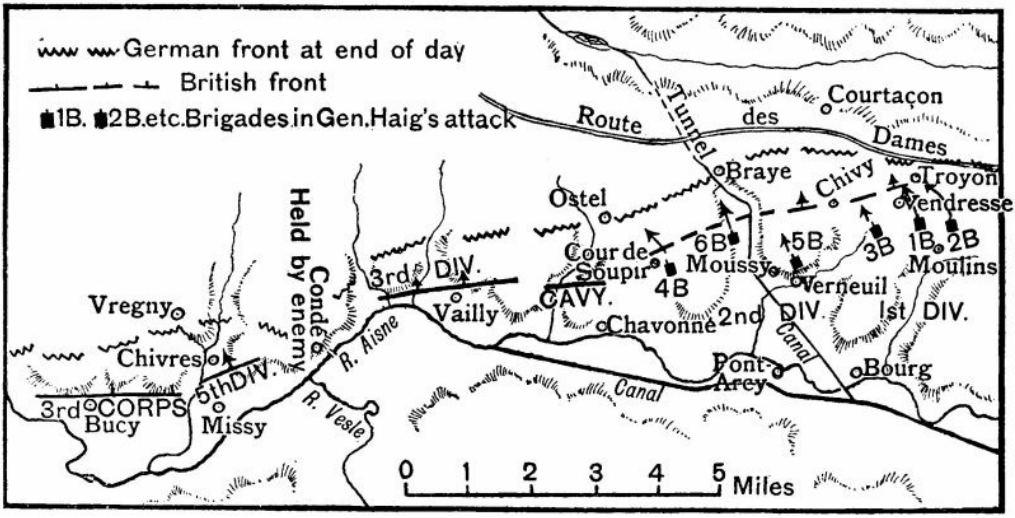
The real offensive was entrusted to Sir Douglas Haig's First Corps, which, as we have seen, was mostly on the northern bank between Chavonne and Moulins, where to the east begins the first lift of the Craonne plateau. "The action of the First Corps on this day," Sir John French wrote, "under the direction and command of Sir Douglas Haig, was of so skilful, bold, and decisive a character, that he gained positions which alone have enabled me to maintain my position for more than three weeks of very severe fighting on the north bank of the river." That is high praise, and it was well deserved. The First Corps was directed to cross the line Moulins-Moussy by 7 a.m. At this point the northern heights are more withdrawn from the Aisne. A widish glen opens out at Pont-Arcy, and up it runs the little canal which, as we have seen, crossed the river at Bourg. This canal presently disappears in a tunnel in the hillside. In all these ravines there are little villages and rock dwellings, where live the men employed in the limekilns and the plaster quarries. Four miles to the north an important highway, the Chemin des Dames, or Ladies' Road, runs east and

west along the plateau. It is the main upper road along the Aisne valley to Craonne, and runs parallel, at an average distance of three miles, with the lower road along the riverside. From it the traveller has a wide prospect as far north as the heights of Laon. If it could be seized it would give command of the southern plateau from Soissons to Berry-au-Bac. It was towards this line that Sir Douglas Haig directed his efforts. The plan of the advance was as follows. The 2nd Brigade and the 25th Artillery Brigade, under General Bulfin, were to push north from Moulins on the extreme right, and hold a spur east of Troyon, while the rest of the 1st Division advanced up the Vendresse valley. The 2nd Division was to occupy the Ladies' Road south of Courtaçon with one brigade, while the remainder advanced up the Braye glen, and the 4th (Guards) Brigade on its left took the heights east of Ostel. It was hoped that the movement of the 3rd Division of the Second Corps north of Vailly would serve to safeguard the left wing of the main advance.

The movement began before dawn on the 14th with General Bulfin's advance from Moulins to the hamlet of Troyon, just south of the Ladies' Road. There was a sugar factory there strongly held by the enemy, and General Bulfin ordered the King's Royal Rifles and the Sussex to move against it at 3 a.m., while the Northamptons were sent off at 4 a.m. to occupy the spur east of Troyon, and the North Lancashires at 5.30 to Vendresse. The factory was too strong for the attackers to carry, and the North Lancashires were recalled to their support. This was not sufficient, and the 1st Brigade had to be brought up, one of its battalions, the 1st Coldstream, supporting the right of the assault, and the remainder forming on the left. About midday the North Lancashires captured the factory, and the two brigades were drawn up on a line north of Troyon and just south of the Ladies' Road. There they were close to the enemy's main entrenchments, and could make no headway for his fire. The day was wet and misty, and this dulled the precision of the artillery on both sides. The 3rd Brigade continued the line west of Vendresse, and linked up with the 2nd Division.

The 2nd Division found itself in heavy waters from the outset. Many of its battalions, it must be remembered, had still to cross the Aisne when the morning broke. Its 6th Brigade, which should have seized a point on the Ladies' Road south of Courtaçon, was hung up just south of Braye, and had to be supported by two howitzer brigades and a heavy battery. The 4th (Guards) Brigade, aiming at Ostel, fought its way through the thick dripping woods, where very little aid could be got from our artillery, and by one o'clock was close on the Ostel ridge. Here the Germans counter-attacked in force, and for some time it looked as if they might turn the left flank of the Guards and cut the communication of the 3rd Division at Vailly.

Sir John French had no reserves available except Allenby's cavalry; but since the British trooper is also a mounted infantryman, and can fight with a rifle as well as with a sabre, the cavalry proved sufficient. Sir Douglas Haig used part of Allenby's division, chiefly the 1st Brigade, to prolong the left flank of the Guards, and after some hard fighting repelled the German attack.



Battle of the Aisne.
Fighting on the British Front, September 14.

About four in the afternoon the commander of the First Corps ordered a general advance. From then till daylight departed there was a heavy engagement, which resulted in a clear British success. At nightfall we held, not indeed the Ladies' Road, but a position which ran from a point on the north-east of Troyon, through Troyon and Chivy to La Cour de Soupir, while Briggs's cavalry carried it down to the Soissons road west of Chavonne. The whole day's work was well conceived and brilliantly executed, and gave the Allies for the first time an entrenched position on the plateau itself. Twelve field-guns, several machine-guns, and 600 prisoners were taken by the infantry, and the cavalry also made many captures. But the success was not won without cost. The Welsh regiment, in the 3rd Brigade at Chivy, fought gallantly under the heroic inspiration of Captain Mark Haggard, and when that officer fell mortally wounded, he was picked up under heavy fire by Lance-Corporal William Fuller, who received the Victoria Cross. One of the most amazing exploits of the war was performed by Private George Wilson of the Highland Light Infantry, when the 5th Brigade were in action at Verneuil. Accompanied by one man, he

attacked a German machine-gun. His comrade was killed, but he advanced alone, shot the officer in charge, and captured the gun, after shooting or bayoneting the six Germans who worked it. For this berserker deed he received the Victoria Cross. The mortality among the commissioned ranks of the First Corps was very heavy. One brigade alone, as Sir John French reports, lost three of its four colonels. Lieutenant-Colonel Adrian Grant-Duff of the Black Watch, Lieutenant-Colonel Montresor of the Sussex, Lieutenant-Colonel Lloyd of the Loyal North Lancashires, and Lieutenant-Colonel Dawson Warren of the West Surrey were among the dead.

On the day before d'Esperey's 5th Army had in large part crossed the Aisne east of Bourg, and on the 14th, the first assault began on the Craonne plateau. On the evening of that day the eastern flank of the British First Corps was safeguarded by French Moroccan battalions, which entrenched themselves in echelon on its right rear. The Germans held the river crossing at Berry-au-Bac, an important point, for there the highroad runs from Rheims to Laon. Along the Suippe the 9th Army was feeling the German strength in the impregnable trenches on the northern slopes, and finding it so great that the advance checked, and was presently to be succeeded by a forced retirement. Farther east in North Champagne, Langle's 4th Army had occupied Souain, and, like its colleague to the west, was becoming aware of the fortress in which the enemy had found shelter.

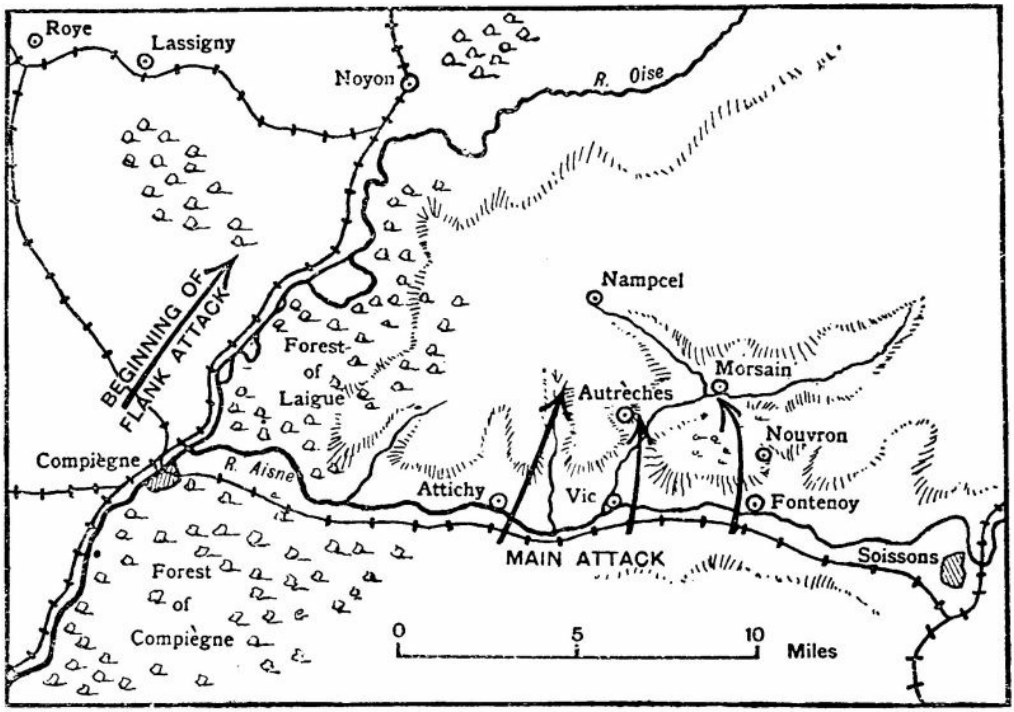
The next day, Tuesday, the 15th, saw a series of violent German counter-attacks along the western front. Maunoury's 6th Army was the chief sufferer. From their main position at Nampcel the Germans drove the French out of their posts on the crests of the spurs, recaptured Autrèches, and forced the French right out of the Morsain ravine and off the spurs of Nouvron. By the Wednesday morning the French were back on a line close to the Aisne, and only a few hundred yards north of their original crossing-places at Vic and Fontenoy. Soissons was heavily shelled, and all the northern part of the town was gutted by fire. The French left, however, continued its flanking movement up the Oise on the west side of the Forest of the Eagle, and on this day made considerable progress in the direction of Noyon. On the British left the 4th Division of the Third Corps was severely handled, but stood stoutly to the ground it had won south of Vregny. The 5th Division felt the weight of the same onslaught, and was enfiladed on its left by the German fire from Vregny, and could not advance in face of the heavy artillery posted north of Chivres and Condé. In the evening it was forced back almost to the line of the stream, and held the ground between Missy and Ste. Marguerite—a line dominated everywhere by the guns on the heights. The 3rd Division on its right was more fortunate, for it advanced from Vailly, and retook the

Sept. 15.

high ground from which it had been evicted the day before. The British right had a long day of counter-attacks, which it succeeded in repulsing, and the 4th (Guards) Brigade in particular gave the enemy much punishment. In this action Bombardier Ernest Harlock of the 113th Battery R.F.A. received the Victoria Cross for his gallantry in returning twice to lay his gun, though badly wounded. By the evening the British line was fairly comfortable, except for the precarious situation of the 4th and 5th Divisions.

Next day there was a sudden lull on the British front. Sir John French had contemplated a second attack on the Ladies' Road, which would give relief to the hard-pressed 4th and 5th Divisions; but the news from d'Esperey convinced him that it would be highly dangerous. For the French 5th Army had found the enemy on the Craonne plateau too strong for them, and the Moroccan battalions, echeloned on the British right, had fallen back, and so left that flank in the air. Accordingly the 6th Division,[2] which had arrived that morning from England, was kept in reserve on the south bank of the Aisne, instead of being sent to support the First Corps in a forward movement.

Sept. 16.



Battle of the Aisne
Operations of the 6th French Army (Gen. Maunoury).

But on the Thursday events moved more swiftly. Maunoury had received reinforcements, and the right of the French 6th Army checked the German attack, and won back all the ground they had lost. They drove the Germans right back from the edge of the plateau to their main position behind Nampcel. In particular, they cleared them out of the quarries of Autrèches, which had given them deadly gun positions. This French success eased the situation of the British 4th and 5th Divisions, and the centre of our line was left in peace. Not so our 1st Division, perched high up on the plateau at Troyon, and looking towards the Ladies' Road. The Northamptons on the extreme right had held their ground in the incessant rain in spite of repeated German efforts to dislodge them. On this Thursday morning they had an ugly experience. Some German troops in the opposite trenches signified that they wished to surrender. When called on to come forward they advanced to the edge of our trenches, and then opened fire at point-blank range. Happily the Northamptons' trench was flanked by a machine-gun section of the Queen's, who, with the assistance of some men of the Coldstreams, enfiladed the Germans, killed 300, and took 100 prisoners. With some truth a German captain had written in a letter home, "With the English troops we have great difficulties."

Sept. 17.

In the afternoon of the same day the Northamptons and Queen's were again attacked—this time by three German battalions. Then they counter-attacked, reinforced by the King's Royal Rifles, and, aided by the thick mist, crept up to the edge of the enemy's line and charged with the bayonet. The Queen's on the left, the Northamptons in front, and the King's Royal Rifles on the right carried the hill, and drove off the enemy with severe losses.

Farther to the east the 5th French Army was still assaulting in vain the Craonne plateau, and the 9th Army had fallen back from the Suippe to just outside Rheims. The Germans were now on the hills north of that city, and were able to pour shells into it. The heights of Brimont were won by them, and though the French made desperate efforts to retake them, and for a moment looked like succeeding, they continued to hold the ground. These heights were only 9,000 yards from the city. More important still, they had worked round the French position on the east, and had won the hill of Nogent l'Abbesse, though the French remained in possession of Pompelle, the southern spur. Here the German advance stopped, for west of Rheims lay the high wooded ground of Pouillon, and south the heights known as the Montagne de Rheims, both old prepared positions for the defence of the Marne. The battle here resolved itself into the artillery duel which was to last for months, and which played havoc with that noblest monument of French Gothic, the Cathedral of

Rheims. Farther east, Langle's army held its own, but made little progress. It was still some three miles short of the Bazancourt-Grand Pré railway.

On the next day there was little doing in the daytime, but at night there was a general attack on the 1st and 2nd British Divisions, and in the darkness the Gloucesters made a brilliant sally and captured a section of the enemy's trenches. Elsewhere Maunoury was striving fruitlessly against von Kluck's position, though his left was making good progress on the Oise; d'Esperey was beating in vain on the Craonne escarpment; Foch's army was hard pressed at Rheims by the Prussian Guards; and Langle found the Wurtembergers in Champagne a barrier which he could not break.

Sept. 18.

This Friday may be taken as the end of the Battle of the Aisne in its strict sense, for it marked the conclusion of the attempt of the Allies to break down the German positions by a frontal attack. Five days' fighting had convinced them that here was no halting-place for a rearguard action, but the long-thought-out defences of an army ready and willing for battle. The forces were too evenly matched to produce anything better than stalemate, and continued assaults upon those hidden batteries would only lead to a useless waste of life. We might win a spur here and there, but we would find, as Napoleon found at Craonne, that the capture of peninsulas of land was idle when the enemy held the main plateau in strength. Our only plan was to dig ourselves in and creep towards the German lines in a slow campaign of sap and mine. By the 18th we had got ready our trenches, and were settling down to this novel warfare.

The general situation was strategically bad. The enemy, from whom we hoped we had wrested the offensive at the Marne, was beginning to recover it. Von Buelow's attack on Rheims was a dangerous blow at our centre, and if Langle failed in Champagne the Allied front might be pierced in a vital spot. The fierce assault upon Verdun, which we shall consider in the next chapter, was also a ground for uneasiness. Fortress was now an anxious word in French ears. Sarrail had none too many men, and if the Crown Prince, aided by the Bavarians, could break through the Heights of the Meuse our right would be turned, and a clear road laid open for the invaders from Metz and the Rhine.

The situation demanded a counter-offensive which should promise more speedy results than a frontal assault upon the Aisne plateau. Accordingly, as early as 16th September, General Joffre changed his strategy. He resolved to play the German game, fling out his line to the west, and attempt to envelop von Kluck's right. Such a movement, if successful, would threaten the chief German communications by the great trunk line of the Oise valley, and if it could be pushed as far as La Fère or even

as far as the junction of Tergnier, would compel the retreat of the whole German right. Accordingly, orders were given for two new armies to form on Maunoury's left, aligning themselves in an angle to the north-west. The first was the 7th Army, under General de Castelnau, who for the purpose surrendered his command in Lorraine to General Dubail. On its left was to be formed the 10th Army, under General Louis Maud'huy. Maud'huy, of whom we shall hear much later, was one of Joffre's discoveries. A man of fifty-seven, he was best known as the Professor of Military History at the École de Guerre. At the beginning of the war he was only a brigadier, commanding a brigade in the army of Lorraine.[3] In three weeks he passed through the ranks of brigadier-general, divisional general, army corps commander, to army commander—a rapidity of promotion which can scarcely be paralleled from the Napoleonic wars. Probably in the formation of these new forces the necessary stiffening of first line troops was taken from the existing armies, for at that moment Joffre had still no superfluity of men. Foch's 9th Army, for example, in its fighting round Rheims, can scarcely have had the strength which it bore in its struggle for Sezanne.

The Battle of the Aisne was one of those pieces of desperate fighting which may fairly be called "soldiers' battles," for there is no scope in them for the higher strategy or much tactical ingenuity. Every great war shows several of the kind. They are hard and sanguinary, without being either very glorious or very interesting. The rank and file and the regimental officers do the chief work and deserve the chief honours.

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[1] It had been once before used as a defensive position by an *invader*—by Bluecher in February and March 1814. The study of this campaign may have suggested the idea to the German Staff.

[2] The 6th Division (Major-General Keir) embraced the 16th Brigade (Brigadier-General Williams)—1st East Kent, 1st Leicester, 1st Shropshire Light Infantry, 2nd York and Lancaster; the 17th Brigade (Brigadier-General W. R. B. Doran)—1st Royal Fusiliers, 1st North Staffords, 2nd Leicester, 3rd Rifle Brigade; the 18th Brigade (Brigadier-General Congreve, V.C.)—1st West Yorks, 1st East Yorks, 2nd Notts and Derby, 2nd Durham Light Infantry.

[3] The 80th Brigade in the 40th Division in the 8th Corps.

CHAPTER XX.
THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE—THE SECOND PHASE.

Nature of the Fighting on the Aisne—Disaster to the Camerons—German Losses—British Losses—The Defence of Verdun—Von Strantz's New Army in the Woëvre—Attack on Fort Troyon—Fall of Paroches and Camp des Romains—Germans capture St. Mihiel—The Crown Prince's Failure at La Grurie—French occupy Varennes—German attack on Rheims—The Cathedral shelled—Extension of French Left Flank—German Counter-movement—New German Dispositions—British Army moved to Extreme Left—The Race for the Sea—Changes in German Policy.

For the three weeks on from Friday, 18th September, the Battle of the Aisne, so far as the British forces were concerned, degenerated into a sullen trench warfare, with no possibility of any great movement. Both armies were in position and under cover. Sporadic attacks had to be faced, especially by the 1st Division at Troyon, and there were many counter-attacks, by which more than once the advanced German trenches were won. But, generally speaking, these weeks showed few incidents. The worst fighting was over by the 18th, and we had now acquired the trick of this strange burrowing.

The only conspicuous British disaster concerned the 1st Cameron Highlanders. This battalion, on 4th September, had been moved to the 1st Brigade, to take the place of the Munster Fusiliers, who, as we have seen, were cut off and captured during the retreat from Mons. In the action of 14th September they had advanced with the 1st Division up the Vendresse glen, and had heavy fighting to the west of the sugar factory at Troyon, where they lost 17 officers and over 500 men. On the 25th of September what was left of them had moved up to relieve the Black Watch in the trenches just west of the village of Beaulne, and the battalion headquarters occupied one of the caves in the chalk of the plateau. During the morning a German shell fell on the top of the cave and buried the inmates. One or two were rescued, but the fire was too heavy to admit of serious excavation, and it was not till the evening that a party of Royal Engineers was able to

Sept. 25.

dig them out. Five officers and some thirty men were lost, including Captain D. N. Miers, then temporarily in command of the battalion, Captain A. G. Cameron of Lochiel, Lieutenant Napier Cameron, and Lieutenant Meiklejohn. No British regiment suffered more heavily in the first two months of war.

But if the gravest peril had gone, the discomfort remained. The first two weeks at the Aisne were one long downpour. To this succeeded a week of St. Martin's summer, and then came autumn damp and mist. On the sides of the plateau the chalky mud seemed bottomless. It filled the ears and eyes and throats of our men, it plastered their clothing, and mingled generously with their diet. Their grandfathers who had been at Sebastopol could have told them something about mud; but after India and South Africa the mire of the Aisne seemed a grievous affliction. The day was soon to come when the same men in West Flanders sighed for the Aisne as a dry and salubrious habitation.

Our trenches were for the most part well up on the slopes of the plateau. Sometimes, as at Troyon, they were pushed close up to and in full view of the enemy's position, but generally the latter was concealed behind the crest of the ridge, and on flanking spurs which enfiladed ours. Great assistance in locating the enemy was given by our airmen; but we suffered from a chronic lack of artillery. Not only had the Germans far more pieces than we had, but they had their big 8-inch howitzers from Maubeuge, and they seemed to have an endless supply of machine-guns. Our artillery had to give most of its time to keeping down the German gun-fire, and in this arm we could rarely take the offensive. The bombardment which the British endured was, therefore, far more incessant and torturing than any we could inflict on the enemy. On 23rd September the four 6-inch howitzer batteries which Sir John French had asked for from England arrived at the Aisne, and we were able to make some return in kind; but for every shell of this type which we could fire the Germans fired twenty. Happily it soon appeared that the bark of the big howitzers was worse than their bite. They made a stupendous noise, like the rushing of an express train through the air, but they did little harm except within twenty yards of where they fell. If a shell dropped in or near a trench it buried the occupants, and there were some extraordinary cases of rescue from entombment. Apart from such accidents, we grew skilled at devising bomb-proof shelters, and battalions vied with each other in the ingenuity of their dug-outs.

Sept. 23.

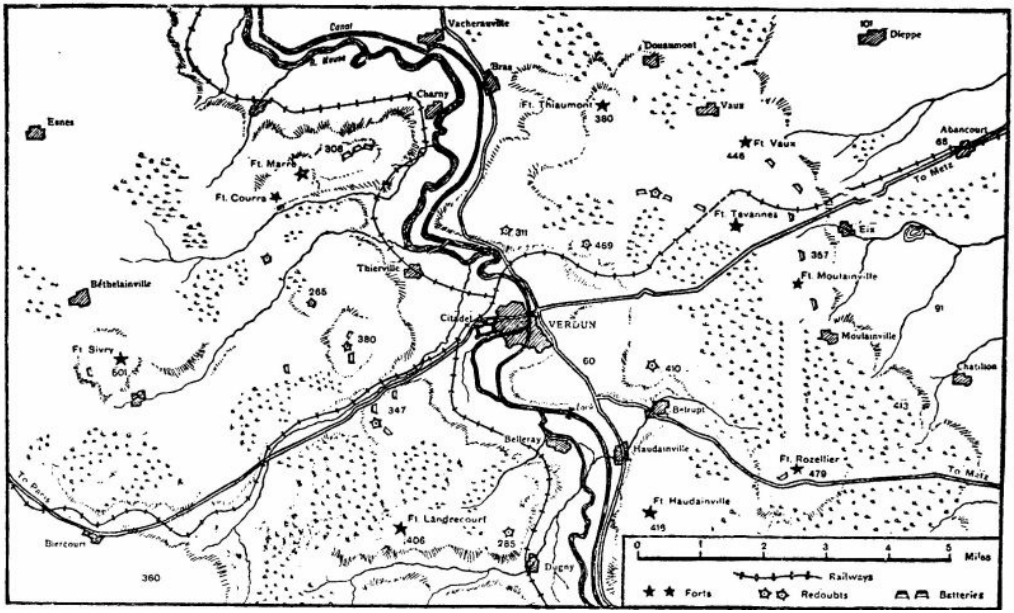
Between the two lines of trenches was a stretch of dead ground, where the unburied bodies of the dead lay. Often the fire was too heavy to rescue the wounded or bring in the dead, and men had sometimes to lie for days in torment in this ghastly

no-man's-land, in full view of their friends. Every scrap of defence that could be found was utilized by both sides. Rabbit-netting from the little spinneys, wire entanglements, and a network of subsidiary trenches turned the heights of the Aisne into the outworks of a fortress, and often German and British defensive works almost touched each other. In such circumstances the free attacks and counter-attacks of the early days soon ceased, and the warfare relapsed into a duel of guns. But every now and again a spasmodic assault would break out, and no side could afford for one moment to slacken its vigilance. The Germans were fond of creeping on at dusk or just before daybreak and trying to dig themselves in, so as to be able to reach our trenches at a single rush. Their sharpshooters, too, were very clever at working forward under cover. They used their searchlights at night to dazzle our riflemen, and, since the inhabitants of the hillside villages still went about their ordinary avocations, there was a fine field for German methods of espionage. But they never succeeded in carrying any part of our trenches, for they were not at their best with the bayonet, while our counter-attacks were frequently successful. The official "Eye-witness" with the British army, quoting a battalion commander, gives us this note on German methods:—

> "The important points to watch are the heads of valleys, the ravines, woods—especially those on the side of hollow ground—and all dead ground to the front and flanks. The German officers are skilled in leading troops forward under cover in closed bodies, but once the latter are deployed and there is no longer direct personal leadership, the men will not face heavy fire. Sometimes the advance is made in a series of lines, with the men well opened out at five or six paces interval; at other times it is made in a line, with the men almost shoulder to shoulder, followed in all cases by supports in close formation. The latter either waver when the front line is checked, or crowd on to it, moving forward under the order of their officers, and the mass forms a magnificent target. Prisoners have described the fire of our troops as pinning them to the ground, and this is certainly brought out by their action. When the Germans are not heavily entrenched, no great losses are incurred in advancing against them by the methods in which the British army has been instructed. For instance, in one attack over fairly open ground, against about an equal force of infantry sheltered in a sunken road and in ditches, we lost only ten killed and sixty wounded; while over four hundred of the enemy surrendered after about fifty had been killed."

Sir John French estimated that between the 12th of September and the 8th of October, when the British fighting on the Aisne ceased, we lost in killed, wounded, and missing 561 officers and 12,980 men. That is a heavy casualty list; but when we remember the nature of the fighting it will not appear excessive. Most of the losses were incurred in the advance of the First Corps on 14th September, when we were assaulting entrenched infantry and artillery. In such work officers always suffer severely, and our officers were, from their distinctive dress, a special mark for sharpshooters. Many of the younger subalterns fell because they were unfamiliar with the risks of trench fighting, and moved too freely. Whatever our losses, they were far less than those we inflicted on the enemy, for it seems certain that not less than 50,000 Germans were put out of action in one way or another in the British section of the Aisne.

During these weeks the French armies had a difficult task, and the hardest was that of Sarrail's army around Verdun. That great fortress, as we have seen, had been menaced by the Crown Prince during the Battle of the Marne, and his left wing had bombarded Fort Troyon from the high ground to the west of the Meuse. In the general German retreat on 10th-12th September he had retired north of Verdun, and his right no longer lay at St. Menehould, commanding the pass of Les Islettes and the main railway from Verdun, but had fallen back two days' march almost as far north as the pass of Grand Pré, which was the terminus of the branch line from Bazancourt. Verdun was promptly cleared by the French general of most of the *bouches inutiles*, its civilian inhabitants. Seven thousand were ordered out of the town, a tariff for food-stuffs was drawn up, and everything was made ready for a prolonged siege. But General Sarrail was determined that it should be no siege in the ordinary sense, and that the German howitzers should never be permitted within range. By earthworks and entrenchments the fortified zone was largely extended. Every height and valley for twenty miles round was seamed with defences, until, as one observer reported, the barbed wire entanglements gave the hillside a look of Champagne vineyards. The lines of the Crown Prince found themselves brought to a halt in a semicircle, with their right on the Argonne at Varennes, passing northward by Montfaucon and Consenvoye, and joining up with the German army in the Woëvre.



Defences of Verdun.

(311, 265, etc. Heights are shown thus in feet measured from the mean level of the Meuse at Verdun, which is 670 feet above the sea.)

During the Battle of the Marne the only German attacking force in this district had been that of the Crown Prince. In the Woëvre the Bavarian right had been engaged with the Toul garrison, but the Bavarians had enough to do in repelling General de Castelnau's advance from Nancy, and had no leisure to spare for the Heights of the Meuse. About the 20th of September, however, a new army appeared in the Woëvre. It was commanded by General von Strantz, and consisted of four South German corps, mainly Wurtembergers. They were reserve corps, the 3rd, 10th, 13th, and 16th, and they had with them several reserve divisions. We may say, therefore, that the whole German eastern line from just east of Rheims to St. Dié in the Vosges was manned from the south. General Sarrail had opposed to him not less than seven corps, comprised in the Crown Prince's and von Strantz's commands, and his original army of three corps was greatly outnumbered. He received the better part of an army corps from Toul as reinforcements, but he fought throughout against heavy odds, relying on the natural and artificial strength of the French position.

A glance at the map will show the nature of the Meuse defences between Verdun and Toul. First after the Verdun ring comes the fort of Genicourt; then Fort Troyon; then the Camp des Romains, protecting the bridge at St. Mihiel, and crossing fire

with Fort Paroches on the west side of the river; then Fort Liouville; then various southern works which need not be specified, for they were never assaulted. The obvious centre of attack was Troyon,[1] for it commanded the biggest gap in the chain. The Crown Prince's first assault had been by reverse fire from the west, and the place was saved only by a hairbreadth. About 20th September a second attempt was made on it, this time from the east. Von Strantz, advancing from the base at Thiaucourt on a broad front, delivered a strong attack on Troyon, but was repulsed by the French army on the heights. The fort had suffered heavily from the first assault, and the second practically destroyed it. It says much for the garrison that they continued to hold out till relief came, in what was little more than a dust-heap.

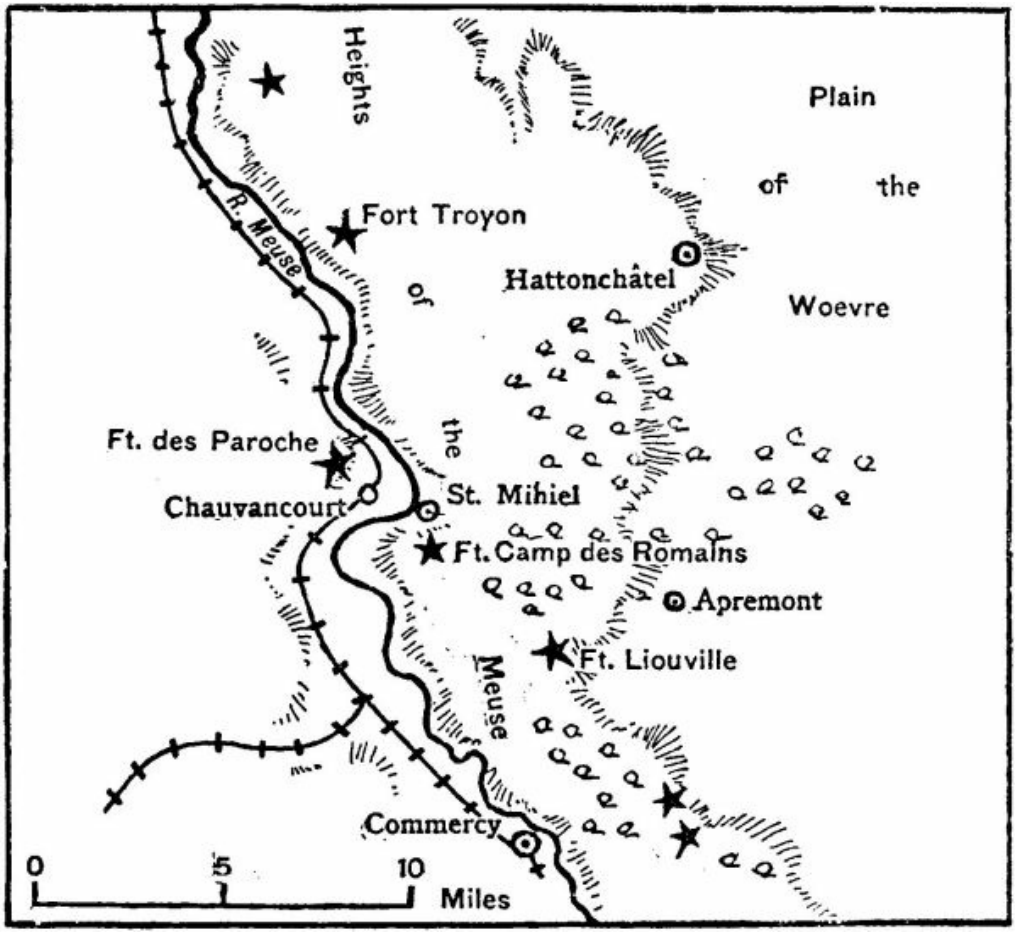
Sept. 20.

This, however, was only a reconnaissance in force. The real attack was delivered four days later, and directed against the little town of St. Mihiel, which lies on the Meuse, midway between Toul and Verdun. The eastern bank is a plateau some 300 feet high above the Meuse, rising to a greater height in various summits, and falling steeply in the east to the deep ravines and wooded knolls of the Woëvre. The spur of the plateau, due east of Troyon, is called Hatton-chattel, and here the Germans established a footing on 23rd September, and got up their heavy artillery. They silenced the small fort of Paroches, across the Meuse, and presently silenced and destroyed the Camp des Romains, and took St. Mihiel with its bridge-head on the western side of the water.

Sept. 23.

They got no farther, for a French cavalry detachment drove in the van of the advance, and compelled them to entrench themselves on the edge of the river. The German aim was clear. They hoped to push from St. Mihiel due west to Revigny, and so get south of Sarrail's army, which would thus be caught between von Strantz and the Crown Prince. Sarrail had enough and only just enough men to prevent this, and for a day or two the issue hung in the balance. But with every day the German position grew more uncomfortable. They had pierced the fortress line Toul-Verdun, but they could not use the path through the gap. They had no railway behind them nearer than Thiaucourt, and only one road, and that a bad one, for the main route through Apremont was held by the French. In the autumn fogs which cloak the Woëvre it was a bad line of communications, and it says much for German tenacity that they managed to hold St. Mihiel for months against all comers. Meantime the Toul garrison sent out troops which fought their way to the southern edge of the Rupt de Mad, the narrow glen by which the railway runs from Metz to Thiaucourt. The fighting east of the Meuse was presently transformed into that war of entrenchments which we have seen beginning on the Aisne, and which seems the modern substitute

for the old winter quarters.



The St. Mihiel Position.

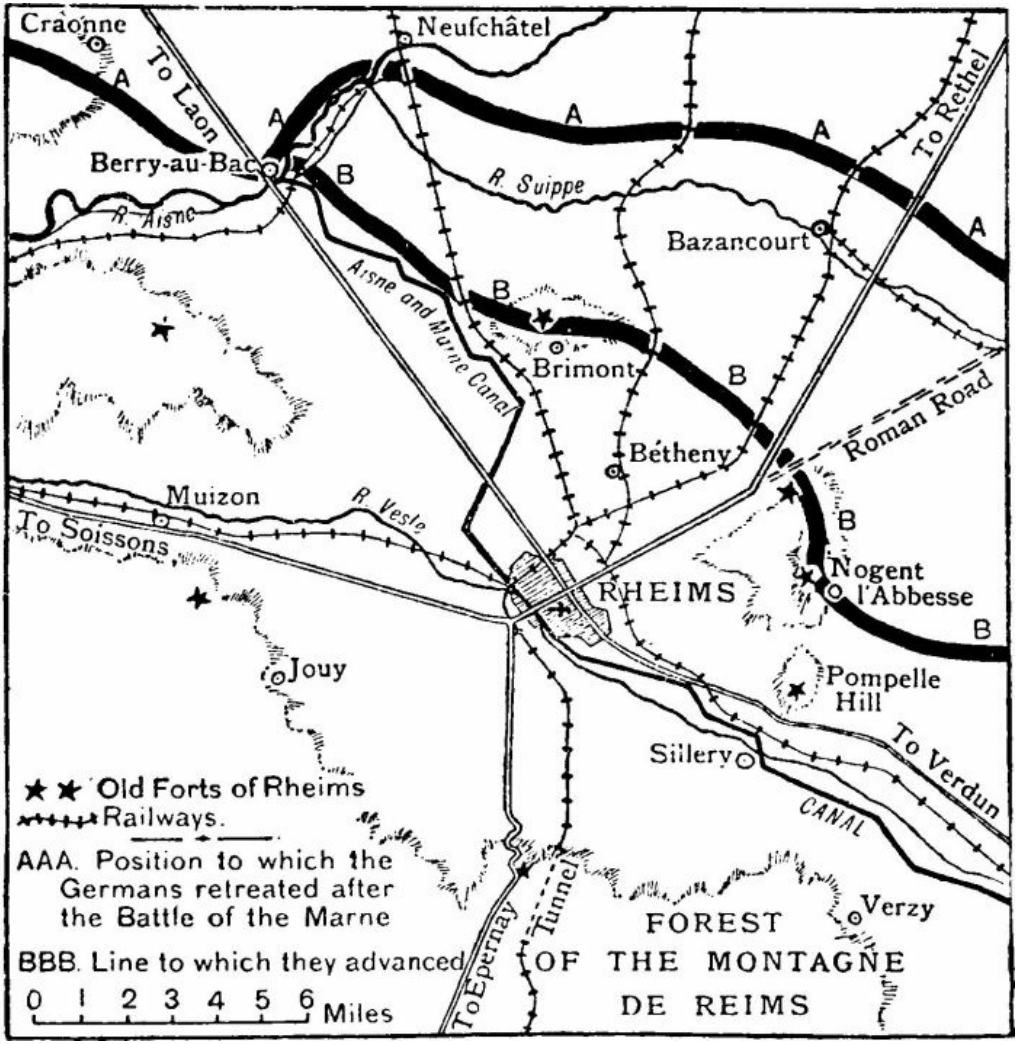
One last effort to secure a decision was made in this district before stalemate set in. On Saturday, 3rd October, the Crown Prince made a vigorous assault upon Sarrail's centre, which lay roughly from south of Varennes to just north of Verdun. Varennes at the moment was in German hands. The Crown Prince attempted a turning movement through the woods of the Argonne against St. Menehould, his former headquarters. A forest road runs from Varennes west to Vienne on the Upper Aisne, and north of this lies the wood of La Grurie, through which the Germans brought their guns. Somewhere in the pass the French fell upon them, and after sharp fighting on the Sunday drove them back north of Varennes, capturing that town, and gaining the road across the Argonne,

Oct. 3.

which gave them touch with the right of Langle's 4th Army. This victory straightened out the French front, which now ran from Verdun due west to north of Souain, and then along the Roman road to Rheims.

The prevailing stalemate was most marked in North Champagne. Langle had made no head against the Wurtembergers. His objective was the Bazancourt-Grand Pré railway; but the German trenches in the flat pockets and along the endless chalk hillocks of Champagne held him fast. He maintained his ground, and the danger of an effort to pierce the line at this point was temporarily removed, probably because of the extensive readjustment of forces which was then going on behind the German front. Farther east the German army around Rheims had better success. The shelling of the city began on Friday, the 18th, and for ten days the terrific bombardment went on. There was much loss of life among the civilians, large sections of the city were burnt and demolished, and the cathedral, though its walls remained standing, lost much of its adornment, including its ancient stained-glass windows, its delicate stone carving, and portions of its towers. The shelling of Rheims Cathedral was one of the acts of vandalism which most scandalized the feelings of the civilized world. The German defence—that the French had erected signal stations on the roof and tower, and gun stations close to the building—cannot be substantiated, and the business is made worse by the fact that the interior was being used as a hospital, and the Red Cross flag was flown. It is difficult to see what military excuse can be put forward for this senseless destruction. The cathedral did not suffer indirectly through being in the zone of fire; the German guns were deliberately trained on it. To von Buelow's army it seemed quite natural to destroy the biggest and most beautiful thing within sight.[2] Only when it was discovered that neutral nations were seriously shocked was the tale of hostile gun-platforms invented. To the French it appeared a happy omen that the statue of Joan of Arc, which stands in front of the cathedral, was uninjured. Round it the Uhlans had stacked their lances when they first entered the city on their way to the Marne. During the bombardment, though the square around was ploughed up by shells and her horse's legs were chipped and scarred, the figure of the Maid remained inviolate. Some soldiers had placed a tricolour in her outstretched hand, and in all these days of smoke and terror the French flag was held aloft by the arm of France's deliverer.

Sept. 18.



Map of the Rheims district to Illustrate the Operations of the 9th French Army (Gen. Foch).

About the 28th the worst fury of the attack was over. The change in the German dispositions compelled them to call a halt, and of this slackening the French took immediate advantage. The Germans had seized a position at La Neuvillette, on the slopes towards Brimont, two miles north of Rheims, which gave them a dangerous mastery over the French lines, and might form a starting-point for a piercing movement. On the evening of the 28th the French counter-attacked, and in spite of heavy fire drove the enemy back to Brimont. That same evening saw a general movement along the whole French front

Sept. 28.

in this section, and one battalion of the Prussian Guard was completely destroyed. The important position of Prunay, on the railway between Rheims and Châlons, was carried, and the danger of a wedge between the 9th and 4th Armies was removed.

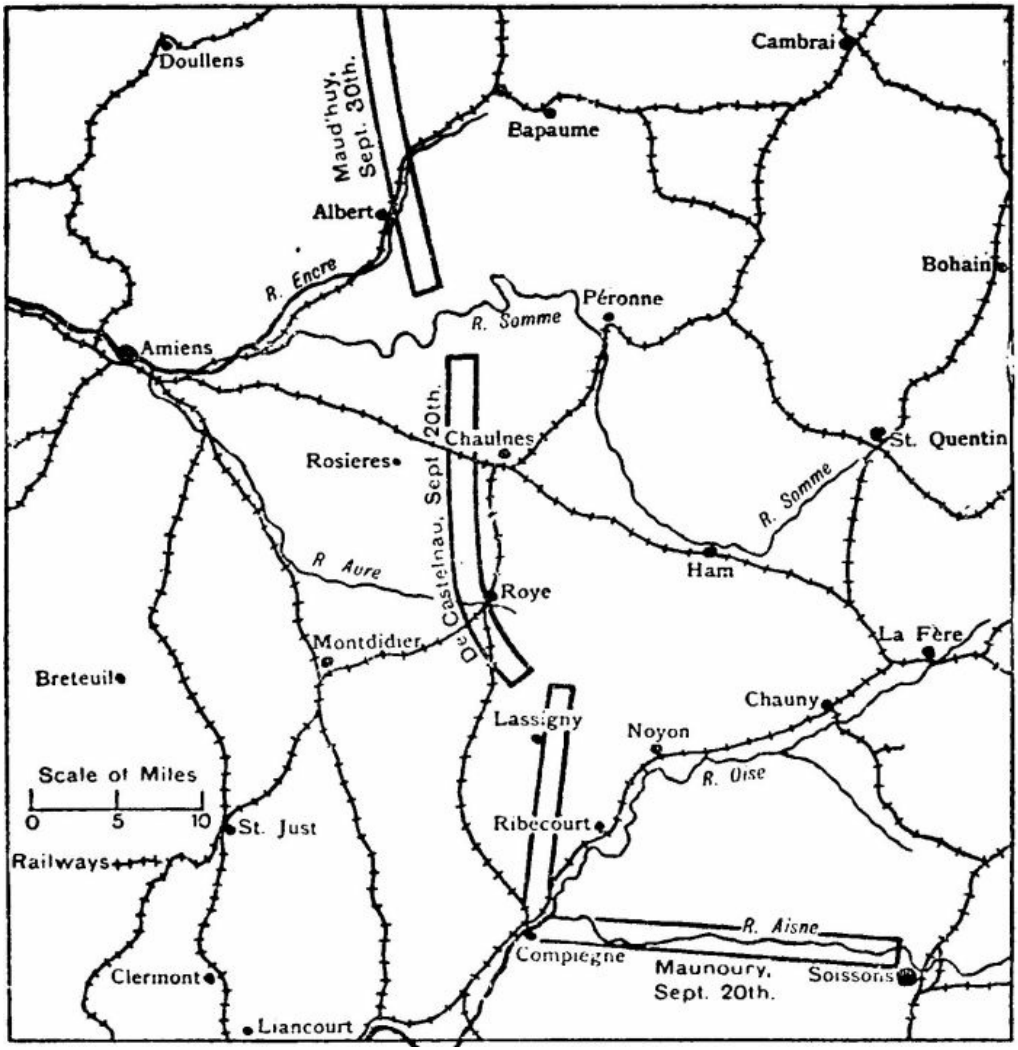
Meantime the 5th Army had no success in the Craonne district. The vital crossing at Berry-au-Bac, where runs the Roman road from Rheims to Laon, was still in German hands. D'Esperey in vain struggled towards Craonne village. His African troops fought with the utmost gallantry; he had certain minor victories and reported a number of prisoners; but he never won the edge of the plateau or came near the German main position. As in the British section, the French won the spurs and ramparts but were brought up short before the citadel.

The true offensive of the Allies, as we have seen, was now on the extreme left, where Maunoury had extended his flank up the Oise, and the new armies of de Castelnau and Maud'huy were lengthening the line towards the north. By the 20th of September Maunoury had established himself south of Lassigny, a day's march from the Oise and the railway line.

Sept. 20.

On that day de Castelnau's 7th Army came into position on his left, and occupied a line through Roye and Peronne and just west of Chaulnes, which extended to the edge of the Albert plateau. Ten days later Maud'huy's 10th Army appeared, and occupied the region around Arras and Lens. There was a fierce struggle, which lasted several days, for the possession of the Albert plateau, and the Germans rank it as one of the great battles of the campaign. The French had hurried every man they could spare, including many marines, into this section, and Maud'huy's achievement showed that General Joffre's confidence had not been misplaced.

Sept. 30.



Sketch Map to Illustrate the Extension of the Allied Left.

The French left now ran for seventy miles north of Compiègne, almost to the Belgian frontier. It was a wonderful piece of outflanking, and it bent back the German right from its apex on the height above the Forest of the Eagle in the shape of a gigantic L. A little more pressure, and it looked as if the angle might be made so acute that the great Oise railway would be uncovered and the main line of German communications on the west made untenable. If that happened there must be a general retirement; for, though the Germans had other lines of supply, they had none which could keep their right and right-centre rapidly fed with the vast quantities of heavy ammunition on which the holding of their Aisne position depended.

But presently it appeared that this flanking strategy was being met by another. The Germans were themselves taking the offensive, and stretching out their right, not to conform with, but to outstrip our movement. It was becoming a race for the northern sea. When precisely the Allies first grasped the nature of this new development is not certain. The French official *communiqué* of 6th October reported the presence of large masses of German cavalry in the neighbourhood of Lille and Armentières, and it was believed that these were merely a screen for forces of infantry and artillery behind. But at least a week before that Sir John French had come to the conclusion that the British army was in the wrong place. At Mons it had been the extreme left, now it was almost the centre, of the Allied line. This meant constant difficulties with communications and supplies, for these ran through Paris to the Atlantic coast, and so crossed those of Maunoury, de Castelnau, and Maud'huy. If, on the other hand, the British were transferred once more to the left wing, they would draw upon the Channel ports, and would be within easy reach of home. This in itself was sufficient reason for the change, but there were others not less cogent. The stalemate on the Aisne had become chronic. Both sides were securely entrenched, and territorial levies might be trusted to hold the lines. It seemed a waste of good material that the most seasoned and professional army in the world should be kept at a task which might with perfect safety be entrusted to men less fully trained. Above all, the British commander-in-chief saw the dawning of a dangerous German offensive, directed especially against Britain, and aiming at the possession of Calais and the Channel ports. News was arriving that the great fortress of Antwerp was at its last gasp, and, once it fell, a fresh army would be hurled at the gap between Lille and the sea. A campaign is full of surprises, and this one had by now taken on the character of a siege. Germany had been forced to accept the position and was penned behind a line of entrenchments running in the west from Lille to Switzerland, and in the east from the East Prussian frontier to the Carpathians. There was a huge area inside the lines—about one-fifth of Europe—but it was a closing area, and might soon be finally sealed up. It was not the kind of campaign we would have chosen, but since it had developed in this way it was our business to take out of it the best advantage. The one sally-port was West Flanders, and this bolt-hole must be stopped without delay.

Oct. 6.

It is probable, too, that in those days we had learned something of the new German dispositions, which revealed the gravity of the projected offensive. The flower of the German troops were given orders for the north. In Alsace, so far as we can judge, no more than one corps was left. The new army of General von Strantz

was entrusted with the whole line in Lorraine from Verdun to the Vosges, and the army of Bavaria was sent north to the country between Lille and Arras. The Imperial Crown Prince remained where he was, but the Duke of Wurtemberg to the west of him was transferred to the extreme right of the German line, and his place taken by a new reserve army, under General von Einem, who had formerly commanded the 7th Corps at Munster. West of him Field-Marshal von Heeringen, from the army of Alsace, replaced von Buelow, whose army was now on the right of von Kluck's, holding the line between the Oise and the Somme. All this looked ominous. Von Kluck, who had made a speciality of the Aisne position, and the Crown Prince, who had not distinguished himself, were alone left in their old positions. The pick of the Prussian troops under von Buelow were going north, and the two generals and armies who had won most reputation, those of Bavaria and Wurtemberg, were under orders for the march to the sea. If any whisper of the German redistribution of forces reached the Allied headquarters it must have strengthened Sir John French's case.

General Joffre concurred, and made ready for the change. He brought up his reserves to take the place of the British, and arranged for the creation of a new 8th Army under General d'Urbal to support the left of the line. He also took General Foch, whose reputation was now the most brilliant of all the army commanders, and put him in general charge of the operations north of Noyon—the kind of task which had been given to General Pau in the turning movement at the Marne. The French and English Staffs worked in perfect concord, and the result was one of the most brilliant pieces of transport in military history. The whole thing was done without noise or friction. General Gough's 2nd Cavalry Division[3] was the first to go on 3rd October, and the three infantry corps followed from left to right, till on the 19th the First Corps detrained at St. Omer. Some of the troops went by Paris, travelling by the loop-line through the suburbs, but most went straight north by Amiens and Abbeville. Some of our soldiers passed near enough to the Channel to see the vessels of the senior service out on the grey waters.

Oct. 3-19.

We won the race to the sea, but only by the narrowest margin. The German sally was stronger than we had dreamed, and a host of new corps, of which the investing force from Antwerp was only a small part, poured westward over the Flanders flats. How the pass was held by the remnants of the Belgians and a small British force till the French supports relieved them must be the subject of later chapters. The movement of the British northward marked the end of the second phase of the war. In the first, which ended before the Marne, the Allies were on the defensive before

the great German "out-march." In the second, which included the Battles of the Marne and the Aisne, we had the offensive, but after their defeat on the Marne the Germans regained the initiative, and compelled us to accept the kind of battle they preferred. Presently we changed our plans, and endeavoured to hoist the enemy with his own petard, the enveloping movement. But he had still a great superiority in numbers, and while seeking to envelop him we found ourselves in danger of envelopment. He was soon to possess himself of both the initiative and the offensive, and in the dark winter months we replied with the very strategy he had practised on the Aisne, and dug ourselves into trenches from which he could not oust us.

One change had appeared in the German generalship, which was to have far-reaching effects on the campaign. Up till the opening of the Flanders battle they had faithfully observed the first principle of sound strategy—that the aim of an offensive is not this or that city or fortress or tract of country, but the decisive defeat of the enemy's field army. They had failed, but their intentions were unexceptionable. Now, however, political considerations seem to have obscured strategic, and the change was presently shown by the supersession of General von Moltke as Chief of the General Staff by General von Falkenhayn, the Prussian Minister of War. General von Falkenhayn continued to fill his old office, which is as if M. Millerand had become also the French Generalissimo, or Lord Kitchener had doubled the parts of himself and Sir John French. The Channel coast, Calais, Boulogne, and Havre were now the German objective, and not the turning or piercing of the Allied line in the manner best fitted to compass its destruction. Such an aim meant that there was bound to be some fumbling in the German high command, for strategy is a jealous mistress, who will not tolerate a divided service. It was fortunate for the Allies that it was so, for they were entering upon a campaign which made extreme demands upon their fortitude and endurance.

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[1] The duplication of French names is a common source of difficulty to newspaper readers. There is Troyon on the Meuse and Troyon, the British advanced post on the Aisne. There is Condé near Mons and Condé on the Aisne. There is a Courtaçon in the Marne valley as well as on the Aisne. Later, in West Flanders, there was dire confusion in many minds between Furnes, west of the Yser, and Fournes, the suburb of Lille.

[2] "It is of no consequence if all the monuments ever created, all

the pictures ever painted, and all the buildings ever erected by the great architects of the world were destroyed, if by their destruction we promote Germany's victory over her enemies. . . . The commonest, ugliest stone placed to mark the burial-place of a German grenadier is a more glorious and perfect monument than all the cathedrals in Europe put together. . . . Let neutral peoples and our enemies cease their empty chatter, which is no better than the twittering of birds. Let them cease their talk about the cathedral at Rheims and about all the churches and castles of France which have shared its fate. These things do not interest us."—Major-General von Ditfurth in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, November 1914.

[3] The cavalry was now organized in divisions, and the first two formed the cavalry corps under Allenby. General Byng's 3rd Division joined the army in West Flanders.

CHAPTER XXI.
THE FIRST RUSSIAN ADVANCE TOWARDS CRACOW.

Russian Strategical Position in mid-September—Von Hindenburg's Advance to the Niemen—Siege of Ossowietz—Battle of Niemen Crossings—Von Hindenburg retires on Suwalki—Battle of Augustovo—German Retreat to the Masurian Lakes—Fall of Jaroslav—Investment of Przemysl—Russian Strategical Plan—Importance of Cracow—Cracow Defences—The Line of the Oder—Silesia—The Galician Oil-fields—The Carpathian Passes—Motives for Raids into Hungary—Russian Advance to Cracow—Beginning of German Movement on Warsaw—Ivanov falls back behind the San.

The position in the East in mid-September presented something of a strategic anomaly. The Russian centre was aligned north and south behind Warsaw, but the Russian wings were curiously dislocated. The right wing—Rennenkampf's army—was some hundred miles to the north-east behind the line of the Niemen, while the left wing, which at the moment represented the chief Russian strength, was far in advance of the centre, moving swiftly towards Cracow. Such a situation might have been dangerous but for one fact. The East Prussian campaign was, from the nature of the country, self-contained. Von Hindenburg was too busy with Rennenkampf to spare the time for getting behind the Russian centre, and, if he had attempted it, there was the strong fortress line of the Narev to block his way. This enabled the Russian left to pursue the retreating Austrians without any great fear of a movement which should cut them off from their centre. The only danger could come from the German reserves in Posen; but these were still reserves rather than a field army, and until von Hindenburg could turn southward the pursuit would go on unchecked. Lemberg had crippled one Austrian army, but Opole, Tomasov, and Rava Russka had temporarily put Austria out of action. Until from some sanctuary like Cracow she could gain time to organize her 1,000,000 Landsturm reserves, the offensive was beyond her power.

The Russian high command had an acute perception of the advantages of the situation, but they did not overrate them. They knew that Germany would presently come in force to the succour of her ally. Their aim was to lure von Hindenburg into

an impossible conflict on the Niemen, while their left wing gave the fleeing Austrians no peace, and prevented a rally which should block the way to the Oder. Von Hindenburg had already committed himself to an advance into the Vilna province. Every day that he could be induced to waste his strength on the line of the Niemen was a gain for the main Russian strategy. He seems to have been of the opinion with which Ségur credits Napoleon, that the Niemen was not of much use either for offence or defence.

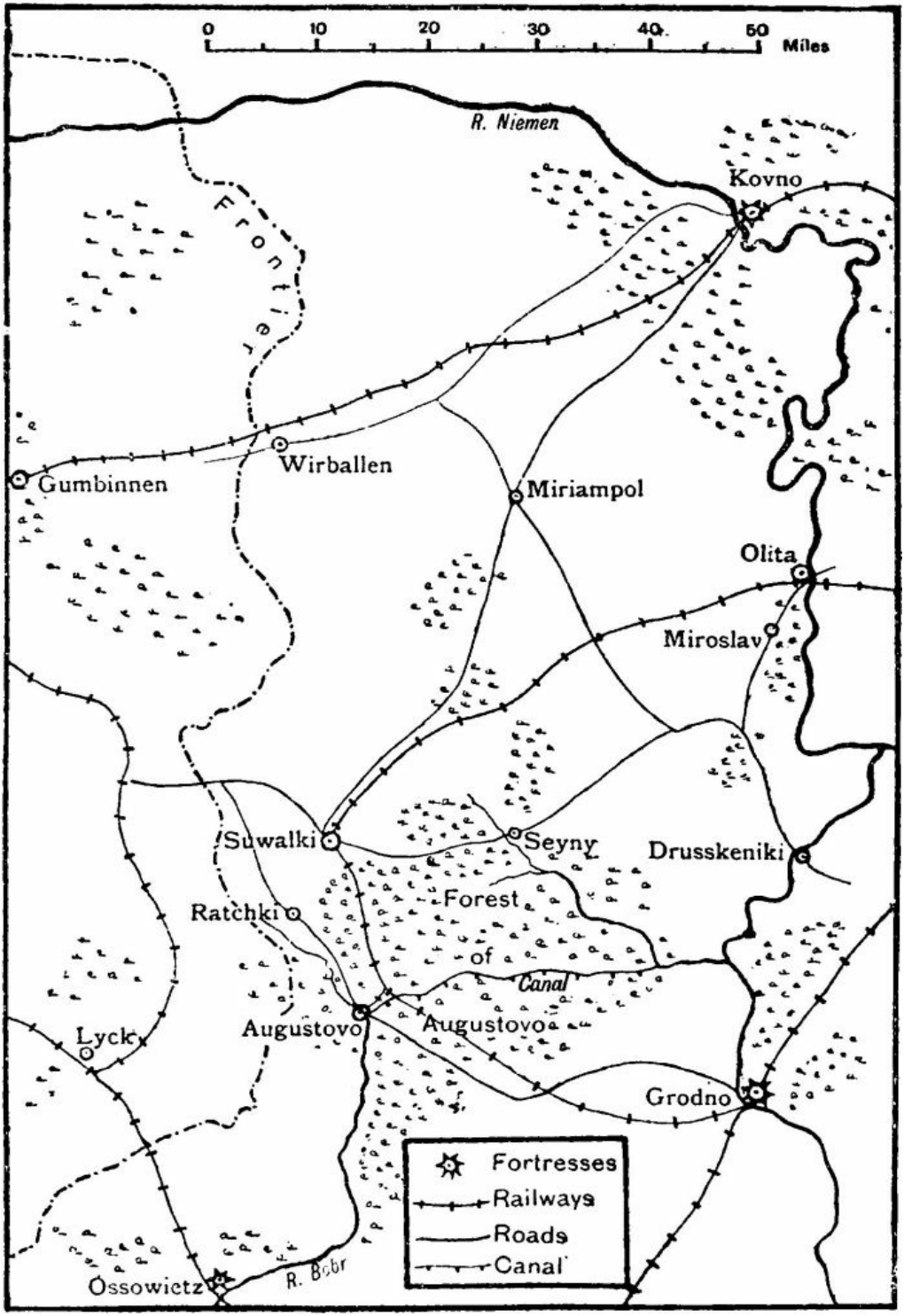
Von Hindenburg fell into the trap, but he saved himself before it was too late. Perhaps it was not well enough baited. It is always hard for a great military power which has suffered a crushing defeat to play the game of a strategic retirement once it has recovered its strength. The Niemen was made too difficult for the German army of East Prussia. The first serious check awakened the new field-marshal of the East to a sense of his true responsibilities, which in the flush of his Tannenberg victory he seems to have forgotten.

Von Hindenburg's great advance had begun on 7th September. He moved on a wide front, with his left advancing on Kovno from Wirballen along the main Petrograd railway, while a detached force attempted to cross the river Memel. His centre moved towards the Niemen by way of Suwalki, which presently was in his hands; while his right, which was his strongest flank, swept towards Grodno, detaching troops to invest the fortress of Ossowietz, an outlying fort to the east of the Narev chain. His army consisted of the four corps with which he had won Tannenberg, and at least two corps of reserves. It was believed in Petrograd that he had received reinforcements from the German lines in the West, and that the Crown Prince was with him; but this is clearly impossible. He drew his reinforcements from the great reservoir of troops still in Germany, and though he had in his command at least one Guards battalion and a number of Saxons and Bavarians, these were not the first-line troops which had been serving in France.

Sept. 7.

The country through which he moved is famous as the theatre of Napoleon's first concentration in the campaign of 1812. The distance between the East Prussian frontier and the Niemen is never less than fifty miles, and is one vast tangle of bog and lake and forest. It has changed little since Napoleon's day. Three railway lines penetrate it: in the north the main line from Berlin to Petrograd, which runs from Wirballen by Kovno to Vilna; in the centre a line from Suwalki to Grodno; and in the south the line which runs from East Prussia by Ossowietz to Bialystok. The roads are few, the chief being a causeway through the marshes from Suwalki by Seyny to various points upon the main highway which runs north to Miriampol from the

Niemen crossing at Drusskeniki. In such a country an advance is not unlike that through the passes of a mountain range. Columns and guns and transport move along narrow defiles on each side of which is impassable country. A bog on the flank is just as much a containing wall for a modern army as an Alpine precipice.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Miles
R. Niemen
Kovno
Frontier
Wirballen
Gumbinnen
Miriampol
Olita
Miroslav
Suwalki
Seyny
Drusskeniki
Forest
of
Canal
Ratchki
Augustovo
Augustovo
Lyck
Grodno
Fortresses
Railways
Roads
Canal
R. Bobr
Ossowietz

Map to illustrate von Hindenburg's Advance to the Niemen and the Battle of Augustovo.

About 15th September von Hindenburg had passed the frontier. Rennenkampf made no attempt to stay him in the defiles, beyond a little rearguard fighting. Tannenberg had broken his army too grievously, and he could count on no reserves short of the Niemen. One considerable engagement did take place in the Augustovo woods, which was reported in German dispatches as a great victory. On 20th September von Hindenburg's right came abreast of Ossowietz and began its investment. The sections of the German army which had the railways behind them travelled fast, and by the 21st the Niemen had been reached at three points—at Drusskeniki north of Grodno, near Miroslav, and somewhere in the neighbourhood of Kovno. Rennenkampf by this time had got most of his men over the stream, which is there a formidable barrier, both from its width and volume of water, to any army. There were some slight delaying actions on the western bank, but by the 25th the whole Russian force was across in prepared positions, and had received large reinforcements from the Vilna command.

Sept. 15.

Sept. 21.

Sept. 25.

The battle of the Niemen crossings was mainly an artillery duel. The Russians lay hid in deep trenches on the low eastern shore, and waited till the Germans had built their pontoon bridges. Then their concealed guns blew them to pieces. Thereupon von Hindenburg attempted to "prepare" a passage by a great bombardment—high angle shell fire which should "water" the enemy's position. By the evening of Friday, the 26th, he thought he had achieved his aim, for his guns had boomed all day, and the Russians had made no reply. So on the morning of the 27th he again attempted a crossing, but again his bridges were blown to pieces, with great loss to his troops. He had taken upon himself an impossible task, and his communications did not allow of a rapid bringing up of reserves, even had these reserves been available, or likely in the circumstances to be useful. This was on the German right; but the operations on the centre and left were no more successful, while the siege of Ossowietz was proving a farce, since the invaders could not find hard ground for their batteries in the spongy moss which surrounds the knuckle of solid land on which the fort is built.

Sept. 26.

Sept. 27.

On the Sunday von Hindenburg gave the order for the retreat. He realized at last that this East Prussian *terrain* was self-contained, and that no German advance

there would make any difference to the Russian movement towards Cracow. He might be kept struggling on the Niemen for a month while the Russians were invading the sacred soil of Silesia. The retreat was no easy matter, and the new field-marshal showed all his old skill in marsh warfare. By the Monday he had fallen back behind Seyny, on a line running from the Wirballen-Kovno railway through Miriampol to south-east of the little town of Augustovo. The extreme right gave up the attempt on Ossowietz, and retired along the railway, while the extreme left had also a railway to move on. Only the centre was in difficulties, for between Seyny and Suwalki there was nothing but damp woodlands, with one or two narrow causeways through them.

Sept. 28.

Rennenkampf made good use of his opportunity. Now was the time to play the traditional Russian game, and harass a retreating foe whom the wilderness had betrayed. He crossed the Niemen, and attacked strongly with his centre and right wing, while he flung his left well south towards Ossowietz and the little valley of the Bobr. Between Suwalki and the Bobr, and extending to within twenty miles of the Niemen, lies the forest of Augustovo—such a region as that in which von Hindenburg had destroyed Samsonov, but far less known than the Masurian lakes, and destitute of all roads, save swampy forest tracks. Guided by foresters of the district, the Russian left, carrying with them the very flag which Skobelev had borne in the Russo-Turkish war, struggled through the matted woods. Their progress was slow, but by Thursday, 1st October, they were at Augustovo, and had driven out the German occupants. Pushing on, they carried the village of Ratchki with the bayonet, and for a moment it seemed that a large part of von Hindenburg's force would be cut off between Suwalki and Seyny.

Oct. 1.

The German field-marshal escaped a crushing disaster by the slenderest margin. For two days there was a fierce rearguard action in the woods, in which the Germans lost heavily in guns and prisoners. But this stand enabled von Hindenburg to evacuate Suwalki and get the bulk of his forces across the frontier to the entrenched position which, as at the Aisne, had been prepared before-hand. Rennenkampf pressed him along the whole front. On 1st October his cavalry, pursuing the Ossowietz siege-train, were at Grajevo, and next day they were over the frontier, and moving on Lyck and Bialla. From the 4th onwards the Russian aviators reported a great movement of German columns and transport trains across the border. Von Hindenburg had received reinforcements from Koenigsberg, but they were not sufficient to stay a retreat at any point short of the entrenchments on the Masurian lakes.

Oct. 4.

By 9th October the series of engagements which the Russians call the Battle of Augustovo was over. Rennenkampf claimed that the Germans lost 60,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners, and the figures may well be accurate, for unsuccessful forest fighting, as we know from Tannenberg, is terribly costly. He was now faced with a check such as he had himself given to the enemy on the Niemen—a more formidable check, for a prepared position in marshy and wooded country is, for a modern army, less easy to carry than any river line. But he was not destined to have von Hindenburg any longer as his opponent. The time had come for the moving of the German centre to relieve the pressure on Cracow, since it was clear that no invasion of the Niemen would effect this purpose. General von Schubert was appointed to the command in East Prussia, and the field-marshal hastened southward.

Oct. 9.

When, after the decisive battles of Opole, Tomasov, and Rava Russka, the Austrian armies fled westward across the San, there were various changes made in the Russian high command. General Ruzsky was appointed to the command of the centre, which, it was clear, would soon be engaged with the main German advance, and which had now been increased to at least twelve army corps. With him was associated General Danilov as quartermaster-general, a post in that country and at that season scarcely less difficult than Khilkov's work during the Manchurian War. General Ivanov was given command of the southern armies operating in Galicia, with Radko Dmitrieff and Brussilov as his chief lieutenants. Brussilov's business was to act as a flanking force along the Carpathians and in the Bukovina, to seize the chief passes, and to threaten Hungary. To Dmitrieff was assigned the duty of pressing the Austrian retreat, and in especial of reducing the fortresses which had given sanctuary to the remnants of von Auffenberg's 2nd Army.

The two chief fortresses of Central Galicia are Jaroslav and Przemysl, both on the river San, and both commanding important railway routes to the west—the first the main line from Lemberg to Cracow, and the second the line which skirts the Carpathians by Sanok and Sandek, and connects with the lines going south through the passes to Hungary. Twenty years ago there was some talk of making Jaroslav the premier fortress, but the fortifications had been left unfinished, and when war broke out they were made into a strong circle of entrenchments. Twenty redoubts had been erected on both banks of the river, for the position was important, both as being on the main railway, and as giving control of the branch line covering the twenty miles to Przemysl, and so offering a base for an assault upon the latter city. Austria looked to Jaroslav for a stout resistance, but something went wrong with the plan. Perhaps the

garrison was too small for the size of the line, for the Russian night attacks led to the immediate capture of most of the redoubts. Ivanov appeared before the place on 20th September, and three days later it was in his hands.

Sept. 20.

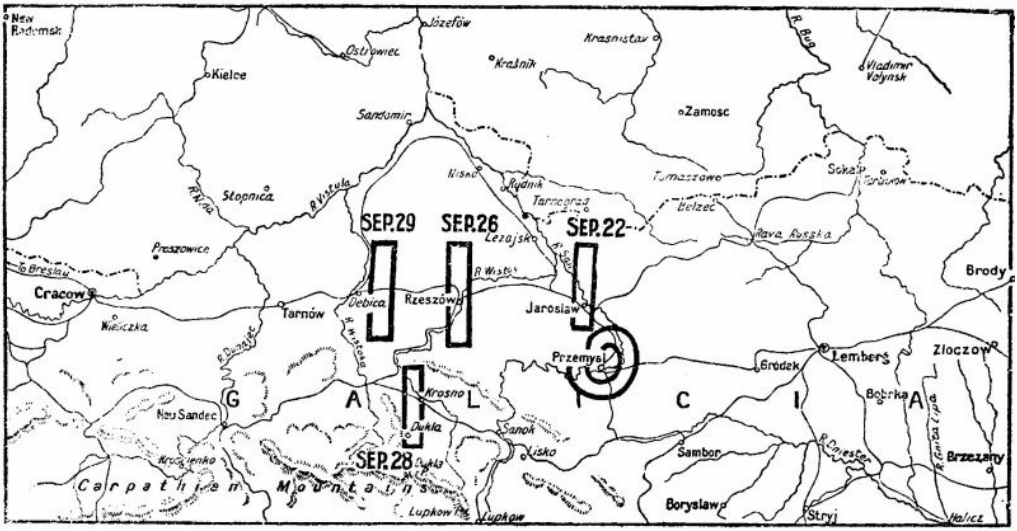
Sept. 22.

Dmitrieff had no such easy triumph at Przemysl. On the 22nd he had closed in on it from the south and east, and presently had it completely invested. Its garrison was estimated at 30,000 men, and most of the civilian inhabitants had been expelled. Its natural position among the foothills of the Carpathians was strong, and it had been equipped as a first-class fortress. Workmen from the surrounding villages had been brought in to strengthen the defences, and there is evidence that a huge quantity of ammunition —most of von Auffenberg's reserves—had been accumulated in the place. The danger lay in the scarcity of food, and Dmitrieff, confident in the success of the main Russian advance, and short at the time of heavy siege artillery, resolved to starve the garrison into surrender rather than waste uselessly many lives in an assault. During the last fortnight of September and the first week of October the impending fall of Przemysl was announced daily in France and Britain, and its uncouth name in many odd forms became familiar to the public. But Przemysl declined to fall, and soon its existence was forgotten in the greater operations developing across the Vistula.

It may be opportune at this point to review shortly Russia's strategical aims, which had been imposed on her both by her successes and her failures. No commander-in-chief expects to fight a campaign according to the cut-and-dried plan which his staff have framed in peace time. Novel conditions present themselves; the enemy turns out to be stronger in certain respects than was believed, and weaker in others; and his own forces are revealed as both better and worse than his expectations. We cannot tell what was the original plan of Russia; but we may guess that it involved a defensive stand on the lines of the Middle Vistula, the Narev, and the Niemen. She was conscious where lay her strength, and it was obvious wisdom to let the enemy break his teeth on her vast distances, poor communications, and impossible country. The necessity of doing something to ease the position of the Allies in the West took Rennenkampf into East Prussia, with what fortune we have seen. But it may fairly be said that the main Russian strategy as against Germany was to remain on the defensive well inland from her frontiers. She had no desire to begin the war with repulses on the Warta and the Lower Vistula.

But one region was marked out for the offensive from the start. This was Galicia, which only an artificial line separated from Poland, and in which the Austrian advance could best be met by a counter-invasion. As we have seen, the East

Prussian *terrain* was isolated, and a check there could not interfere with any movement in the south. At first the Russian generalissimo believed that the most that could be done was to drive the Austrians out of Eastern Galicia, and invest Jaroslav and Przemysl. But the speedy fall of Lemberg, the victories of Tomasov and Rava Russka, the fall of Jaroslav, and the apparent demoralization of the Austrian armies convinced him that a bolder strategy was possible. Przemysl could be masked, and must fall if not quickly relieved. The German centre, with its field-marshal involved in the bogs of the Niemen, was not likely to make a rapid advance. Galicia, which suffered from nearly the worst weather in Europe, had one climatic merit: its short, hot summers and long, hard winters had between them wonderful autumns—autumns of clear, cool skies, when the ground was dry and the rivers low. The Grand Duke Nicholas, knowing what a Russian winter meant for armies in the field, was eager to strike a great blow before it set in. Accordingly, what was always the main Russian plan was accelerated, and the armies swept towards Cracow.



First Russian Advance towards Cracow.

The city of Cracow, the last refuge of Polish independence, is strategically the most important point in Eastern Europe. On paper it is a strong place, a first-class fortress, but that strength is mainly on paper. It stands on the edge of the Carpathians, at a point where the Vistula ceases to be a mountain stream, and becomes a river of the magnitude of the middle Thames. Hills flank it on north and south, and provide gun positions for its defence. A narrow ring of old fortresses surrounds it, but the main reliance was placed on entrenchments on the outer ring,

which were intended to do what the lines at Verdun did, and prevent the enemy's heavy artillery from getting within range. Deep trenches were dug, especially on the northern hills, and light rails laid in them to carry the howitzers. The Austro-German garrison was probably not less than 100,000 men, and it had cleared a fire zone with a radius of eight miles. Advanced field-works were also constructed on the Raba, which enters the Vistula twenty-four miles east of the city. Remembering the lesson of the Belgian and French fortresses, the defences of Cracow could not be rated as of the strongest. On the south the Carpathian foothills came too near to allow of proper field-works. On the north all the forts and entrenched positions could be dominated by the higher ground which sloped towards the Russian frontier. Only on the west, on the land between the Vistula and the Rudawa, were first-class defensive positions to be found. It seemed likely that any army which allowed itself to be shut up in Cracow would run a certainty of capture, for the Russian attack would be from the east and north. Accordingly the German staff ordained that the city should be defended by a field army and not by a garrison, and that the Russians should be held at all costs on the Raba.

A glance at the map will reveal why Cracow played a vital part in the war. It is the gate both of Vienna and Berlin. A hundred miles west of it the great *massif* of the Western Carpathians, what is called the High Tatra, breaks down into the plains through which the river March flows to the Danube. These plains, between the Carpathians and the Bohemian mountains, constitute the famous Gap of Moravia, the old highway from Austria to North Germany. Through this gap the army of Kutusov had marched in 1805 to find its doom at Austerlitz. Through this gap runs the great railway which connects Silesia with Vienna, and the general who could master Cracow had a clear and easy road before him to the Austrian capital.

Not less was it the key of Germany. Forty miles west from Cracow is the Silesian frontier. Seventy miles from the city lie the upper streams of the Oder. The army which entered Germany by this gate had turned the line of the frontier fortresses of Thorn and Posen, the beautiful system of lateral frontier railways, and the great defensive positions on the Warta. It had before it only Breslau, which till the other day was an open city, and even now had only limited defences, and the old second-class fortress of Glogau. The Oder is a better barrier than was generally believed in the West. Its low banks are easily flooded, and the river in many places strains in mazy channels and backwaters among isles matted with dwarf willows and alders. The good crossings, too, have been for the most part fortified. But the Oder is a defence only against an enemy coming from the East. To an invader from Cracow and the south it offered no difficulties, for he would be on the western bank.

He would have turned the line of the Oder as well as the line of the frontier fortresses. If he were strong enough to keep his communications intact and to take or mask Breslau, he would find nothing before him except the little fortress of Kustrin among the marshes at the mouth of the Warta. The strong fort of Stettin at the estuary on the Baltic would be useless against such an invasion. And from Kustrin it is no more than fifty miles to Berlin.

The Russian plan, never for a moment lost sight of though often postponed, was to render useless all the elaborate defences of Thorn and Posen by turning them on the south. Once on the Oder and in the Moravian Gap, she threatened directly the two enemy capitals. And of this position Cracow was the key. It played the part of Vicksburg in the American Civil War. Once Vicksburg was in Northern hands the policy of the "shrinking quadrilateral" could be pursued, with Grant's advance on Virginia and Sherman's march to the sea. The capture of Cracow would mean the beginning of Russia's main strategical purpose.

But it meant more than an open road to Berlin and Vienna. It involved an immediate blow at the heart of Germany through one of her chief industrial centres. That is why so much importance was rightly attached to the Russian movements. The advance of the Allies through Alsace would lead at the best only to the wooded hills and rural villages of Baden and Wurtemberg, and between the Allies and Westphalia lay the formidable barrier of the Rhine. But with the Russians at the gates of Silesia a province not less important than Westphalia was imperilled, and the most vital parts happened to be close to the southern frontier. It was not only that Silesia, like East Prussia, was the home of the great German territorial magnates—names like Hohenlohe, Hatzfeld, Pless, and Donnesmark. It contained one of the chief coal and iron fields, and one of the largest manufacturing areas of the German Empire. It yielded more than a quarter of the German coal production, it had the richest zinc deposits in the world, and it had enormous chemical and textile factories. The invasion of East Prussia merely dispossessed the farmers and annoyed the squires; the German invasion of Poland had as little effect upon Russia's well-being as the tap of a cane upon the shell of a tortoise. But a closely-settled, highly-organized industrial land would feel acutely the mere threat of invasion. The delicate machine would go out of gear, and no part of Germany would be exempt from the shock. For on the products of Silesia, scarcely less than on the products of Essen, did the life of her soldiers and civilians depend.

The primary aim, then, of the Russian advance through Galicia was the occupation of Cracow, and with it the roads to Silesia and to Vienna. This was the strategic purpose; but there were two others, which we may call the economic and

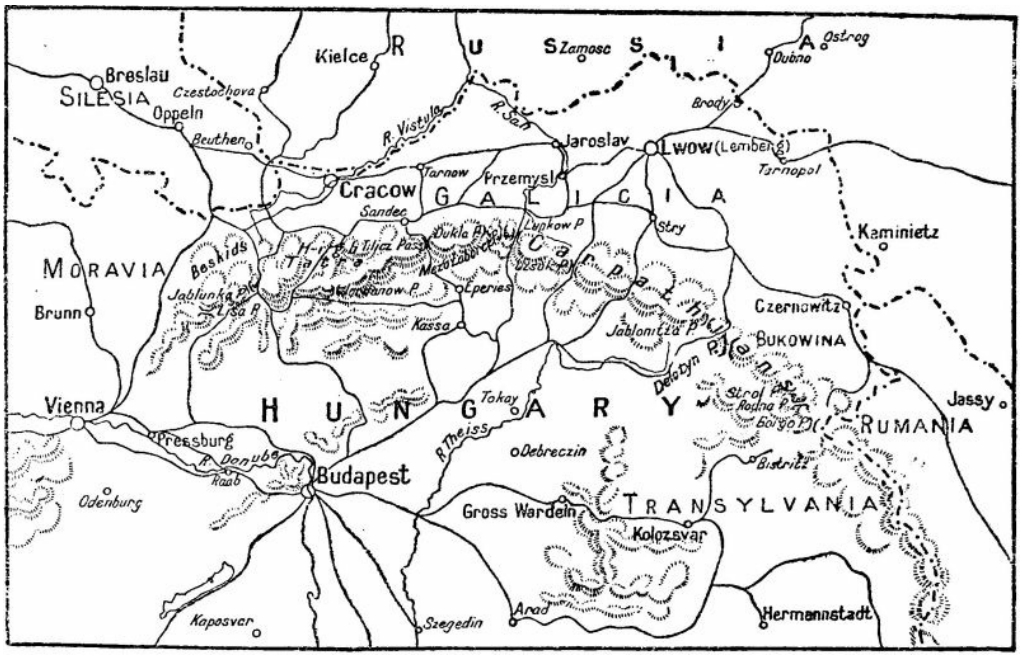
the political. Germany, with her elaborate system of motor transport, had made petrol for her one of the foremost munitions of war. She had immense stocks of it, but these stocks were rapidly shrinking. Overseas imports from America were forbidden to her by the British navy. Russia, with her Caspian oil-fields, was her enemy; her supplies could only be kept up by importations from her ally, Austria, and through Austria from neutral Rumania. Now, Austria's oil-fields were all on Galician soil. Early in the sixteenth century the Galician "earth balsam" was known to the world, and since 1878 her petroleum fields have been busily worked, largely under the superintendence of Canadian engineers. These fields, some of the richest in Europe, lie along the northern slopes of the Carpathians, and consist of three chief centres—the fields of Sloboda-Rungurska, near Kolomea, which is just outside the northern frontier of the Bukovina; Bobrka and Potok, near Krosno, the town on the southern main line between Sanok and Jaslo; and Boryslav and Schodnitza, near Drohobycz, which is a little west of Stry. So soon as Russia controlled the Carpathian foothills she entered into possession of the oil-wells. Brussilov, as we have seen, was at Kolomea about 10th September, and at Drohobycz about 14th September, while Krosno fell into Russian hands on 28th September. The Austro-German advance against Warsaw for a moment regained possession of the Krosno fields, but not for long, and Drohobycz and Kolomea remained consistently in Russian occupation. This in itself would have been sufficient justification for the Galician campaign, and it explains especially Brussilov's persistent cavalry movements along the Carpathian skirts, which had another aim besides seizing the passes.

A subsidiary economic purpose was served by the raids into Hungary. With Galicia gone, Rumania was for Germany the only supply ground for petroleum. She was also her chief foreign granary, while from the plains of Hungary was recruited Germany's fast diminishing supply of horses. The lines of this traffic moved too far south to be cut by any incursion from the hills, but Brussilov's advanced cavalry served the purpose of dislocating to some extent the imports by the mere threat of its presence. Especially did it affect the Hungarian horse trade, for, since Hungary was at war, horses were commandeered at military prices, and this meant a certain friction with dealers and breeders. The excuse of an enemy at the gates was sufficient to send large quantities of horses to safe retreats among the Transylvanian glens.

The political objects of the Galician campaign may be set down very briefly. The great bulk of the people were Slav, who, though not unfairly treated by the Dual Monarchy compared with the other subject races, had yet strong ties of race and

religion with the invading Russians. The Russian generals were scrupulous in the cultivation of their goodwill and that of the considerable Rumanian population of the Bukovina; and probably no armed occupation of an enemy's country was ever attended by fewer barbarities. By the middle of September the whole of Eastern Galicia was being smoothly administered by Russian officials, and the people accepted the new rule with alacrity rather than submission.

A second political object was concerned with the occupation of the Carpathian passes. This great range, which sweeps in a half moon round Hungary from the Iron Gates of the Danube to the Moravian Gap, is not a mountain barrier like the Alps or the Pyrenees. Only in the west does it rise high, and then short of 7,000 feet; all the centre and east of the chain is little over 4,000 feet. Its distinguishing mark is that it is crossed by many passes, all of them much lower than the Brenner. The six main passes from west to east are the Dukla, the Mezö Laborcz, the Lupkow, the Uzsok, the Vereczke, and the Delatyn. Of these the highest, the Delatyn, is less than 3,000 feet, and the lowest, the Dukla, only 1,500 feet above the sea level. The Dukla and the Uzsok have roads but no railways, while the Mezö Laborcz carries the line from Przemysl to the Hungarian wine region of Tokay, the Vereczke the railway from Lemberg to Munkacs, and the Delatyn the line from Kolomea to Debreczen. By the beginning of October the Russians had crossed the three eastern passes, and were menacing the northern fringe of the Hungarian plains. Strategically it was for the moment a side-show, justified only by the immense number of light cavalry which Russia had at her disposal. But a serious strategical purpose would come later, for, if Ivanov once reached the Moravian Gap, a flanking advance westward by the south side of the Carpathians would be necessary to protect his left wing.



The Carpathian Passes.

The moment, however, had not arrived for this movement, and Russia's purpose in her Hungarian raids was political. The mountaineers of the Carpathians were a Slav people and friendly; the Hungarians of the plains were bitterly anti-Slav, but they were no less anti-German. Their leaders had been largely responsible for the ultimatum to Serbia which had been the immediate cause of the war, but it was becoming clear that they had raised a conflagration for which they had not bargained. If they found the sacred soil of Hungary threatened they would call upon Austria to defend them, and Austria, it was certain, could not spare a man for the purpose. The Hungarian regiments of the line and the Hungarian Honvéd had suffered desperately at Lemberg and Rava Russka, and were now either shut up in Przemysl or in full retreat towards Cracow. Russia had an acute perception of Magyar psychology. She knew that Hungary cared little for the Dual Monarchy, but much for her own position of dominance. She judged, and judged rightly, that the sight of war at her doors, and the stories of Hungarian regiments sacrificed to Prussian ambitions, and Hungarian officers overridden by von Hindenburg's staff, would go far to weaken her loose attachment to the Teutonic alliance.

It seems unlikely that during these weeks any large infantry forces of Ivanov's command penetrated much beyond the San. That the river was crossed in force we

know, for the Austrian rearguard made many efforts to regain it. On 26th September the Russians were in Rzeszow, on the main Cracow railway. On the 28th they held Krosno, on the southern railway, and Brussilov had seized the Dukla Pass in the Carpathians, and had penetrated a short distance into Hungary. On the 29th they were at Dembica on the main line, a point only one hundred miles from Cracow. These, however, were cavalry exploits, and the main force was much farther to the east, for news was already coming of the beginning of a movement on the German centre.

Sept. 26.

Sept. 28.

Sept. 29.

After the disaster of Rava Russka there had been a drastic overhauling of the Austrian commands. Dankl and von Auffenberg were under a cloud. The supreme command could no longer be left in the hands of the Archduke Frederick, and the Chief of Staff, von Hoetzendorff, was also out of favour at the German headquarters. Accordingly all the Austrian forces were placed under von Hindenburg, with the Archduke Frederick as a kind of sub-generalissimo; and German staff officers were assigned to the Austrian armies. The change was inevitable, and did not necessarily involve any slur on Austria—the supreme command in an Allied force must be centralized—but the manner of making it seems to have been tactless. The defences of Cracow were strengthened under German supervision, and the German right advanced from the Posen frontier towards the northern bank of the Vistula between Petrikov and Stopnitza. Such a movement must threaten directly the right of any Russian advance in Galicia, and, accordingly, within ten days' march of Cracow, that advance was stayed. But this was not all. Ruzsky had flung out vanguards in Poland towards the German frontier, and they reported a movement of the enemy's centre towards Lowicz and Lodz, and of his left from Thorn along the south bank of the Vistula. The movement was everywhere slow till von Hindenburg arrived from East Prussia to take command. But it was sufficient to convince the Grand Duke Nicholas and his staff that here was the beginning of the long-awaited German offensive in Poland. Germany did not intend to await the enemy on a line of frontier entrenchments, but to fight him a hundred miles inside his borders.

There was but one course for Ivanov. He fell back behind the San, to conform to Ruzsky's position in Poland. The curtain was rising on the great second act of the Eastern drama, when the battle was to be joined at the very gates of Warsaw.

CHAPTER XXII.
THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

Situation in Britain—Government's Financial Expedients—"Business as Usual"—Attitude of Ordinary Briton—Recruiting: its Hindrances; its Success—The New Spirit in France—M. Lavedan's *Credo*—Unanimity of Russia—Russian Generals—Russian Civilization—Germany's Attitude towards her Civilian Life—Her Strained Nerves—Hatred against Britain—Position of Turkey—Fiasco of Young Turk Régime—Failure of Turco-German *Jehad*—Italian Neutrality—Italian Parties—Rumania—Holland—The Scandinavian Countries—The United States—American Sympathy with the Allies—The German Propaganda in America—International Difficulties.

Even in a history of war concerned with the operations of fleets and armies, it is desirable to pause now and then and glance at civil events. The most notable are those which shed light upon the domestic conditions and the spirit of the belligerent peoples, and upon the feeling of the neutral states. The political situation is especially interesting at the beginning and the end of a campaign. Half-way the position is apt to ossify. Belligerents settle down to a sullen resolution, and neutrals to a sombre acquiescence. But in the first months of war we see the creation of national attitudes, and a great deal of intrigue and wavering before the realization of the facts is complete.

The first week of war broke to pieces the accepted military policy of Britain. It was not that that policy was inherently wrong; but it was shaped for ninety-nine out of a hundred possible contingencies, and the hundredth had happened. Our Expeditionary Force, adequate for any ordinary crisis, was transparently inadequate for this, and it had to be many times multiplied. Our Territorial Force, consecrated to home defence, was soon largely an army of volunteers for foreign service. On the whole, the British people set themselves with admirable sang-froid to revise their theories and improvise levies on the continental scale. They were both assisted and hampered by the fact that the ordinary life of the country was not seriously dislocated. We had no invaders within our borders, nor much likelihood of invasion. After the first hectic days we found that our commerce and industries were not greatly affected. The grave financial crisis was manfully faced, and the Government,

in consultation with the chiefs of the city of London, devised a series of measures, some of which, indeed, were open to criticism, but which on the whole served the purpose of restoring confidence and safeguarding national credit. Expedients like the moratorium and the new note issues were simple enough, but it required some courage to guarantee outstanding bills of exchange to the amount of £400,000,000, and to devise means of preventing the Stock Exchange from disappearing in wholesale bankruptcy. Except among women workers, and among those who, like authors, actors, artists, and musicians, minister to the intellectual and æsthetic needs of society, there was far less unemployment than in the beginning of an ordinary autumn. Some industries, notably the cotton trade, were badly crippled, but others were enormously benefited by war. In a few weeks a sense of security stole over the land, and when later the Government announced a vast scheme of new taxation and the raising of a war loan of £350,000,000—by far the largest state loan in the world's history—the people of Britain assented without a murmur.

We possessed one signal advantage as compared with our past struggles. Our leaders, at any rate, recognized that we were face to face with war on the grand scale. Policy was in harmony with strategy; there was not likely to be any interference with our armies on political grounds—none of the maddening and inept dictation from home which was the bane of Wellington in the Peninsula. Both political parties were equally determined on a "fight to a finish," and willing to trust the experts. No praise can be too high for the conduct of the official Opposition, and for those smaller sections which were not wholly in sympathy with the party in power. The Government had not to face the unpatriotic attacks which Pitt suffered at the hands of Fox and his allies, and which in a lesser degree appeared during the South African War. The nation was completely united.

But it was not yet completely awake. The national psychology during the first months of war provides an interesting contrast with the state of mind of a land like France, where compulsory service and the imminence of invasion brought home the terrible gravity of the struggle to every man and woman. In Britain there was a great outburst of patriotic feeling. Large sums were subscribed to the Prince of Wales's Fund and to other similar collections; a thousand war charities were started; the sports and pleasures of the rich disappeared; and there was a commendable desire in all classes to lend a hand. From the Press flowed a torrent of pamphlets in which the German character was acidly analyzed, and the badness of the German case compendiously expounded. Letters from angry novelists and furious poets filled the newspapers, and every man who could write became a publicist. Many a noted pacificist, temporarily bellicose, girded on his pen. Much of this gave the impression

that the writers wrote to soothe uneasy consciences, and to atone for past perversity by present exuberance. But with all this activity the attitude of the ordinary Briton was curiously academic. He was indignant with Germany, because of her doings in Belgium, because she seemed to him the author of the war, and because her creed violated all the doctrines in which he had been taught to believe. He was determined to beat her and to draw her fangs. But he had as yet no realization of the horrible actualities of modern battles, or of the desperate gravity of the crisis for civilization, for his country, and for himself. The popular mind is slow to visualize the unknown, and the smoke of a burning homestead, seen or remembered, is a more potent aid to vision than the most graphic efforts of the war correspondent.

A proof of this was the popularity during the early weeks of the phrase, "Business as usual," as a national watchword, a watchword acclaimed by every type of citizen, from advertisement-agents to Cabinet Ministers. The phrase, properly applied, contains excellent good sense, but its application was far too wide. Many people came to think more of capturing the enemy's trade after the war than of beating him as soon as possible in the field. The catchword showed the comparative remoteness of the bulk of our citizens from any realization of the struggle. Early in September the Government, faithful to the same motto, took occasion to pass into law their two chief controversial measures. Such an action may, under the circumstances, have been right—that does not concern us here; but that it was possible shows how greatly the situation of Britain differed from that of France, where a true national government was in power, and where the gravity of war was intimately present to every mind.

This feeling—as of a crisis serious but not too serious—was obviously bad for recruiting. There were other hindrances. Our treatment of aliens looked very like playing with the question. Hordes of humble folk—waiters, barbers, and the like—were interned or put under surveillance, but many wealthy and highly-placed foreigners went free, and continued to share the confidence of the authorities. Most of these, no doubt, were naturalized; but in a previous chapter we have seen the value of such naturalization. Again, we were not fortunate in our handling of the Press. We established a Press Bureau, which proceeded upon principles not easily intelligible. Britain, with her free traditions, makes a bad Censor, and in our official secrecy we went far beyond what was demanded by military requirements. We heard little of the glorious deeds of our army, and regiments were rarely mentioned, so that the chief aid to recruiting was abandoned. We forgot the old truth that the Press is the best press-gang. Such a censorship was really inconsistent not only with our system of voluntary recruiting, but with our type of democratic government. In

time of war a civilian First Lord at the Admiralty and a civilian Home Secretary, dealing with many semi-military questions, involved as their logical corollary a large measure of free public criticism. To withdraw this right by withdrawing reasonable information was to make of our constitution a bureaucracy without a true bureaucracy's efficiency.

Yet in spite of these many hindrances the voluntary system did not break down. Indeed, it justified itself beyond the hopes of its warmest advocates. Remember what we were asking of our volunteers. In a continental country, with the enemy at its gates, a man is called upon to enlist for the defence of his home and his livelihood. But that was not our case, nor likely to be our case. We could only ask for recruits to fight for the honour and interest of Britain and of her Allies. These were great matters, but obviously they must appeal to a more limited class than the call to strike a blow against a direct invasion. The men who enlisted came often from classes to whom the soldier's pay was no attraction, and who had other ways of earning their living. They came either because they comprehended and believed in the principles for which the Allies stood, or because they liked fighting for its own sake.

Those who were engaged in the business of recruiting, whether by addressing meetings or by a personal canvass, soon came to realize that a man's readiness to enlist depended mainly upon his understanding of the situation. The areas which did specially well—the mining districts of North England, Lancashire, the Scottish Lowlands, Birmingham—were those near the centre of things, or where the people showed a high level of intelligence and education. The Durham miners enlisted in thousands when the news came of the German destruction of Belgian coal-pits; that made them visualize the realities of war. The backward areas were either those remote from news centres, or localities where the mills were busy with the manufacture of war stores. The rural districts were, on the whole, apathetic till after the harvest or the term day; but when the shepherds and labourers were free they showed no disinclination to serve. The nature of the response is best shown by figures. It has been estimated that in these islands there are 8,000,000 men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five. If we take the French average, we must deduct 2,000,000 for the physically or mentally unfit. Another 2,000,000 must be deducted for the men required to keep our industries going, for Britain was manufacturing not only for herself but for all her Allies. If we allow 500,000 for the navy and purposes connected with the navy, and another 500,000 for the men between thirty-eight and forty-five (thirty-eight being the official age limit for enlistment), we get a total of 3,000,000 possible recruits. By Christmas, 1914, fully 2,000,000 of the inhabitants of the British Isles were under arms, either for home defence or foreign service. That

is 66 per cent., and the figures grew daily. To an impartial observer it must seem that the voluntary system had done wonders—miracles, if we remember the many needless obstacles placed in its path.

In France the arresting feature was the singular calm of her people. War was at her door, and the normal social life was naturally at a standstill. Presently the Government left Paris, and the capital waited breathlessly for the sound of the fortress guns which should announce the beginning of the German assault. But in the Press, in public speeches, in private letters, in conversation, there was no sign of fear or flurry. She realized the worst, she expected it, but she was confident in the ultimate issue. For some years past there had been a remarkable revival in the country of what we may call a religious nationalism. The old shallow secularism was losing its grip. At the moment she led the world in philosophy, and the teaching of men like M. Bergson and Henri Poincaré was in the direction of a rational humility before the mysteries of the spirit. Just as there was a striking religious movement in the armies of Lee before the great conflict in the Wilderness, so in France before the outbreak of war there had been a very clear reaction against the old materialism. Maurice Barrès rather than Anatole France had become the spokesman of French feeling. In her public life she had suffered in late years especially from two dangers—a doctrinaire international socialism, and—far more insidious—that evil type, the *sansculotte* financier, the speculative demagogue. When the hour of crisis came the exponents of the first rallied, as we have seen, most nobly to the national cause. The second disappeared, though its evil effects were long to be felt in the corruption which had weakened the army in many classes of war material.

The spirit of France can best be described in the words of Maurice Barrès as a "grave enthusiasm, a disciplined exaltation." It was the temper which wins battles, for it was unbreakable. Once more she felt herself leading the van of Europe, and the alliance of Britain, her secular enemy, filled her with a generous delight. Old critics of England, like M. Hanotaux and M. Rostand, recanted their suspicions, and testified to the spiritual unity, which wars had never wholly broken, between those whose history was so closely knit. France awoke to a consciousness of her past. In all this there was no violent reversal of things, no leaning to a sectional aim, nothing of Boulangism, or Royalism, or Clericalism. She became catholic in the broadest sense, zealous to maintain her republican freedom and her post in the forefront of intellectual liberty, but not less zealous for that delicate spiritual heritage which is independent of change in creeds and churches. A *Credo* written by M. Henri Lavedan gives expression to the ardent faith of this new France, which was no less

the old France:—

> "I believe in the courage of our soldiers and the skill and devotion of our leaders. I believe in the power of right, in the crusade of civilization, in France, the eternal, the imperishable, the essential. I believe in the reward of suffering and the worth of hope. I believe in confidence, in quiet thought, in the humble daily round, in discipline, in charity militant. I believe in the blood of wounds and the water of benediction; in the blaze of artillery and the flame of the votive candle; in the beads of the rosary. I believe in the hallowed vows of the old, and in the potent innocence of children. I believe in women's prayers, in the sleepless heroism of the wife, in the calm piety of the mother, in the purity of our cause, in the stainless glory of our flag. I believe in our great past, in our great present, in our greater future. I believe in our countrymen, the living and the dead. I believe in the hands clenched for battle, and in the hands clasped for prayer. I believe in ourselves. I believe in God. I believe. I believe."

The bane of France's wars in the past had been the domination of the soldier by the politician. But from the end of August onward politicians of all shades subordinated themselves to the soldiers. There were no appointments made because this or that minister wished to do a kindness to a friend, and no moves were undertaken because Paris had views. The discretion and self-effacement of M. Viviani and his colleagues were as remarkable as their spirit. A standard of naked efficiency ruled at General Joffre's headquarters. Eminent generals were ruthlessly dismissed when they failed; younger men were promoted with bewildering speed when their competence was proved. General Joffre was beyond doubt one of the chief assets of France in the struggle. That square, homely figure, scant of words, loathing advertisement, plainly, almost untidily dressed, and looking not unlike a North Sea pilot, was far enough removed from the traditional French general who, in brilliant uniform, curvets on a white charger, and pronounces eulogies of "la gloire." He was another portent of the new France.

The position in Russia was not less hopeful. For the first time since 1812 she had a national war and a national ideal which permeated and vitalized the whole of her gigantic body politic. In Manchuria she had been fighting half-heartedly for a cause which she neither liked nor understood, and thereafter came that welter of disorder, that ill-led scramble for liberties which often follows an unsuccessful and unpopular

campaign. The forces of order won as against the forces of emancipation, for the liberationists were not ready, and in a strife of dreams and policy, policy will usually be victor. But the forces of order learned much in the contest, and under men like Stolypin began a slow movement towards, not the westernizing of Russia, but the realization of her own native ideals. When the campaign opened there was an amazing rally of those very elements in her society which had hitherto seemed intent upon a doctrinaire cosmopolitanism. The "intelligents" were not less enthusiastic than the mujiks, and the student class, formerly the nursery of revolutions, was foremost in offering its services, and accepted joyfully the repeal of the laws which gave it freedom from conscription. Russia had one special advantage in such a war. In the Tsardom she had a natural centre of leadership, an office with mystic sanctions which no other modern kingship could display. The humblest peasant from the backwoods fought for a monarch whom he had never seen as the soldiers of the French Guard fought for Napoleon. In the Allied lines in the West there was a strange mixture of nationalities and races, but it was nothing to that battle front in the East. There, indeed, you had a bewildering array of figures: Finn and Tartar, Caucasian and Mongol, Buriats and Samoyedes and Kirghiz and Turcomans, fighting side by side with the more normal types of Russia proper. To weld such a miscellany into a fighting force more was needed than skilful organization, more even than a great national cause; it required the spell of a kingship, mystical, and paternal, and half divine.

No better proof of the regeneration of Russia could be found than in the renunciation by the Government of the alcohol monopoly, which meant the loss of many millions of revenue. Only a great and simple people can take such heroic measures and loyally obey them. Another proof is found in the constitution and conduct of the General Staff. There was no trace of the scandals of the Russo-Japanese War. Competence was the rule, not the exception. We shall have much to say of the Russian generals in the future, but here we may note not only the soldierly efficiency but the moral elevation of leaders like the Grand Duke Nicholas, Ivanov, Ruzsky, and Brussilov. In the phrase once used of a great English general, they were "patient, hardy, and merciful," and higher praise cannot be given to a soldier. We see this spirit in the dignity and candour of their official *communiqués*. There was no boasting, and no empty heroics; they told the truth, not exaggerating triumphs or minimizing defeats.

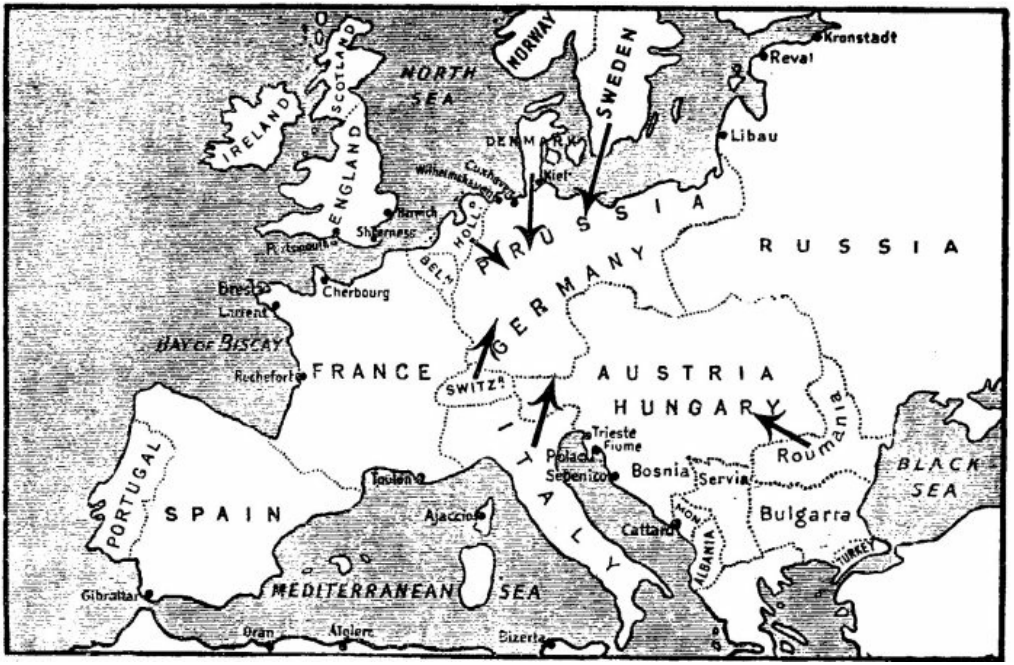
Many Western observers had long looked towards Russia for an influence which should counteract the weakness of our modern commercial civilization. Russia, with all her faults, was perhaps the purest democracy in the world. She had not felt the

blighting effects of a mechanical culture, and she had retained a certain primitive simplicity and spirituality. At her best, in her literature and her thought, she represented the new spirit which we have seen to be appearing in France. She still dwelt in the ages of faith. Her mystic communism had no affinities with the shallow materialism and the capitalistic tyranny which Signor Ferrero has named "Americanism," and which till yesterday was the working creed of Western Europe and the United States. Her great writers, like Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, had flown the flag of an unshaken idealism. Of the fighting value of Russia there was never any doubt, for the spirit of the men who fought at Kulm still lived in their descendants. But joined to the courage was a curious gentleness, the gentleness of that iron dreamer, that practical mystic, whom Lord Rosebery has called the most formidable of all combinations. The race which Prussia condemned as barbarians had a culture far beyond that of their critics. In the words of Professor Vinogradoff:—

> "These simple people cling to the belief that there is something else in God's world besides toil and greed; they flock towards the light, and find in it the justification of their human craving for peace and mercy. For the Russian people have the Christian virtue of patience in suffering; their pity for the poor and oppressed is more than an occasional manifestation of individual feeling—it is deeply rooted in national psychology. This frame of mind has been scorned as fit for slaves! It is indeed a case where the learning of philosophers is put to shame by the insight of the simple-minded."

Germany presented the unique case of a nation where the crisis had been long foreseen and every means taken to provide for it. Her civil life was beautifully stage-managed; but it was artificial, not natural. Her financial arrangements, highly impressive on paper, were in the nature of taking in each other's washing; they were spectacular rather than sound. The Press was directed with immense care. It was given plenty of information of the right kind, and daily it said the things which the Government wished the people to believe. Germany's chief mistake at the outset had been to get at loggerheads with the opinion of neutral nations. She realized this, and at once began to angle for their sympathies with all her terrible industry, but with all her customary lack of tact and perception. The pose of the Government was that Germany could beat her foes with her left hand and conduct her ordinary life with the other. Her captains of industry, Herren Ballin, Gwinner, Thyssen, Rathenau, issued reassuring pronouncements. Her cities were brilliantly lighted, while London and

Paris were in shadow; her cafés, restaurants, theatres, and operas went on as usual; to a casual observer, except for the absence of young men, her streets seemed as gay and busy as ever. Perhaps it was rather a spectral gaiety, for thousands of homes were in mourning, and in spite of the glowing news in the Press there were anxious faces in the cafés of an evening. But, on the whole, it served its purpose. The nation was kept in a high vein of confidence, and scarcely one man in a thousand had a suspicion of a doubt that the war could end otherwise than in a glorious triumph.



Sketch showing Inlets for German Imports.

As the seas were held by the Allies, only non-contraband goods could be imported from outside Europe. Contraband goods could only come from existing stocks held by Holland, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Italy, and Rumania.

Undoubtedly the policy of the German Government was wise. Germany needed to conserve all her confidence and power, for she could not relax her efforts for a moment, and if she was to win she must win quickly. She was rapidly falling into the position of a beleaguered city. Except through Scandinavia and Holland, Italy and Rumania, her communications with the outer world were cut, and even those few ports of entry were woefully restricted. Soon the pinch would be felt, not only in war munitions, but in the civil industries which she so feverishly toiled to maintain. Once let the spirit of the people weaken, and the palace of cards would fall. There was

another reason, too, for this policy. Foreign observers have been in the habit of describing the ordinary Teuton as stolid, unemotional, and unshakeable; and German admirals and generals fostered this notion by declaring that the people with the best nerves would win, and that the German nerves were the strongest in the world. The truth is almost the opposite. Scarcely any nation suffers so acutely from nervous ailments. The German lives on his nerves; he is quick in emotion and sentiment, easily fired, a prey alike to hopes and suspicions. In his own way he is as excitable as the Latin, and he has not the Latin's saving store of common sense. He is the stuff out of which idealists are made, but also neurotics. We see this trait in the overweening national arrogance which filled him of late years; that is not the characteristic of steady nerves, but of diseased ones. We see it in his almost mystical fidelity to a plan. The neurotic loves a mechanical order; he flies to it for comfort, as a hysterical lady obeys the dictates of an autocratic physician. We see it in the passion of hatred which about the beginning of September rose against Britain, drowning all the lesser antagonisms against Gaul and Slav. Herr Ernst Lissauer's poem in the Munich *Jugend* is a vigorous expression of this passion:—

"Take you the folk of the Earth in pay,
With bars of gold your ramparts lay,
Bedeck the ocean with bow on bow,
Ye reckon well, but not well enow.
French and Russian they matter not,
A blow for a blow and a shot for a shot;
We fight the battle with bronze and steel,
And the time that is coming Peace will seal.
You will we hate with a lasting hate,
We will never forgo our hate,
Hate by water and hate by land,
Hate of the head and hate of the hand,
Hate of the hammer and hate of the crown,
Hate of our millions choking down.
We love as one, we hate as one,
We have one foe, and one alone—
ENGLAND!"

As poetry that has its merits, but it is not quite the poetry of sane men. It is the scream of jangled and unstrung nerves. It would be a mistake to give much weight to the journalism of an irritated *litterateur*, were it not that the same spirit was

beginning to show itself throughout the whole of German society, and was assiduously encouraged by the Government itself. Let us do all honour to the courage and self-sacrifice of the German people. Their great armies fought like heroes, their young men flocked to the colours to fill the places of the dead, their women cheerfully laid their best on the national altar. But it is important also to recognize the high, strained pitch of the German temper, which could only be sustained by frequent stimulants. In the provision of these, as we shall see, the leaders were presently hard pressed, and the result was that political considerations came to rank before strategical—the first step on the road to defeat.

As a half-way house between the belligerent and neutral Powers, we naturally turn to Turkey, which in September was still maintaining an uneasy peace. She had committed a grave technical breach of neutrality in connection with the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, and through August and September her military leaders were busy with underground preparations which were perfectly well known to the Allied Powers. German gold, arms, and men were imported through Bulgaria. A German general, Liman von Sanders, became a kind of honorary Inspector-General of the Turkish army. The two German warships remained under German control, and a large German element was introduced into the Turkish fleet. German merchant vessels, such as the *Corcorado* and the *General*, were used as naval auxiliaries, and their wireless apparatus was adapted for communication with the German General Staff. The army was mobilized, and large quantities of war stores were sent to Syria and Baghdad. Meanwhile, under German direction an attempt was made to preach a Holy War throughout the Moslem provinces. It was represented that the Kaiser was a convert to Islam, and that presently the Khalif would order a *Jehad* against the infidel. Stories were told of the readiness of the Mohammedan subjects of Britain, Russia, and France to revolt at this call, and preparations were made for the manufacture of Indian military uniforms at Aleppo to give proof to the Syrians that the Indian faithful were on their side. Egypt, which had long been the hunting-ground of German emissaries, was considered ripe for revolt, and the Khedive was known to be friendly. The Mohammedan world was believed to be a powder-magazine waiting for the spark.

All this activity was not the work of a united Government. There were serious differences of opinion in the higher Turkish councils. The Sultan was consistently averse to a breach of neutrality, and did his best to prevent it. The Grand Vizier, a weak man, could not at first be persuaded of the danger, but was as strongly against war as his nature permitted. Djavid Bey, the Minister of Finance, was well aware

that the Treasury was empty, and stoutly opposed the designs of the militarists. Nor were the Turkish people at large in any way hostile to the Allies. They had been offended by Britain's action in preventing delivery of their two battleships, the *Sultan Osman* and the *Reshadie*; but this feeling was passing, and they had little love for the military junta who ruled the land with an oppressiveness at least as great as in the old days of Abdul Hamid. But the Turkish people were voiceless, and the Turkish Government was in the hands of the army, which, in turn, was in the hands of the strangely-named Committee of Union and Progress, of Enver, the Commander-in-Chief, and of his German patrons and paymasters.

The Turkish nation had been unhappy under its old masters, but it was infinitely more unhappy under the new. When the Young Turkish movement in 1909 drove Abdul Hamid from his throne, the Western critics of the former régime proclaimed the dawn of a nobler world, and burned foolish incense before the shrines of the revolutionaries. It needed little familiarity with Turkey and with the character of the new leaders to see that the latter end of the country would be worse than the beginning. Turkey's strength lies in her religion and in her peasantry. For a strong Turkey we need an Islamic revival and a pure government which will relieve the burdensome taxation of her provinces. The Young Turks were anti-Islam, and, therefore, anti-national, and they were fully as corrupt, as unscrupulous, and as brutal as their predecessors. Their creed was the sort of thin Comtism which the Western world has more or less forsaken. Their aim was dominance for their own sect and faction, and their leader was Enver, a tinsel Napoleon, who dreamed of himself as the master of the Mohammedan world. They insulted the Sheikh-ul-Islam, and neglected orthodoxy, forgetting that the whole strength of Turkey lay in her faith. When honest men stood in their path they removed them in the fearless old fashion, beginning with journalists and politicians, and ending with the ablest soldiers, Nazim and Mahmud Shevket. They envisaged a Holy War, engineered by unbelievers, which should beguile the Mohammedan populations of Africa and Asia, and they naturally leaned on the broad bosom of Germany, who made a speciality of such grandiose visions.

There was never a chance of such a *Jehad* succeeding. To begin with, the Committee of Union and Progress were too deeply suspect. They had proved themselves both corrupt and incompetent. They had led Turkey to defeat in two great wars, and in the matter of oppression their little finger was thicker than Abdul Hamid's loins. Again, the ordinary Turk had not forgotten his old alliance with Britain, and he had no natural leaning toward the German side. In the great days of Turkey's history the Grand Vizier had been wont to assemble the standards at the

Adrianople Gate for the march to Vienna, and it was in that direction that the Turkish war should roll in the eyes of the conservatives of a deeply conservative people. In a pure-blooded race, too, birth counts for much, and the Committee's origin was too patently mongrel. Enver was half a Pole; Djavid was a crypto-Jew from Salonika; Cavasso was a full Jew; Talaat was a Bulgarian gypsy; Achmet Riza was partly Magyar and partly Circassian. It was as if the German armies, battling for the cause of Teutonic culture, had been directed by names like Levinski and Cohen and O'Toole and Mackintosh. Besides, they talked about Islam, but their conduct had shown no love for Islam. In the Tripoli war the Arabs had been scandalized by the infidelity of the Young Turk officers, and news spreads fast through the Moslem world. The Sultan's title to the Khalifate, too, was being fiercely questioned. The Turks had won it originally by conquest from the Abbasids, and the Arabs had never done more than sullenly acquiesce. But a title won by the sword can only be held in the same way, and to the faithful of Islam it looked as if the sword had grown blunt in degenerate hands. Most important of all, the Turco-German alliance was breaking its head against an accomplished fact. By September the whole of Mohammedan India and the leaders of Mohammedan opinion in British Africa were clearly on the Allied side, and their forces were already moving to Britain's aid, while forty thousand Arab Moslems were fighting for France in the battles of the West. Islam had made its choice before Enver sent his commissaries to buy Indian khaki in Aleppo and inform the Syrians that the Most Christian Emperor had become a follower of the Prophet.

Of all the neutral Powers the action of Italy was most vital to the struggle, for she held a strategical position on the flank of both combatants. Her intervention on behalf of her colleagues of the Triple Alliance would menace the French right wing; and if she joined the Allies she could turn the Austrian left, while her fleet would establish a crushing superiority against Austria in the Mediterranean. When Italy became a kingdom she had two features in her foreign policy—a dislike of Austria and a not unnatural suspicion of France. The assistance which Napoleon III. had given to the Risorgimento was counterbalanced in Italian eyes by the price he had exacted for it, and by the obstacles he had placed in the way of Garibaldi's seizure of Rome. Besides, her position compelled her to be a naval Power, and France's naval activity and the French colonization of the North African littoral alarmed her susceptibilities. The direct result of the Congress of Berlin, which gave Cyprus to Britain and Tunis to France, was the formation in 1881 of the Triple Alliance between Italy, Austria, and Germany. Italy was a very new Power; the arrangement gave her powerful backers at a most critical time; and the Italian statesman, Crispi, did what at the

moment was the wisest thing for his country.

The Alliance was renewed in 1887, in 1891, in 1902, and in 1912, but in each case under changed conditions. From 1882 onwards Italy began her colonial adventures, undertaken by Crispi at the instigation of Bismarck, who aimed at setting France, Russia, and Britain by the ears. A commercial war with France did not improve her relations with the Republic. Then came dark days, days of industrial distress and colonial misfortunes, culminating in the disaster of Adowa on March 1, 1896. Italian ambition was sobered, and the disappearance of Bismarck from the European stage removed the chief rivet which bound her to the Triplice. Relations with France began to improve, and in 1896 and 1898 commercial treaties were signed. Then, in 1904 came the Entente between France and Britain, which was tested in the following year at the Conference of Algeciras, when Italian sympathy leaned against the German claims. In 1908 Austria's annexation of Bosnia, with the consent of Germany, annoyed Italy acutely, and in 1911 her declaration of war with Turkey over Tripoli showed that she was aware of, and resented, Germany's policy in the Near East. Probably the only thing that still kept her in the Triplice was the partnership of Russia in the Entente, for she feared above all things a Slav advance to the Adriatic.

Italians, however, have always shown an aptitude for *realpolitik* far greater than the nation that invented the term. By 1913 Italy had acquiesced in the rise of the Balkan states, provided her own interests were safeguarded. She refused to join Austria in an attack on Serbia, and there is reason to believe that she curtly rejected the Austro-German plans which were unfolded to her in the spring of 1914. Her interests were becoming clearly defined. Some day she wanted Trieste and the hinterland of Istria, and, less urgently, the Trentino. She must rule in the Adriatic, and especially must hold the Albanian port of Valona (Avlona), which was only forty miles from her shores. No great Power other than herself must dominate Albania. These were the essentials, and they brought her sharply up against both her colleagues of the Triplice. When war broke out Italy's interests were, on the whole, opposed to those of Germany and Austria; her relations with France were good and with Britain cordial; and the sympathies of her people were by an enormous majority on the side of the Allies. Her neutrality, at least, was assured.

Whether she should go farther was a difficult question. It is one thing to be estranged from your allies, and quite another thing to go to war against them. To begin with, she was jealous of her honour. More wise than Germany, she did not believe in a Machiavellianism which offended the sense of decency of the world, and she had no desire to be called unscrupulous. The bitter witticism of a French

diplomatist—"Elle volera au secours du vainqueur"—was not really justified. Italy was in a very delicate position. Her treasury was not overflowing, her debt was large, her taxation high; and though the training of her army was excellent, its equipment was not perfect. An immediate declaration of war against Germany was difficult for a thousand reasons, of which not the least was the appearance of bad faith. German conduct, to be sure, very soon gave a civilized and liberal Power a good excuse for withdrawing from the Triplice; but the immediate occasion for hostile action was still wanting, and the chance of its appearing was lessened by Germany's strenuous courtship, which culminated in the dispatch of the former Chancellor, Prince Buelow, as Ambassador to Rome. Further, since Italy was one of the few means of entry for foreign supplies into Austria and Germany, considerable sections of her population were benefited by her neutrality. On the other hand, if she delayed too long, and the Allies were victorious, she could not expect to have much share in the division of spoils. Italy, as the youngest of the Great Powers, was bound to consider the matter on business lines, and it was inevitable that her real interest should be slow in revealing itself. So she contented herself with preserving an armed and watchful neutrality.

Popular sympathy, being free from the responsibility of statesmanship, was not neutral. The extreme Clericals and the extreme Socialists, being united in the bonds of anti-nationalism, were in favour of neutrality at all costs. At the other end of the line the Nationalists, Republicans, moderate Socialists, and smaller oddments like the Futurists, favoured an immediate breach with Germany, and they probably carried the bulk of the people with them. The centre party, the Liberals, who were the party in office, adopted the policy of neutrality for the time being, and they had the support of the majority of the commercial and professional classes. But all the elements in Italian life which we are accustomed to rate high, the idealists, the inheritors of the Mazzini tradition, were arrayed against German pretensions. Many old "red shirts" volunteered for the French and British service, and more than one descendant or kinsman of Garibaldi was to give his life for the Allies' cause.

The action of Rumania depended upon Italy, and on Rumania, again, hinged the policy of Bulgaria. It was believed that close relations existed between Rumania and Italy, since both were to some extent Latin Powers, and both were free from diplomatic entanglements at the moment. The position of the former was a curious one. Her king was a German, of the Catholic branch of the Hohenzollerns; she had no special love for Russia, since the Peace of Berlin deprived her of Bessarabia; and the Austrian possession of Transylvania remained a bone of contention with the Dual

Monarchy. She was bound to benefit by neutrality, for she remained the one great granary open to the Teutonic League, and, after the Russians had seized Galicia, the only source of German oil supplies. Her strategic position on Austria's flank made her intervention of considerable military importance, for she could put in the field nearly half a million troops. The death of King Carol on 10th October removed the chief dynastic bond with Germany, and the Russian domination of the Bukovina seemed to forebode a summary cutting off of her activities as an importer of wheat and oil. The sympathies of her people were with the Allied cause, but her course craved wary walking, and for the first months of war she maintained a decorous and observant neutrality, waiting for Italy to give the lead.

The situation of the smaller Baltic and North Sea States was very different. For them there could be no question of intervention, at any rate for many a day. Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were compelled by their geographical position and by their military feebleness to bear with the best grace possible the penalties of an impotent detachment. They were useful to Germany as conduits for foreign supplies; but the omnipresence of the British fleet, the unsafeness of the North Sea from mines, and our rigorous application of the doctrine of "continuous voyage" with regard to contraband, gravely interfered with their commerce. Holland was the chief sufferer. She was compelled by the Rhine Acts to forward to Germany any consignments arriving on a through bill of lading, and the British Government were forced in consequence to take stringent measures, including the absolute prohibition of the export of certain food-stuffs to Dutch territory. But, in spite of all our efforts, large quantities of goods, both absolute and conditional contraband, reached Germany through Holland and Scandinavia, including materials for the making of war munitions in the shape of copper, rubber, and various chemicals. On the general question these countries stood to gain by a victory of the Allies, but political foresight is often obscured by an immediate loss to the pockets. Yet, on the whole, they conducted themselves well. The Allied cause, in spite of ceaseless German attentions, was the more popular; except, perhaps, in Sweden, which had an old dislike and dread of Russia. Holland, remembering the proclaimed ambitions of Germany and realizing that the quarrel with Britain would mean the end of her colonies, showed by her Press the direction of her sympathies; and, though suffering severely herself, welcomed and sheltered many hundred thousands of Belgian fugitives with an uncomplaining generosity which deserves to be honourably remembered.

The United States of America on the outbreak of war revealed, in spite of her

large German and Irish-American population, a clear bias towards the Allied cause. Something was due to those ties of blood and language, which are apt to be forgotten except in a crisis; much to the hatred felt by a free democracy for a creed which put back the clock of civilization. No proud people likes to be told that it is not competent to make up its mind for itself, and America resented patronage of this kind from Germany, as she would have resented it from Britain. The German Ambassador, Count Bernstorff, who was personally popular, and had married an American wife, set a-going a vast bureau of information, and sedulously cultivated the Press. He was assisted by Herr Dernburg, a former German Colonial Minister, and between them they managed in a month or two to antagonize thoroughly American sentiment, and to make themselves the object of general ridicule. There can be no question but that during the first months of war, except for a few German financiers in New York, one or two Irish-American politicians, and the German communities of the Middle West, the feeling of the United States was clearly, even enthusiastically, on the side of the Allies.

But in war it is inevitable that outsiders must suffer, and America soon began to feel the pinch. The campaign at sea which Britain conducted was bound to play havoc with some of her industries, and just as during the Civil War the loss of cotton imports almost beggared Lancashire, so now the cotton and lumber interests in America were heavily handicapped. Some American products benefited, for all the Allies were buying in her markets, but others were gravely hurt. Copper is a case in point. American exports of this metal to the neutral states of Europe were suddenly multiplied fourfold. Undoubtedly the bulk of this was destined for Germany, who was soon in straits from her excessive expenditure of ammunition. Accordingly British cruisers seized American copper in neutral vessels and held it up, unless—which rarely happened—it was clearly proved that the goods were for *bona-fide* neutral use. This practice, while foreign to our old customs, was justified by more recent maritime law, first laid down in the American courts, as in the *Springbok* case[1] during the Civil War. America forgot this, and protested; and, later, in her proposal to buy, at the expense of the nation, from German owners, German ships interned in American ports, she clearly broke a fundamental rule. She has, indeed, ever been an ardent student of international principles, but, like most other nations, not always a consistent practitioner.

It would be as unfair to blame the United States Government for their protests and the American people for their occasional outbursts as to blame British feeling during the American Civil War. When industry is disorganized and thousands suffer there is not the time or disposition to abide calmly by the text-books, and it was

highly exasperating to see a great fleet playing havoc with what till a few weeks before had been legitimate commerce. Besides, by our wavering attitude towards the Declaration of London, we had made it exceedingly hard for neutrals to know where exactly they stood. Happily there was a real disposition in both Governments and peoples to bear with each other—in the British to abate the right of capture as far as was consistent with the demands of war, and in America to listen to reason and put a friendly construction on the occasional differences. The support of America was of high value at this time to the British people. American intervention in the quarrel would, indeed, have made little immediate difference to either side, from the smallness of her regular army and her distance from the scene of war. But to have the moral assent of the great English-speaking Republic was a supreme comfort even to those in Britain who know little of the United States. Americans and Englishmen will continue to criticize each other to the end of time, but that is only a proof how nearly they are related. Their wrangles are like the tiffs among the members of a household.

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[1] This, as well as the analogous cases of the *Bermuda* and the *Peterhoff*, were decisions of Chief Justice Chase and the Supreme Court of the United States.

CHAPTER XXIII.
THE WAR IN AFRICA.

German Aims in Africa—German Explorers—The Foundation of her Colonies—The Berlin Conference, 1884—The Caprivi Agreement, 1890—German Colonial Methods—Togoland—The Cameroons—German South-West Africa—German East Africa—Capture of Togoland—Fighting in the Cameroons till End of October—Situation in South-West Africa—General Botha's Policy—Frontier Fighting during September—Disaster of Sandfontein—Maritz's Rebellion—Maritz driven across the Frontier—Dangerous Position in East Africa—British and German Strength—The German Plan—Raids on Nyassaland and North-Eastern Rhodesia—Arrival of First Indian Reinforcements—Fighting on Northern Frontier—Nature and Difficulties of the Campaign.

By the end of August the war had spread beyond Europe to every quarter of the globe where Germany possessed a square mile of territory. Our Australasian and African dominions were engaged in defending or enlarging their borders, and, though the fighting was on a small scale compared with the gigantic European struggle, it had important strategical bearings, and for Britain was scarcely less vital than the battlefields of France. The war in the Pacific, in which Japan was our partner, must be left to another chapter. Here we propose to consider only the campaigns conducted in the different parts of Africa, where Germany owned four colonies, contiguous to those of France and Britain. This was fighting of a familiar type, such as almost every year had shown on some portion of the Empire's frontiers. We fought with and against armies largely composed of native troops, and the country was that bush and desert which had been for a century the common theatre of our armed adventures.

Germany's colonial ambitions awoke with her great development after the victory over France. She desired to emulate Britain in finding an outlet under her flag for her surplus population, which had hitherto emigrated to North and South America; she wished to have producing grounds of her own from which she could draw raw material for her new factories; she sought to share in the glory of conquest and colonization, which had done so much for France and Britain; and, as a coming maritime Power, she was anxious to have something for her Navy to defend. Her

thinkers as well as her statesmen fostered the new interest. List and Friedel and Treitschke pointed out that trade followed the flag, and that the flag might also follow trade; while Bismarck discerned in the movement a chance of getting fresh assets to bargain with in that European game which he played with such consummate skill. Especially Germany's eyes turned towards Africa, and not without justification. Her travellers had been among the greatest pioneers of that mysterious continent. In the history of South African exploration honourable place must be given to the names of Kolbe and Lichtenstein, Mohr and Mauch. In West and Northern Africa the roll of honour contained such great adventurers as Hornemann and Barth, Ziegler and Schweinfurth, Rohlfs and Nachtigal. It was a German, Karl von der Decken, who first surveyed Kilimanjaro, and the story of African enterprise contains few more heroic figures than that of von Wissmann. Germany was resolved to share in what is called the scramble for Africa, and she had admirable pathfinders in her missionaries and explorers.

This is not the place to describe in detail the tortuous events from 1880 onwards which led to the foundation of the four German African colonies. It is a fascinating tale, for Germany made adroit use of the suspicions and supineness of the Powers in possession. So far as the British Governments of the day were concerned, she might have had all she wanted for the asking; and it was only by the efforts of clear-sighted private citizens that her bolder schemes were checkmated. Her first attempts were directed towards the Portuguese colony of Delagoa Bay, which would bring her in touch with what she believed to be the bitterly anti-British people of the Transvaal. In Pondoland and at St. Lucia Bay, on the Zululand coast, she endeavoured to get grants of land from the native chiefs, and was only stopped by a tardy British intervention, forced upon the mother-country by the people of Cape Colony. Few at home realized the significance of the attempts, and Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons publicly thanked God for them, and looked forward to her alliance, "in the execution of the great purposes of Providence for the advantage of mankind." In 1884 the work was fairly begun. Sir Bartle Frere from Cape Town had warned Lord Carnarvon as early as 1878 that Britain must be mistress up to the Portuguese frontier on both the east and west coasts. "There is no escaping from the responsibility," he wrote, "which has been already incurred ever since the English flag was planted on the castle here. All our difficulties have arisen, and still arise, from attempting to evade or shift this responsibility." But presently Herr Luderitz had founded his settlement at Luderitz Bay, and on April 25, 1884, the German flag was hoisted in Damaraland, and the colony of German South-West Africa was constituted. Two months later Nachtigal landed from a gunboat at Lome, the port of

Togoland, and by arrangement with the local chiefs declared the country a German Protectorate. A month after he did the same thing in the Cameroons, and the British consul, sent to frustrate him, arrived five days too late.

Bismarck, desiring to regularize his acquisitions, summoned the famous Berlin Conference, which met on 15th November of the same year. Many of its phrases are still in common use—"Occupation to be valid must be effective," "Spheres of influence," and such like. Meanwhile German agents, including the notorious Karl Peters, were busy in Zanzibar, intriguing with the Sultan, and sending expeditions into the interior to secure concessions. Some day the history will be written of the part played in that contest by men like Sir Frederick Lugard, who, while they could not prevent the creation of German East Africa, saved Uganda and the East African Protectorate for Britain. In 1890 came the Caprivi Agreement, as a consequence of which Heligoland was ceded to Germany. It settled the boundaries of German East Africa, but it did more, for it gave to German South-West Africa a strip of land running north-east to the Zambesi, which formed a wedge separating the Bechuanaland Protectorate from Angola and North-West Rhodesia.

There could be no objection in international law or ethics to Germany's African activity, though there might be much to her methods of conducting it. She had a right to get as much territory as she could, and to profit by the blindness of her rivals. But by 1890 a new and more watchful spirit was appearing in British Africa, and to some extent in the mother-country. Cecil Rhodes was beginning his great struggle with Paul Kruger for the road to the north, and the dream of a Cape to Cairo route seized upon the popular imagination. Imperialists sighed for a Monroe doctrine for Africa, but the day for that had long gone by. A solid German fence had been built across that northern avenue which might have joined up Nyassaland and North-East Rhodesia with Uganda and the Sudan. Meanwhile Germany, having got her colonies, did not handle them with great discretion. She was much out of pocket over them, for she lavished money on the construction of roads and railways, and especially on that cast-iron type of administration which was the Prussian ideal. Her first blunder was her treatment of her settlers, who found themselves terribly swathed in red tape, and were apt to trek over the border to more liberal British climes. Her second was her attitude towards the native population. Unaccustomed to allow ancient modes of life to continue side by side with the new—which is the British plan—she attempted to make of the Bantu peoples decorous citizens on the Prussian model; and, when they objected, gave them a taste of Prussian rigour. One of the ablest of German students of colonial policy, Dr. Moritz Bonn of Munich, has noted the result so far as concerns South-West Africa: "We solved the native problem by smashing tribal life

and by creating a scarcity of labour."

Beginning from the west, the first colony, Togoland, is about the size of Ireland, and is bounded on one side by French Dahomey, and on the other by the British Gold Coast. It is shaped like a pyramid, with its narrow end on the sea, for its coast line is only thirty-two miles. About a million natives inhabit it, chiefly Hausas, and the whites number about four hundred. It was a thriving little colony, with a docile and industrious population, and a large trade in palm oil, cocoa, rubber, and cotton, while the natives were considerable owners of cattle, sheep, and goats. One railway ran inland from Lome, and there was a network of admirable roads, which were a credit to any tropical country. Farther south the German Cameroons lay between British Nigeria and French Congo, and extended from Lake Chad in the north to the Ubangi and Congo rivers. Its area was about one-third larger than the German Empire in Europe, and its population of 3,500,000 contained 2,000 whites, and the rest Bantu and Sudanese tribes. In the south lay the Spanish enclave of Rio Muni, or Spanish Guinea, which was an enclave owing to the arrangements which followed the trouble with France over Morocco in 1911, when Germany obtained a long, narrow strip of French Congo to the south and east of the Cameroons. This Naboth's vineyard was one of the pieces of territory which Bernhardi had marked down for speedy German acquisition. The Cameroons was a colony of great possibilities, for it contains a range of high mountains, which might form a health station for white residents, while the soil is rich and water abundant. Its products were much the same as Togoland, but its forests provided also valuable timber, and there was a certain mineral development. Some roads had been made, and 150 miles of railway, but trouble with the native tribes had done much to handicap progress.

Following the western coast-line past the Congo mouth and the Portuguese territory of Angola, we reach a more important colony in German South-West Africa. Its area is some 320,000 square miles, considerably larger than the Cameroons, and it stretches from the Angola border to its march with Cape Colony on the Orange River. Its native population used to be 300,000, but at the beginning of the war, owing to the Herero campaign, it was little over 100,000—chiefly Bushmen, Hottentots, and Ovambo; while the whites numbered 15,000 and included many agricultural settlers. German South-West Africa was the only German colony where the small farmer, as opposed to the planter, seemed to flourish. In spite of the dryness of the climate the land makes excellent pasturage, and there is considerable mineral wealth in the shape of copper and diamonds. The latter were discovered in 1906 near Luderitz Bay, and promised at one time to become a serious competitor

to the mines of Kimberley and the Transvaal. The colony has two chief ports—Swakopmund, half-way down the coast-line, and just north of the little British enclave of Walfish Bay, and Luderitz Bay, or Angra Pequena, nearer the southern border. The capital, Windhoek, is 200 miles from the coast, in a direct line east from Swakopmund. Some note must be taken of the railways, which were built with a strategical as well as a commercial purpose. A railway quadrilateral had been formed, of which the northern side was Swakopmund to Windhoek, the eastern Windhoek to Keetmanshoop, and the southern Keetmanshoop to Luderitz Bay. From Swakopmund an unfinished line runs for several hundred miles north-east towards the Caprivi strip which abuts on the Zambesi. But the most important strategical extension is in the south, where a branch runs from Reitfontein to Warmbad, which is within easy distance of the Orange River and the frontier of the Cape Province.

The last and greatest of the German colonies is German East Africa, which is about twice the size of European Germany. It has a population of 8,000,000, which includes in normal times about 5,000 white men. The wide variations of climate and landscape which it contains give it endless possibilities. Its northern frontier runs from the coast south of Mombasa, just north of the great snow mass of Kilimanjaro, to the Victoria Nyanza, of which two-thirds are in German territory. Going westward, it includes the eastern shores of Lakes Kivu and Tanganyika, as well as the north-eastern shore of Lake Nyassa. It has Britain for its neighbour on the north and part of the west borders, while the remainder of the west marches with the Belgian Congo and the whole of the south with Portuguese Mozambique. The islands of Pemba and Zanzibar, under British protection, dominate the northern part of its coast-line of 620 miles. It will be seen that the vast lake region of the west provides admirable means of transit, and is eminently suitable for tropical agriculture. Elsewhere water is a difficulty, for the only river of any size is the Rufiji, and the snows of Kilimanjaro largely drain towards British territory. Nevertheless it is a land of great potential agricultural and pastoral wealth; its forest riches are enormous; gold is known to exist in large quantities, as well as base metals and soda deposits. On this colony Germany especially expended money and care. It was resolved to make it a planter's country, and huge agricultural estates were the rule. Four excellent ports, Lindi, Kilwa, Tanga, and the capital, Dar-es-Salam, made commerce easy, and the colony was well served by the great German steamship lines. Two railways ran into the interior, and competed with the Uganda railway to Port Florence. One, running from Tanga to Moschi, served the rich foothills of Kilimanjaro, and was destined to be continued to Victoria Nyanza. A second, which

was only completed this year, ran from Dar-es-Salam to Tabora, an important junction of caravan routes, and was continued thence to Ujiji, on Tanganyika. All such railways were intended under happier circumstances to be connected at their railheads by the great Cape to Cairo route. It will be seen that, if in West Africa Germany had acquired no more than ordinary tropical colonies, and in South-West Africa something of a white elephant, in East Africa she had won a territory which might some day be among the richest of African possessions.

The first blow in the war was struck in Togoland. That small colony was in an impossible strategic position, with French and British territory enveloping it on three sides, and a coast-line open to the attack of British warships. Its military forces were at the outside 250 whites and 3,000 natives. In the early days of August a British cruiser summoned Lome, and the town surrendered without a blow. The German forces fell back one hundred miles inland to Atakpame, where was situated Kamina, one of the chief German overseas wireless stations. Meantime Captain Bryant of the Royal Artillery had led part of the Gold Coast Regiment across the western frontier in motor cars, while the French in Dahomey had entered on the east. By Monday, the 10th of August, the whole of southern Togoland was in the hands of the Allies, and Captain Bryant, with a small French contingent, advanced against the Government station of Atakpame. On 25th August he crossed the river Monu, and by 27th August, with very few casualties, he occupied Atakpame, destroyed the wireless station, and secured the unconditional surrender of the German troops. Togoland had become a colony of the Allies, normal trade was resumed, and in two months' time there was nothing to distinguish it from Dahomey and the Gold Coast.

Aug. 10.

Aug. 25.

Aug. 27.

NORTHERN TERRITORIES
ASHANTI
TOGO
DAHOMEY
GOLD COAST
GULF OF GUINEA
Gambaga
Sansane-Mangu
R. Oti
R. Kulukpene
R. Oti
Bismarckburg
R. Volta
Kete-Kratschi
R. Anga
R. Monu
Sokode
R. Ogu
Atakpame
Misahohe
Nuatja
Kewe
Tsewie
R. Monu
Sebe
Anecho
Lome
Kwitta
Scale of Miles
0
25
50
75
100

A far more difficult problem was presented by the Cameroons. Strategically this colony also was hemmed in by the Allies, but the great distances and the difficulty of communication made a concerted scheme not easy to execute. It was arranged that two French columns should move from French Congo, while the British columns should enter at several points on the Nigerian frontier. There is reason to believe that both on the French and British side the advance was made without adequate preparation. It was the rainy season in West Africa, and any campaign in a tangled and ill-mapped country was liable to awkward surprises. A mounted infantry detachment of the West African Frontier Force left Kano on 8th August, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Maclear, and seems to have crossed the frontier on 25th August after a heavy march, and occupied the German post of Tepe, on the Benue River. Next day it advanced along the Benue as far as Saratse, and on the 29th attacked the river station of Garua. One fort was captured, but next day the Germans counter-attacked in force, and drove back the British troops to Nigerian soil. In this fighting Lieutenant-Colonel Maclear and four other British officers were killed, several were wounded or missing, and forty per cent. of the native force was lost. Apparently we suffered chiefly from Maxim fire, for the Germans, having once located our trenches, had the exact range, and simply mowed down our troops. In the words of one of the survivors, "it was a terrible loss, and there was absolutely no glory in the whole fighting, taking place as it did in a little out-of-the-way spot 5,000 miles from England, that not one person in a thousand has ever heard of."

Aug. 25.

Aug. 29.

No better luck attended the other two expeditions which about the same time entered from Nigeria at more westerly points on the frontier. One entering from Ikom met with little resistance, and about the 30th occupied the German station of Nsanakong, five miles from the border. The other expedition, moving in from Calabar close to the coast, occupied Archibong on 29th August. A week later, at Nsanakong, as at Garua, the Germans counter-attacked in force. They arrived about two in the morning, and met with a stubborn resistance until the British ammunition was exhausted, when the garrison endeavoured to cut its way out with the bayonet. The bulk of them managed to retreat to Nigeria, but three British officers and one hundred natives were killed, and many were taken prisoners. Thereupon the Germans crossed the frontier, and occupied the Nigerian station of Okuri, north-east of Calabar, from which, however,

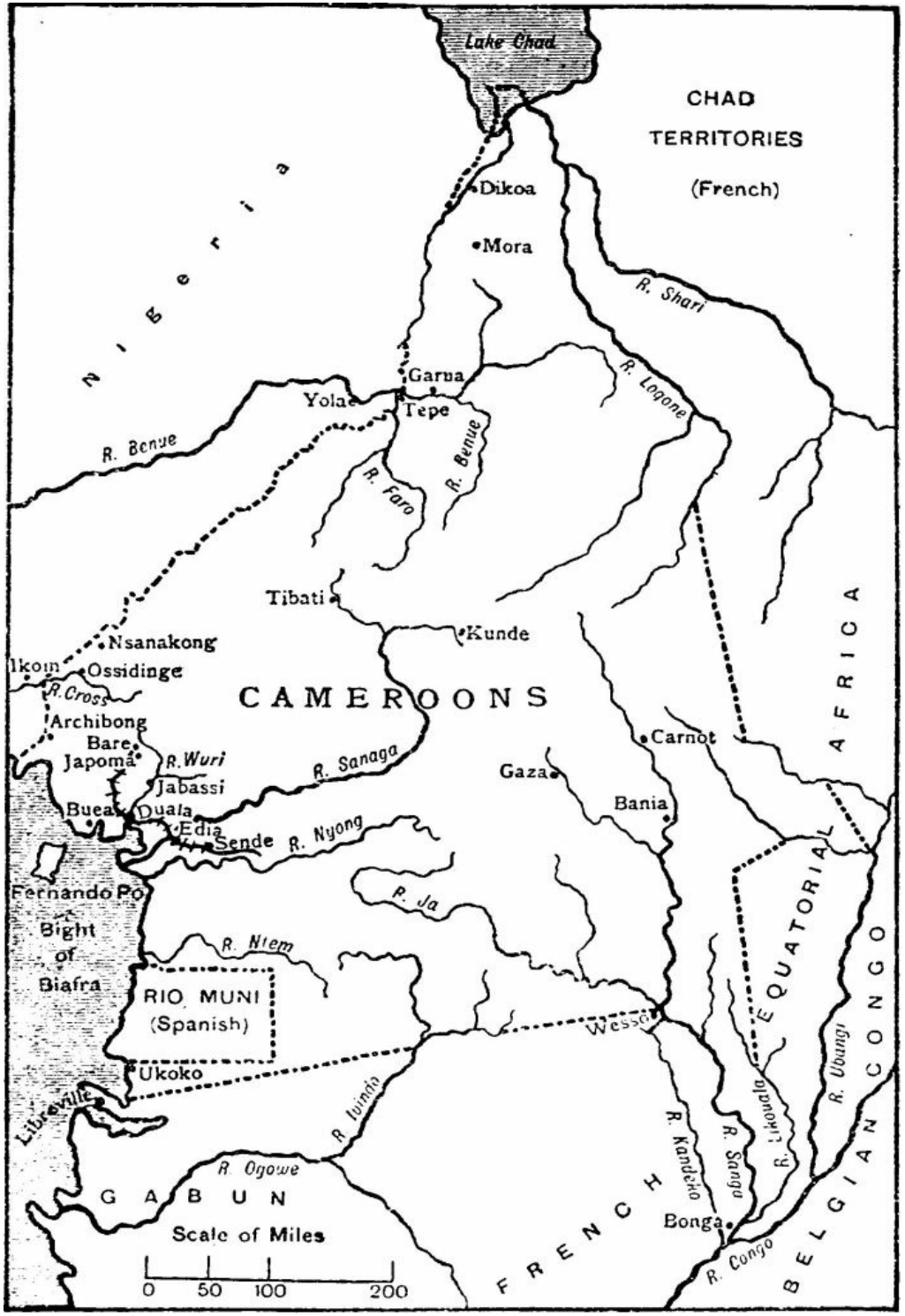
Aug. 30.

they soon retired.

The land attack having failed, recourse was had to the sea. For some time the British warships *Cumberland* and *Dwarf* had been watching the mouth of the Cameroon River and the approaches to the German port, Duala. On 14th September a bold attempt was made to blow up the *Dwarf* by an infernal machine. Two days later, a German merchantman, the *Nachtigal*, tried to ram the British gunboat, but was wrecked, with the loss of thirty-six men. A few days later two German launches made another attempt with spar-torpedoes, but once again the attack miscarried. On 27th September the Anglo-French force appeared before Duala, and the bombardment resulted in its unconditional surrender. Bonaberi, the neighbouring coast town, fell to an Anglo-French force, under Brigadier-General Dobell, and the *Cumberland* captured eight merchantmen belonging to the Woermann and Hamburg-Amerika lines. All were in the Cameroon River, and were reported to be in good order, "most of them containing general and homeward cargoes, and considerable quantities of coal." At the same time a German gunboat, the *Soden*, probably constructed for river work, was seized, and put into commission in the British navy. Meanwhile the French, operating from Libreville in French Congo, and covered by the warship *Surprise*, attacked Ukoko on Corisco Bay, and sank two armed vessels, the *Khios* and the *Itolo*.

Sept. 14.

Sept. 27.


Lake Chad
CHAD TERRITORIES (French)
NIGERIA
Dikoa
Mora
R. Shari
Garua
Yola
Tepe
R. Logone
R. Benue
R. Benue
R. Faro
Tibati
Kunde
Nsanakong
Ikom
Ossidinge
R. Cross
CAMEROONS
Archibong
Bare
Japoma
R. Wuri
R. Sanaga
Jabassi
Carnot
Gaza
Bania
Bueas
Duala
Edia
Sende
R. Nyong
AFRICA
Fernando Po
Bight of Biafra
R. Ja
R. Ntem
RIO MUNI (Spanish)
Ukoko
Libreville
R. Ivindo
R. Ogowe
GABUN
Scale of Miles
0 50 100 200
FRENCH EQUATORIAL
BELGIAN CONGO
R. Kandeko
R. Sangha
R. Likouala
R. Ubangi
Bonga
R. Congo

With the chief port in our hands, and the coast as a base, the Allies could now advance with better hopes of success. The Germans retreated by the valley of the river Wuri, and by the two interior railways. During October the half-circle of conquered territory was rapidly widened, while isolated entries were made from the northern and southern frontiers. Jabassi, on the Wuri, was taken, and Japoma, the railway terminus. We had now the measure of the enemy, and could afford to advance at our leisure. By 1st October the Cameroons, so far as it was of any value to Germany in the struggle, was virtually captured. The wireless stations had been destroyed, the coast was ours, and the German troops were reduced to defensive warfare in a difficult hinterland.

In German South-West Africa the situation was different from that in the other German colonies of the East and West. Here over the frontier lay not a British Crown possession, but a self-governing dominion. Elsewhere a cable from the Colonial Office could mobilize the British defence, but in South Africa there was an independent Parliament and a hotch-potch of parties to be persuaded. Further, the ground had been carefully baited. Intrigues had been long afoot among the irreconcilable elements in the Dutch population, and the highest of German authorities had not thought it undignified to speak words in season, and to hold out hopes of a new and greater Afrikander republic. Elsewhere the German colonies had to fight their battles unaided, but here there was every expectation of powerful assistance from within the enemy's camp. Till the situation developed the campaign on Germany's part must be defensive, and for this rôle German South-West Africa had many advantages. Her capital was far inland, and, since she could hope for no assistance by sea, it mattered little if her ports were seized. Her railways on the south ran down almost to the Cape frontier, but between the Cape railheads and her border stretched the desert of the Kalahari, and the dry and waterless plains of North-West Cape Colony. At least two hundred miles separated the branch railways at Carnarvon and Prieska from the nearest German territory, and the distance from Kimberley on the main northern line was little less than four hundred. At one point only had the British forces reasonable means of access by land. From Port Nolloth a line runs inland to serve the copper lands of Namaqualand, and from one station on it, Steinkopf, a sixty-mile track leads to Raman's Drift, on the Orange River, a point about fifty miles from the terminus of the German railway at Warmbad.

As to the German forces, it is not possible to speak with certainty. In their official

returns before the war they claimed a military force of some 3,500 men, mainly whites; but by calling up reserves and enrolling volunteers from among the civil population of German blood they probably increased this to not less than 6,000. The figure may have been higher, for the Cape Town estimates put the German strength at not less than 10,000, as well as a camel corps 500 strong. The Germans were believed to be strong in artillery, and to have sixty-six batteries of Maxims, half of which were concentrated at Keetmanshoop, in the south of the colony.

On the declaration of war the German governor, Dr. Seitz, put at once into force the long-prepared scheme of defence. The Germans, about 10th August, abandoned their two principal stations on the coast, Swakopmund and Luderitz Bay, and retired with all military stores to their inland capital of Windhoek. Before leaving they destroyed the jetty, and dismantled and sank the tugs in the harbour of Swakopmund. By 20th August they had made small incursions into British territory, entrenching themselves in certain places among the kopjes, and skirmishing with the frontier farmers. When General Botha met the Union Parliament on 8th September he was able to inform it that Germany had begun hostilities.

Aug. 10.

Aug. 20.

In a later chapter we shall consider the political situation in the Union of South-West Africa which led to a dramatic and not unexpected rebellion. Here it is sufficient to say that General Botha, in a speech of great dignity and force, announced that after careful consideration he and his colleagues had decided to carry the war into German territory, "in the interests of South Africa as well as of the Empire." He had information about German machinations which was denied to the ordinary politician, and the great majority of the members of Parliament were ready to trust his judgment. The sole opposition came from General Hertzog, who succeeded in mustering only twelve votes in the House of Assembly and five in the Senate. Yet it is clear that his views were largely held in the country, and that many burghers looked with alarm upon a policy of active operations. These men lived chiefly in the districts bordering upon German South-West Africa, in the Orange Free State, and in the Western Transvaal, and they argued that, as long as Germany left Union territory alone, no offensive measures should be taken against her. It did not require any great amount of political acumen to foresee that such an attitude was impossible. Sleeping dogs may be best left alone, but when ninety-nine of the pack are tearing in full cry across Europe it is folly to suppose that the hundredth will continue its slumbers.

Sept. 8.

The beginning of September saw scattered fighting in the south-eastern angle of the frontier. Information was received that a considerable German force was

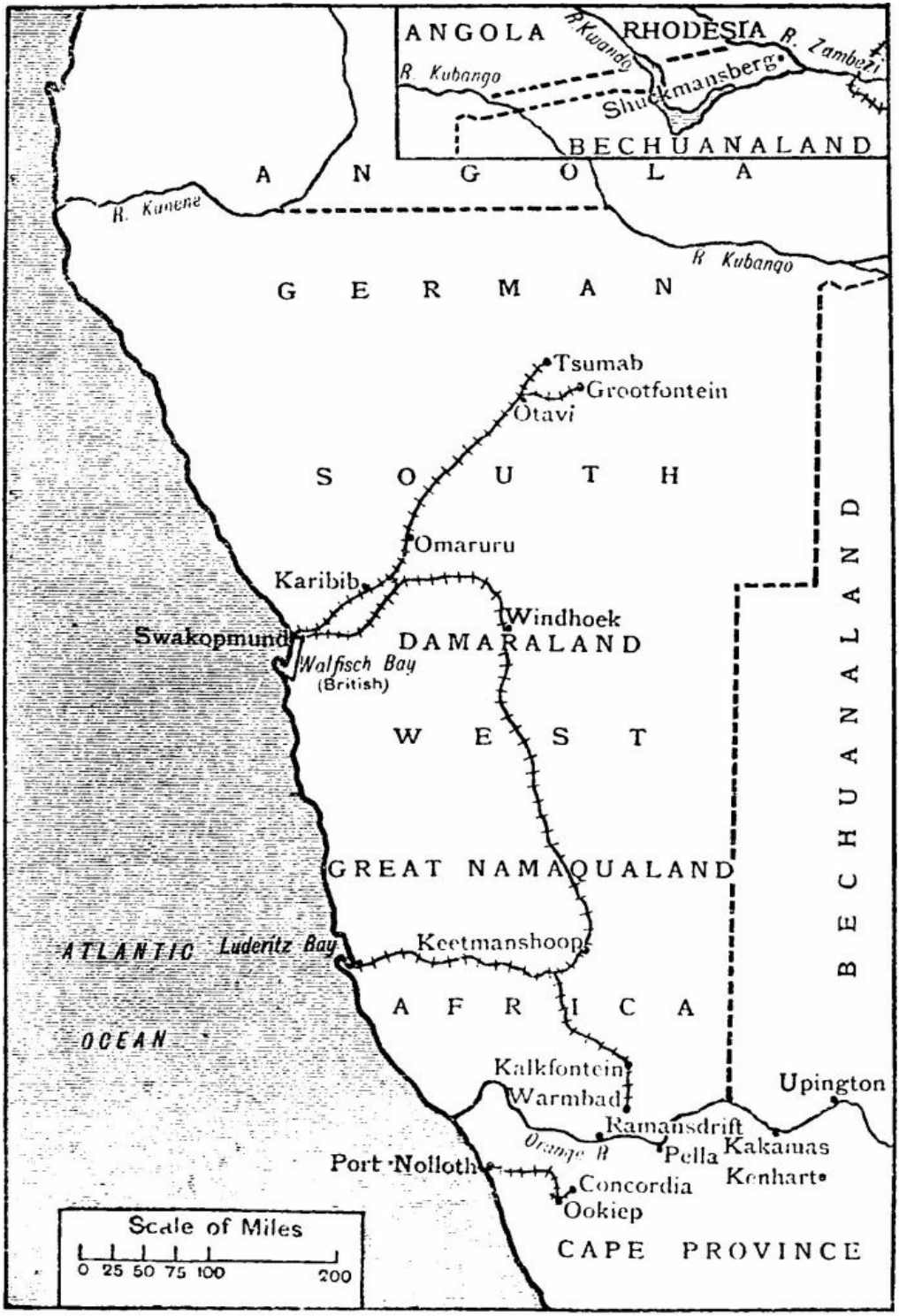
advancing to Raman's Drift, on the Orange, with the intention of entrenching themselves and disputing the northward passage of British troops. Colonel Dawson, with the 4th South African Rifles, left the Port Nolloth railway at Steinkopf, marched the sixty miles to the river, and surprised a German garrison at the drift on 15th September. After a fight in which only one man was killed, he captured the German blockhouse, and received the surrender of the garrison. He sent patrols up the Orange, and ousted the enemy from the kopjes, while with a larger force he compelled the Germans to evacuate an entrenched position farther north. To set against this success, the Germans on 17th September surprised a small British post at Nakob, a point near the Orange just outside the south-eastern angle of the frontier. The victors carried off some cattle and a number of prisoners, and retired, leaving a small garrison. The next day witnessed a British counter-stroke by sea. On 18th September a force sailing to Luderitz Bay occupied the town, and hoisted the Union Jack on the town hall. The Germans had destroyed the wireless station, but otherwise the place was undamaged.

Sept. 15.

Sept. 17.

Sept. 18.

While this frontier fighting was taking place there was a widespread martial enthusiasm throughout the Union. General Botha, who had agreed to take command of the army, called for 7,000 men—5,000 foot and 2,000 mounted infantry—and to his appeal there was an immediate and adequate response. Recruiting was stimulated by the news of three unimportant German raids, two across the Orange at Pella and Rietfontein, which they occupied, and one upon Walfish Bay, which failed disastrously. Meantime the Rhodesian Police had occupied the far north-western post of Schuckmansburg, in the Caprivi strip, and had forestalled any danger from that quarter. At this time the strategical idea seems to have been a British advance simultaneously from Rhodesia, down the Orange River and from the Port Nolloth railway, while a movement would also be made inland from the coast ports.


ANGOLA
RHODESIA
R. Kwando
R. Zambezi
R. Kubango
Shuckmansberg
BECHUANALAND
A N G O L A
R. Kunene
R. Kubango
G E R M A N
Tsumab
Grootfontein
Otavi
S O U T H
Omaruru
Karibib
Windhoek
Swakopmund
DAMARALAND
Walfisch Bay
(British)
W E S T
GREAT NAMAQUALAND
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
Luderitz Bay
Keetmanshoop
A F R I C A
BECHUANALAND
Kalkfontein
Warmbad
Upington
Ramansdrift
Orange R.
Pella
Kakamas
Kenhart
Port Nolloth
Concordia
Ookiep
CAPE PROVINCE
Scale of Miles
0 25 50 75 100 200

With the end of September there came heavier fighting. On the 27th, between Kolmanskop and Grassplatz, a German patrol was surprised by some Rand Light Infantry, and found its retreat barred by a body of Imperial Light Horse. In the skirmish three British and four Germans were killed. Our forces in this affair were operating from Luderitz Bay, and, using the same base, we surprised a German post at Anichab. Meantime, at the south-eastern angle a more serious encounter took place which ended in a British reverse. Between Warmbad and Raman's Drift lies a place called Sandfontein, important as one of the few spots where water can be got in that arid desert. On 25th September a small force of South African Mounted Rifles and Transvaal Horse Artillery pushed forward to the water-hole, which lay in a cup-shaped hollow, commanded by kopjes, and with the only retreat through an awkward defile. Early on the 26th the Germans brought up guns to the heights, and till noon bombarded the water-hole, while a considerable force held the pass in the rear. The British troops, under Colonel Grant, made a gallant fight till their ammunition was exhausted, and then, having first rendered their guns useless, were forced to surrender. Our total strength seems to have been no more than 200, and out of it we lost 16 killed, 43 wounded, and a large number of prisoners and missing. The German commander, Lieutenant-Colonel von Heydebreck, behaved like a good soldier, complimented the survivors on their defence, and buried the British dead with the honours of war.

Sept. 27.

Sept. 25.

Sept. 26.

The affair at Sandfontein was in many ways mysterious. It looked as if we had had false information, or treacherous guides, to have been betrayed into so hopeless a battle. A fortnight later came news which explained much and revealed a very ugly state of things in the north-west of the Cape Province. The British forces there were under the command of a certain Lieutenant-Colonel S. G. Maritz, who had fought on the Dutch side in the South African War, and had assisted the Germans in their struggles with the Hereros. Maritz was the ordinary type of soldier of fortune, not uncommon in South Africa, florid, braggart, gallant after his fashion, and with little scientific knowledge of war. General Botha found reason to suspect his loyalty, and dispatched Colonel Conrad Brits to take over his command. Maritz refused to come in, and challenged Colonel Brits to come himself and relieve him. The latter sent Major Ben Bouwer as his deputy, who was made prisoner by Maritz, but subsequently released, and sent back with an ultimatum to the Union Government.

This ultimatum declared that, unless the Government guaranteed that before a certain date Generals Hertzog, De Wet, Beyers, Kemp, and Muller should be allowed to come and meet him and give him their instructions, he would forthwith invade the Union.

Major Bouwer had other interesting matters to report. To quote the dispatch of the Governor-General: "Maritz was in possession of some guns belonging to the Germans, and held the rank of general commanding the German troops. He had a force of Germans under him, in addition to his own rebel commando. He had arrested all those of his officers and men who were unwilling to join the Germans, and had then sent them forward as prisoners to German South-West Africa. Major Bouwer saw an agreement between Maritz and the Governor of German South-West Africa, guaranteeing the independence of the Union as a republic, ceding Walfish Bay and certain other portions of the Union to the Germans, and undertaking that the Germans would only invade the Union on the invitation of Maritz. Major Bouwer was shown numerous telegrams and helio messages dating back to the beginning of September. Maritz boasted that he had ample guns, rifles, ammunition, and money from the Germans, and that he would overrun the whole of South Africa."

The immediate result of this discovery was the proclamation of martial law throughout the Union and a general strengthening of the Union forces. The time had now come for every man in South Africa to reveal where lay his true sympathies, and the centre of action was soon to shift from the western borders to the very theatre where for three years the British army had striven against the present generalissimo of the Union forces. Meantime Maritz proved a broken reed to his new allies. His one asset was an intimate local knowledge of the waterless north-west. He had small notion of serious warfare, and was incompetent to control his ill-assorted forces. He fixed his base near Upington, on the Orange, and dispatched a portion of his command of 2,000 to march southward up the Great Fish River against Kenhart and Calvinia. Colonel Brits lost no time in harrying the Upington commando, and on 15th October captured a part of it at Ratedrai, many of the men voluntarily surrendering. On the 22nd Maritz attacked Keimoes, a British station on the Orange, south-west of Upington. But its small garrison of 150, after holding on till reinforcements reached it, drove him back, and captured four of his officers. Maritz then moved west down the Orange to Kakamas, where Colonel Brits fell upon him so fiercely that he lost all his tents and stores, and was compelled to withdraw, wounded, over the German frontier. He made another sally on the 30th,

Oct. 15.

Oct. 22.

but was conclusively beaten by Brits at Schuit Drift, and driven finally out of the colony. Meantime the commando which had marched up the Great Fish River had no better success. It travelled fast, and by 25th October had covered 200 miles, and was close to Calvinia. Here Colonel van der Venter beat it heavily, taking ninety prisoners and the two Maxim guns which Maritz had confiscated from the Union army. The commando was hopelessly broken, and "drives," organized by van der Venter and Sir Duncan Mackenzie, collected its remnants at their leisure. It was fortunate for the British cause, for a far more formidable rebellion under abler soldiers than Maritz was now threatening in the very heart of the Union.

Oct. 30.

Oct. 25.

The situation in East Africa in the first months of war was the gravest which a British colony had to face. The German province was rich, well-organized, and strategically well-situated, for our Uganda railway, which formed the sole communications between Uganda, the East African plateau, and the sea, ran parallel with the northern frontier at a distance of from fifty to one hundred miles, and offered a natural and easy object of attack. There is reason to believe that the German scheme of operations, while providing for invasions of Nyassaland, North-East Rhodesia, and the British shores of Victoria Nyanza, aimed especially at an advance by land against Mombasa and the railway, which should be assisted by the *Koenigsberg* from the sea. The size of the German forces is hard to estimate. Lord Crewe, in the House of Lords, spoke of native infantry and police to the number of 2,000; but there is little doubt that the native levies were at least 5,000, and that there were some 3,000 whites, recruited partly from the residents and partly from German reservists in the East, who had come thither by sea at the outbreak of war. The Germans got their native forces largely from the Sudan, which was the chief recruiting ground of the King's African Rifles; but they also enlisted the local tribesmen, especially the Masai and the Manyumwezi. They were especially strong in machine-guns, of which they had four to each company.

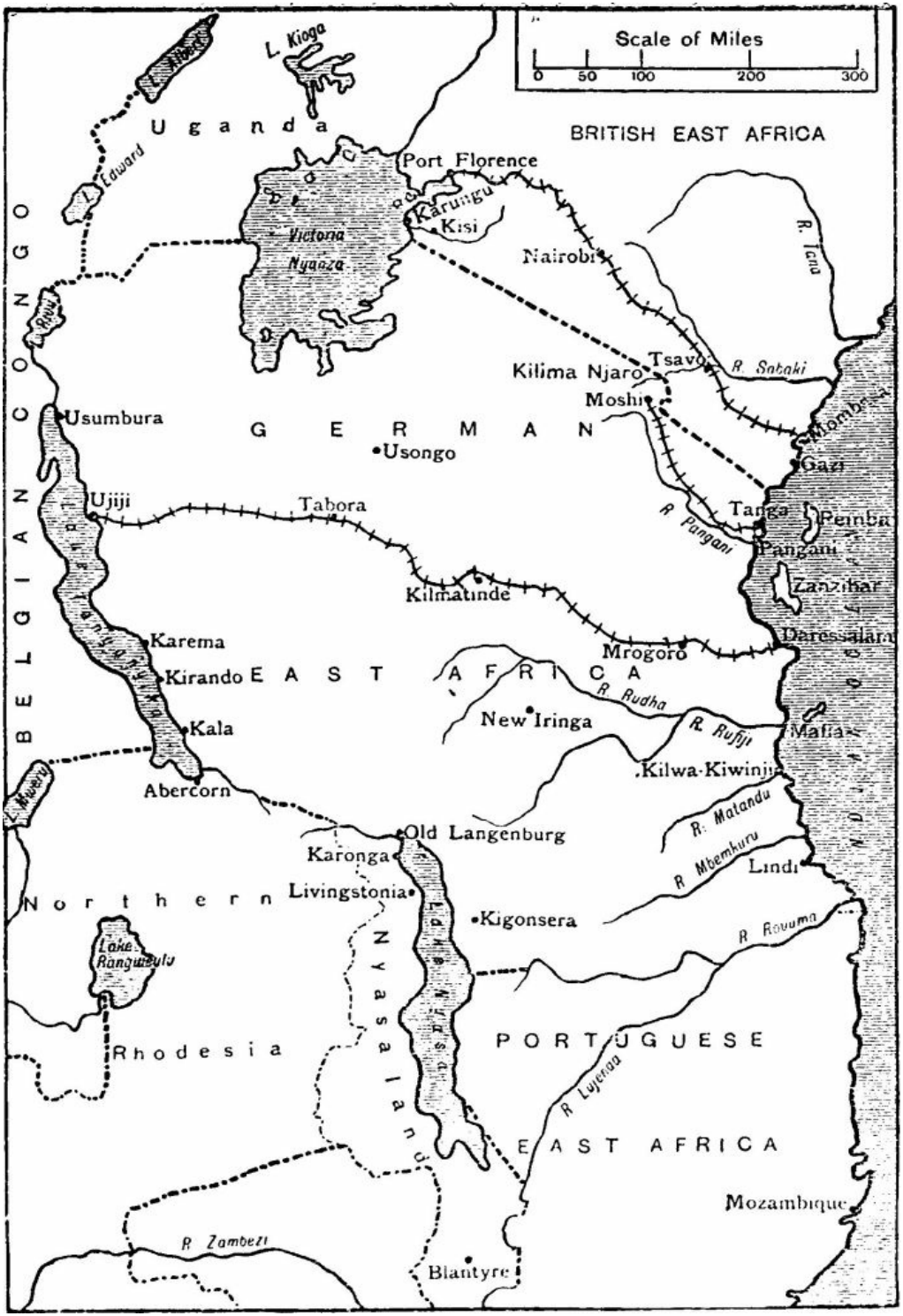
The British forces at the start were almost non-existent. In British East Africa and Uganda they consisted of the 3rd and 4th battalions of the Kings African Rifles, numbering under 1,000. These troops were mainly stationed on the northern frontier and in Jubaland, where a punitive expedition had just been dispatched against some of the Somali and Abyssinian tribes. All companies were at once recalled, and about 500 King's African Rifles were concentrated. Some 200 police were obtained for the defence of the railway line, by means of calling out the reserves and weakening police posts wherever possible. Two volunteer corps were raised among the white settlers—the East African Mounted Rifles and the East African Regiment. The latter

was a failure, and never reached a higher figure than 50, but the former was nearly 400 strong. The existing Uganda Railway Volunteers—less than 100—were also called out, and employed in guarding bridges. As time went on further volunteer units were raised from Indian residents. A small body of Somali scouts was created, and a number of Arabs were recruited by Captain Wavell, one of the few Englishmen who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca. In Nyassaland and North-East Rhodesia there were small bodies of police, aided by white volunteers.

The total British defence force, therefore, in the first three weeks of war may be put at under 1,200, much of it of doubtful quality. The King's African Rifles were first-class fighting men, and the new Mounted Rifles, recruited from young British settlers of good blood and from the Boers of Uasin Gishu, were a force whose members reached a remarkable standard of shooting and veldcraft. But it is difficult to believe that so small an army could have made a serious stand if the Germans had pushed their northern invasion with vigour. For some obscure reason Germany did little in this direction during August, but contented herself with attacks on the south and west borders.

Aug. 13.

On 13th August the campaign began by an attack of a British cruiser on the German capital, Dar-es-Salam. The port was bombarded, and landing parties made their way into the harbour and completely destroyed the new wireless installation. They finished their work by dismantling the German ships, and by sinking the floating dock and the *Moewe*, a survey ship of 650 tons. On the same day, on Lake Nyassa, the British steamer *Gwendolen* surprised the German steamer *Von Wissmann* at Sphinxhaven on the eastern shore, took her crew and captain prisoners, and rendered her helpless. Three weeks later two vigorous attacks were made in the south-west. At Karongwa, one of the chief British ports on Lake Nyassa, a small garrison of 50 was attacked by a force of 400, but held on long enough for supports to arrive. These supports decisively defeated the invaders, and drove them over the border with the loss of half their white officers. The second attack was made upon Abercorn in North-East Rhodesia, just south of Lake Tanganyika. A body of Rhodesian police drove it back, and captured a field-gun. Fighting continued intermittently all along this part of the frontier, but the balance leaned heavily in the British favour. Germany was keeping her best troops for her northern campaign.


Scale of Miles
0 50 100 200 300
BRITISH EAST AFRICA
Uganda
L. Kioga
L. Edward
L. Albert
Victoria Nyanza
Port Florence
Karungu
Kisi
Nairobi
R. Tana
Kilima Njaro
Tsavo
R. Sabaki
Moshi
Mombasa
Gazi
Usumbura
GERMAN
Usongo
Ujiji
Tabora
Tanga
Pemba
R. Pangani
Pangani
Zanzibar
Kilmatinde
Karema
Mrogoro
Kirando
EAST AFRICA
R. Rudha
New Iringa
R. Rufiji
Mafia
Kala
Kilwa-Kiwinji
Abercorn
L. Mweru
Old Langenburg
R. Matandu
R. Mbemkuru
Karonga
Lindi
Northern
Livingstonia
Kigonsera
R. Rovuma
Lake Rangweulu
Rhodesia
Nyasaland
PORTUGUESE
R. Lujenda
EAST AFRICA
Mozambique
R. Zambezi
Blantyre
BELGIAN CONGO

On 3rd September reinforcements arrived for the British. Brigadier-General J. M. Stewart reached Nairobi and assumed command of all the British troops. He brought with him the 29th Punjabis, a battalion of Imperial Service troops, one battery of Calcutta Volunteer Artillery, one battery of Maxim guns, and one mountain battery. He had come only just in time, for the Germans were beginning operations against the Uganda railway. About 20th August they had seized the small frontier post of Taveta under Kilimanjaro, which was in dangerous proximity to their chief northern military post of Moschi. They had also taken the frontier post of Vanga, on the coast, due south from Mombasa. Early in September they sent a detachment to blow up the Uganda railway at Maungu. The history of this expedition is curious. They arrived comfortably within twenty miles of the line, guided by the excellent German maps. There, however, the maps stopped, and they were compelled to have recourse to English ones. The result was that they missed the water-holes, went eight miles out of their course, and were captured to a man. Thus may the deficiencies of a Survey Department prove an asset in war.

Sept. 3.

Aug. 20.

A more serious advance was made on 6th September, when a force of Germans, about 600 strong, marched down the Tsavo River. They were much delayed by Lieutenant Hardingham with a mounted infantry company of King's African Rifles, who harassed them day and night, and gave time for a half battalion of the 29th Punjabis and several companies of the King's African Rifles to come up. An engagement was fought about five miles from the Tsavo railway bridge, and the enemy were driven back in some confusion. This success enabled us to establish advance posts at Mzima and Campiya Marabu, which managed to maintain their position against repeated German assaults. Three days later, on 10th September, the northern frontier was crossed at its extreme western end. The Germans occupied the frontier town of Kisi, near the Victoria Nyanza. On the 12th two companies of King's African Rifles, with two Maxims and some native police, surprised this force, who retired in disorder upon the lake port of Karungu. About the same time an action was fought on the lake itself. Two German dhows were sunk, and the British steamer *Winifred* sailed into Karungu Bay to relieve the town. At first it was driven off, but it returned with a colleague, the *Kavirondo*, and in the face of the British strength the Germans evacuated Karungu and fell back over the border.

Sept. 6-7.

Sept. 10.

Sept. 12.

During September there were other attacks on the northern frontier, making a total of seven in all, but much the most dangerous was the advance along the coast from Vanga towards Mombasa. The expedition was to be supported by the *Koenigsberg*, which was to shell the town and occupy the island, while the land forces were to destroy the bridge connecting Mombasa with the mainland. Something prevented the *Koenigsberg* from playing its part—perhaps the presence of British warships—but the land attack came very near succeeding. The Germans were 600 strong, with six machine-guns, and they were met at Gazi by Captain Wavell's Arab company, strengthened by some King's African Rifles from Jubaland. This little force held up the invaders for several days, and on 2nd October were reinforced by some Indian troops. Gazi was a very fine performance, for practically all the European officers were wounded before help arrived, and the command of the King's African Rifles passed to a native colour-sergeant, who handled his men with great coolness and skill, and headed the charge which drove back the enemy.

Oct. 2.

Towards the end of October the German attacks slackened, and the position resolved itself into a stalemate. The British troops remained on the defensive, waiting until a big Indian contingent should arrive in the beginning of November. The Germans occupied British territory at Taveta and at Longido on the Romba River, and they had an advance post between the Romba and the Tsavo. The defence had had great luck, but had on the whole acquitted itself well. In such a campaign the attackers had to fight against the country as well as against human opponents. All along the northern border the waterless desert is covered with thorny scrub, which makes military operations desperately difficult. At a time when our soldiers elsewhere were shivering in the mud of the Aisne, the East African force had to contend with intolerable heat and thirst. Much of the country was wholly virgin; there were no maps or roads; and wild beasts made picketing and scouting a sensational task. Happily, most of the men engaged in the work were familiar with the conditions. Most of the officers had hunted big game over a similar country, and the African levies were bush-bred and expert shikaris.

"This is an awful country to fight in," ran one officer's letter, "and an ideal one for waylaying. It is one mass of bush and thorny scrub, in which you can walk right on to the enemy without being seen. Last night they put me out on picket duty on the hills. I got a grand view of Kilimanjaro in the moonlight—it looked awfully fine with its snowy peak; but really the job was a nervy one, considering that the place was teeming with rhino and lion, and we had to stand in the open without even a fire. The lions could be heard roaring quite close by, and besides that many other sounds of

animal life could be heard. All this is very nice, but awe-inspiring."

CHAPTER XXIV.
THE FALL OF ANTWERP.

Antwerp Past and Present—Belgian Fighting, September 17-28—German Numbers—The Fortifications of Antwerp: their Weakness—Reasons for German Assaults—German Efforts to conciliate Belgium—Why did the Germans leave the Western Exit Open?—The Fall of the Trans-Nethe Forts—Belgians defend Line of Nethe—Situation in the City—Arrival of British Naval Division—Effect upon the Garrison—Germans carry Line of the Nethe—The Flight from Antwerp—Scenes on the Ghent and Bergen Roads—Withdrawal of the Garrison—Misadventure of the First Naval Brigade—Casualties—Criticism and Defence of Antwerp Expedition—The British Plan—Bombardment of Antwerp—Germans enter the City.

The story of the campaigns, hitherto somewhat lacking in drama, now approaches a tragedy which in pity and terror must rank with the greater catastrophes of history. Visitors to Antwerp in the June before the outbreak of war found a city settled and comfortable and decorous, full of ease and prosperous busyness, and all the signs of an interminable peace. She had had stormy episodes in her history. She had been the object in 1576 of that sack and massacre which is called "the Spanish Fury;" she had been captured by Parma; the Treaty of Munster in 1648 had closed the Scheldt and broken her prosperity; in 1832 she had been taken by the French and Belgians, and the Dutch General Chassé had bombarded her streets from the citadel. But she bore no sign of this restless past. In the seventeenth century a Venetian envoy had reported that more business was done at her wharves in a fortnight than in Venice during the year, and in the last four decades she had recovered her commercial pre-eminence. With a population of between 300,000 and 400,000, and an annual trade of more than £100,000,000 sterling, she was one of the largest and richest ports of the world. Her broad streets and her handsome edifices, with the delicate spire of her great cathedral soaring into the heavens, made her one of the comeliest of European cities. Museums, libraries, and many halls and public buildings testified to her wealth and the variety of her interests. If one had been asked to name a city from which fighting seemed infinitely remote—which seemed the very shrine of peace and the citadel of that *bourgeois* civilization

which it was fondly hoped had made war impossible—the odds are that Antwerp would have been chosen.

We have seen how, when Brussels was threatened, the Belgian Court and Government had retired inside the Antwerp lines, and how during the first fortnight of September the Belgian army had made several gallant sallies against the German troops of occupation. The main object of these efforts was to relieve the pressure on the Allies in France, but another motive must have been present in the minds of the Belgian Staff. Sooner or later it was certain that the Germans would make an attempt upon the city, and the lessons of Liége and Namur were beginning to be understood. The great howitzers must not be allowed to come within range of the forts, and the Belgian lines of defence must be far to the south, beyond the Nethe, and along the roads from Malines to Louvain and Brussels. By 17th September they had been driven back from the line of the Malines-Louvain railway. By 25th September, after two days' desperate fighting, they were on the railway line between Malines and Termonde. Here, on the 26th, there was a moment of success. The enemy was driven from the village of Audeghem and pressed back on Alost, while at Lebbeke next day there was also a German repulse. The day after the Germans regained most of the ground they had lost; but their left seems to have given up the idea of forcing an immediate crossing of the Scheldt, owing to the strength of the forces which the Belgians had massed on the northern bank. Meanwhile the main attack was beginning to develop against the first line of the Antwerp defences. Malines—what was left of it—had been subjected to a new cannonade on Sunday, the 27th, and on the Monday the great siege howitzers were so far advanced to the north that they were within range of the southern forts, and the bombardment of Antwerp began.

Sept. 17-28.

The Belgians had done the right thing, but they had been too weak to achieve success. They had probably by now under 100,000 men, and the German army of von Beseler can scarcely have been less than 120,000.[1] The Belgians had been fighting without intermission for nearly two months, and the Germans were fresh troops. But the decisive factor was the enormous German preponderance in artillery. The defence in prepared positions may repel an attack six times as numerous, but it cannot stand against six times its weight in guns.

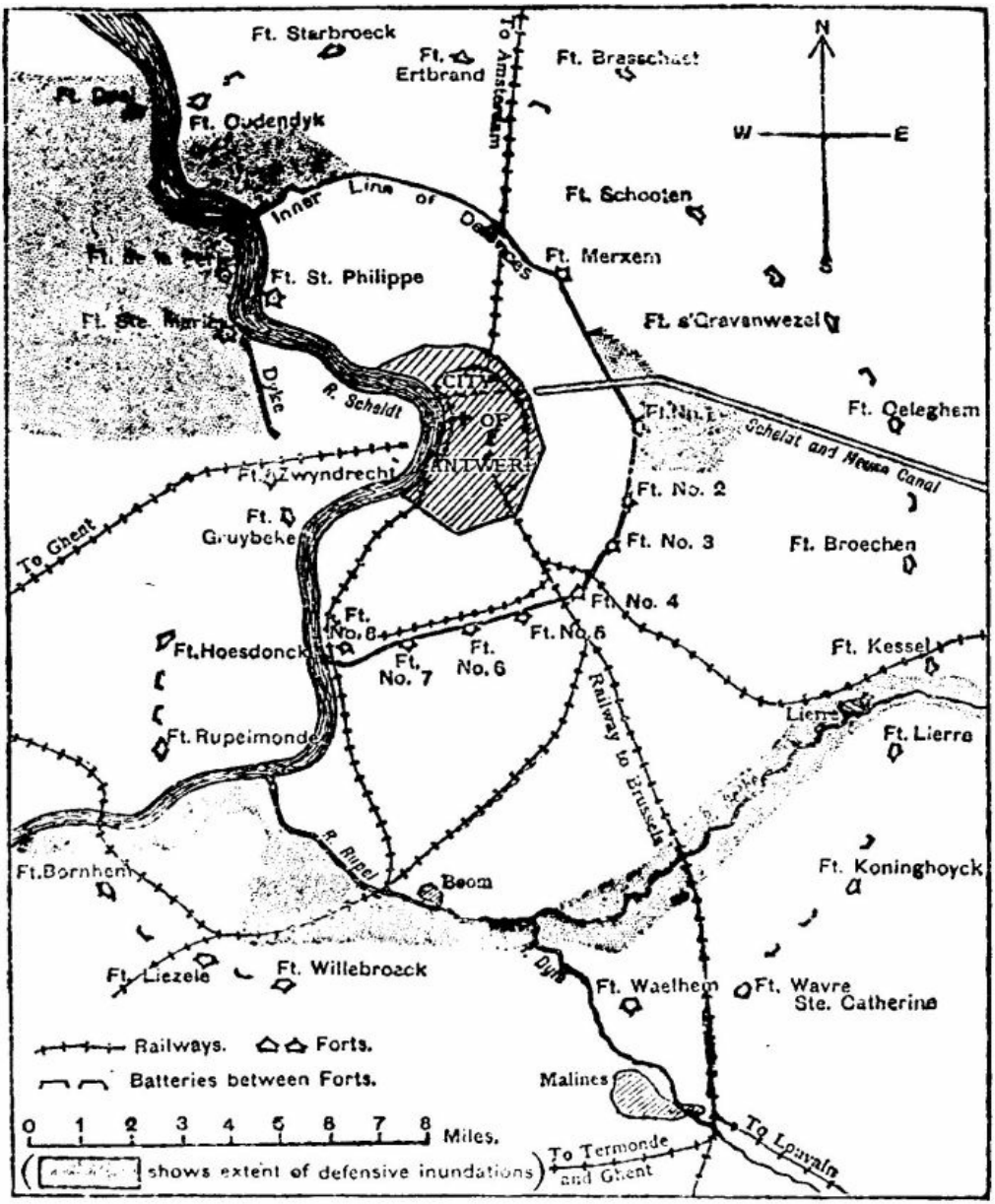
The fortifications of Antwerp demand a brief explanation. In the days of Spanish rule Alva had demolished the old walls of the city, and re-fortified it with a citadel and a bastioned rampart. These were the works which Carnot held against the Allies in the last days of Napoleon's empire, and which Chassé later defended against Gérard. When Belgium won her freedom it was realized that the city must have

space to grow in, and after much debate the reconstruction of the fortress was entrusted to Brialmont. His plans, completed in 1859, provided, as we have already seen, for a wholesale reorganization of the Belgian defensive system. Belgium's chief danger was believed to lie in the ambition of Napoleon III., and Brialmont's idea was to make of Antwerp an entrenched camp, into which in the last resort the army could retire to await succour from Britain. That is why the main citadel of Belgium was erected at a point within easy reach of reinforcements from the sea.

Brialmont's works were begun in 1861, and completed ten years later. The old ramparts were levelled and replaced by a line of boulevards, around which the new quarters of the city grew up. A fresh line of ramparts, with huge bastions and a ditch like a canal, was erected more than a mile in front of the line of the boulevards, with, as a further defence, a circle of outlying forts two miles in advance of these ramparts. Taking into account the range of siege artillery at that time, it was believed that such a line of forts would be an absolute protection to the city and the harbour. On the northern and western fronts, and on parts of the eastern and southern fronts, large inundations could be made to add to the strength of the defence. The new entrenched camp had a circuit of twenty-seven miles, and formed the most extensive fortress in Europe. It was expected that the alliance or the friendly neutrality of Holland would permit supplies to enter from the Scheldt, so that complete investment would be impossible. To meet the objection that it would take more than a fortnight to put the place on a war footing, Brialmont added to his plan two strong forts on the Nethe, to delay the approach of an invader from the south-west.

But the issue of the war of 1870 upset all these calculations. Strassburg and Metz passed to Germany, leaving the eastern frontier of France open, and in 1874 was begun the construction of the French barrier forts from Verdun to Belfort. Presently it was apparent that these new fortresses might be a serious danger to Belgium. France was no longer a probable assailant, but the Verdun-Belfort line meant that the natural route of a German invasion of France was closed, and that Germany in the event of war might be disposed to turn the barrier by a movement through the Belgian plain. The result was the strengthening of Liége and Namur, and a complete overhauling of the Antwerp defences. Much had happened since 1861, and the time had come to replace the earthworks and stone casements with concrete and steel. Again, Antwerp had prospered beyond the dreams of 1861; new suburbs were demanded, and Brialmont's ramparts were cramping the growing city, while the citadel prevented the construction of new docks. Besides, the longer range of modern artillery made the place no longer safe from distant bombardment. On all these grounds it was proposed to demolish Brialmont's inner works, and construct a

new rampart along the line of the outer forts, which would serve as bastions. These are the forts marked by numerals on the attached plan. Further, to protect the city from long-range guns, a new circle of outlying forts was to be built some ten miles out in the open country. The southern forts would be beyond the line of the Rupel and the Nethe, close to Malines, the northern would be within gunshot of the Dutch frontier, and the whole circle would be not less than sixty miles.



The Entrenched Camp of Antwerp.

Brialmont opposed the scheme, on the ground that the defence of so great an *enceinte* would require not a garrison but an army. He was over-ruled, and the work was begun. The outlying forts, constructed on the same plan as those of Liége, were only completed on the eve of war, and it is doubtful whether the eastern and

northern sections were ever fully armed. In one respect the great entrenched camp of Antwerp was very strong, for its extent and its contiguity to the sea and the Dutch frontier made investment practically impossible. It fulfilled its purpose, too, of serving as a rallying-ground for the Belgian forces, where they could shelter themselves for a time and wait on the coming of their Allies. But so far as bombardment went, its strength was no more than the strength of any group of its advanced forts; and what that was Liége and Namur had given a melancholy demonstration.

That the Belgian army should make a stand in Antwerp was inevitable. The great city was the last piece of Belgian soil left under the administration of King Albert's Government. It represented Belgium's sovereignty, and if it fell the nation would be homeless. Germany's reason for the attack was more complex. The possession of Antwerp would give her no outstanding strategic advantage. It did not command any main line of communication, and the neutralization of the Scheldt—unless she chose to quarrel with Holland—prevented its use as a naval base against Britain. But if we look closely into German motives, we shall find that there was a far better ground for the taking of Antwerp than British critics at the time were prepared to allow. To begin with, Germany—strange as it may seem—still cherished the idea of conciliating Belgian sentiment. It is a proof of her complete incapacity to gauge the temper of peoples other than her own. She argued that, so long as Antwerp remained as a focus of resistance, Belgium would continue intractable, but that with its fall she would realize facts, and accept—grudgingly, perhaps, at first, but with growing alacrity—the part which Germany had destined for her. About this time the German papers were filled with curious cartoons, in which female figures representing Hamburg and Bremen had their arms about the neck of Antwerp, their weeping sister, and the consoling words on their lips, "Soon you shall be happy as we are, when you have won a German mind." Accordingly, efforts were still made to convince Belgium of her errors. A certain elderly publicist of Brussels, whose name need not be given, was employed to make a proposal to King Albert. If the Belgian army would promise to keep quiet, wrote Marshal von der Goltz, to stay within its defences, and do nothing to molest the German occupation of the rest of the country, Antwerp should not be attacked. The emissary returned to Brussels with a very short answer. Some days later von Beseler sent an aeroplane over Antwerp to drop proclamations addressed to the Belgian soldiers. "You have fought long enough," ran this curious document, "in the interests of the Russian princes and the capitalists of perfidious Albion. Your situation is desperate. . . . If you wish to rejoin your wives and children, if you long to return to your work, stop this useless strife, which is only working your ruin. Then you will soon enjoy the blessings of a happy and perfect

peace." It seems strange that those responsible for Louvain and Aerschot should have believed in the efficacy of such a lure; but Germany had not yet begun, even dimly, to realize how her code of military ethics was viewed by normal human beings.

A second reason was also political. The capture of Antwerp, one of the chief ports in the world, would be an acceptable present to the German nation, which was beginning to be in want of such encouragement. Von Hindenberg had failed on the Niemen, Ivanov was drawing near to Cracow, and the Aisne had proved a costly refuge. The high hopes of the Week of Sedan had declined, and it looked as if the speedy realization of German dreams was out of the question. A solid gain, such as the taking of a great city, would give an enormous fillip to civilian Germany. Generally speaking, a political purpose must subserve strategical aims; still, if it can be achieved without loss to the main strategy, it is mere pedantry to disregard it.

But besides these reasons there was a perfectly sound military one. A hostile army on the flank, operating from a strong sanctuary, was an intolerable nuisance to the German Staff. It meant that large forces had to be kept in Belgium and on the lines of communication, when they were badly wanted at the front, where the extension of the French left was causing serious anxiety. Besides, at any moment Britain might send reinforcements to the Belgians, and Germany might be compelled to wage a difficult campaign in the very district which controlled the communications of her main army. Again, the dash for Calais was maturing in the minds of German statesmen. If the south coast of the Channel was to be won as a preparation for an attack upon the arch-enemy, Britain, it was clearly necessary to begin with Antwerp. Moreover, its fall was certain, as certain as the truth of a mathematical proposition. Once the great guns were in position, it would only be a matter of days.

Now appears a baffling conundrum to which no answer has yet been given. Most people at the time in France and Britain believed that Antwerp was virtually isolated. It was thought that from a few miles inland from Ostend the Germans controlled all the country east to the Scheldt. We now know that they held no part of this district. Bruges was unoccupied, Ghent was not held, the main line from Antwerp to Ostend by St. Nicholas, Ghent, and Bruges was open, as, of course, were the smaller parallel lines running from St. Nicholas westward along the Dutch frontier. Further, there were half a dozen good roads available for traffic. That is to say, there was not only an outlet left for the Belgian army to emerge, but an inlet for British reinforcements to enter. We know, too, that the Belgians did not hold, and could not have held, this district in any strength. Why did von Beseler neglect this open flank? Why, before attacking Antwerp, did he not isolate it, for only thus could

he reap the full fruits of his victory? He made, indeed, some attempts to cross the Scheldt, but never in force till it was too late. Yet if he had advanced to St. Nicholas before 1st October not a British sailor would have entered the city, and if he had reached it before 9th October not a fighting man would have left it.

The answer can only be guessed. Perhaps he did not realize the importance of those western communications, though why he did not is hard to explain, for it was obvious. Perhaps he thought they might be held at any moment by British reinforcements, and wished to make certain of the taking of the city before he was involved in a campaign across the Scheldt. Perhaps the hard fighting of the Belgians about Malines and Termonde had made him regard the siege as a more difficult task than it proved, and he did not dare to detach men for the western investment. Or it may be—and this seems to us the most likely explanation—that he deliberately left the port open. He hoped that a British contingent would arrive, and he cared very little whether the Belgian army escaped, for he believed that Germany could deal with both at her leisure. The great scheme of a counter-envelopment had been decided upon by the General Staff, and the movement of new corps westward, of which we were presently to feel the force, was already in train. It is a wise rule in war to respect the intelligence of your opponent, and if we credit von Beseler with sound strategical instincts he may have argued in this way. The fresh corps swinging towards the line Ypres-Arras would turn the extended Allied left, and drive on to the coast at Calais. Then cut off in northern Flanders, with no base or shelter once Antwerp had fallen, would be the Belgian garrison and any force Britain might have been foolish enough to send to their aid. It would be no difficult task to drive those remnants into the sea. As it happened, the plan miscarried, but it looked for some days in October as if it might succeed. Had Sir John French been a little slower in his movement to the north; had the French supports been a day later; had we fought less desperately at Ypres, von Beseler's action at Antwerp would have been amply justified.

We must return to Monday, 28th September, when the curtain rose on the first act of the tragedy of Antwerp. The German howitzers were in position against the forts south of the river Nethe, and the first attack was directed upon Waelhem and Wavre St. Catherine. There is some doubt as to the nature of the German batteries, but it is practically certain that the big 42-cm. howitzers were not among them. The ordinary piece was the 28-cm., which had already answered for Liége, Namur, and Maubeuge. But there is evidence that Austrian guns of a large calibre were also used—those manufactured by Baron Skoda of Pilsen, and ranking between the 28-cm. and the

Sept. 28.

42-cm. pieces. Our evidence is certain unexploded shells which were picked up north of the Nethe. The point is immaterial, for the 28-cm. howitzers were quite competent to do the work. With an effective range of 7½ miles, they had Forts Waelhem and Wavre at their mercy from the beginning. No guns that the Belgians could mount had a range of more than 6.

All day on the 28th the pounding of Waelhem and Wavre went on. There was a good deal of infantry fighting all along the line from Termonde to Lierre. The Germans were afraid that the enemy might rush their gun positions, and the Belgians south of the Nethe, assisted by their field batteries on the northern bank, met the German attack, and counter-attacked with some success. But for the big howitzers, the day went well for Belgium. Yet those who saw the effect of the shells on the two forts realized that the end could not long be delayed. The bombardment went on during the night, and early on the morning of Tuesday, the 29th, Fort Wavre was silenced. Its cupolas and concrete works were smashed beyond repair, and the blowing up of the magazine—whether by an enemy's shell or by an accident from inside, we do not know—made the work untenable. Its commander insisted on returning with a fresh garrison, but found that every gun was out of action. Waelhem had also one of its cupolas smashed, but managed to continue its resistance during the day.

Sept. 29.

Next day it and Fort Lierre were the centre of German attentions. An unfortunate accident which happened during the morning had important results for the defence. Behind Waelhem lay the main waterworks of Antwerp, and shell after shell was dropped by the Germans on the embankment of the great reservoir. At last the dyke gave way, and the water poured into the infantry trenches which had been dug between the forts. These were presently flooded out, the field guns were submerged, and it became impossible to carry supplies to Waelhem. The Belgian device of inundation was turned against them. A more serious result was the shrinkage caused in the city's water supply. It did not fail, for there were artesian wells, but water had now to be carried long distances in pails and buckets, the health of the citizens was imperilled, and it was certain that any conflagration caused by the bombardment must burn unchecked.

Sept. 30.

Thursday, 1st October, saw the fall of the southern forts. Wavre was destroyed, Waelhem had only one gun, Fort Koningshoyckt, south of Lierre, was silenced, and Fort Lierre soon followed; while the village of Lierre was set on fire, and advertised by its smoke, which was seen clearly from Antwerp, what was happening south of the Nethe. Farther west

Oct. 1.

German infantry attacks had cleared out Termonde, and forced the Belgians across the Scheldt by a wooden bridge, which they afterwards destroyed. On that day, and during the night which followed, the Belgian forces relinquished the ruined fortresses and fell back to the northern bank of the Nethe, to a line of entrenchments which they had already prepared.

Fort Wavre and its fellows had held out for four days—a fine achievement if we realize the circumstances. It was longer than any of the Liége forts had resisted after the big guns had once been brought against them; four times as long as Namur; and if it was shorter than the siege of Maubeuge, we must remember that in that case a very strong line of field-works had been erected, which for some days prevented the siege howitzers from getting into position. The stand of the southern defences of Antwerp represents probably the maximum achievement of a Brialmont fort against modern artillery.

The fight for Antwerp had now ceased to be a siege, and become something in the nature of a field battle. The Nethe lines gave a strong position, but to hold them required a large force and an artillery equipment not inferior to that of the enemy. Let us leave the struggle for a moment and consider the condition of Antwerp itself. A gallant effort was made to keep up the spirit of the citizens. The newspapers published reassuring statements, and any whisper of the true state of affairs across the Nethe was rigorously excluded. All day long the faint thunder of the guns was heard in the streets; by night numbers of wounded and dead were brought in in the darkness; the hotels and cafés were filled with staff officers and correspondents, and aeroplanes circled daily above the city. But for some reason the hopes of the inhabitants were high. They had a fixed idea that their great forts would hold off the enemy, and that at any hour the British might arrive, to turn the defence into an advance.

Oct. 3.

By Saturday, the 3rd, however, melancholy had begun to descend upon the crowds in the streets and boulevards. Something of the views of those in authority had filtered through to the ordinary citizen. For on the Friday afternoon it had been decided that the Government should leave for Ostend. One boat was to sail on the Saturday morning with the Belgian authorities and the foreign Legations, and another in the afternoon with the members of the French and British colonies. A proclamation was issued by the burgomaster, M. de Vos, allowing those who wished to leave the city, and at the same time General de Guise, the military governor, issued another calling upon the citizens to show courage and coolness in all contingencies. These two proclamations had an immediate effect upon the popular mind. Many of the ordinary inhabitants,

especially the well-to-do, began to leave for Holland and England. The second boat, arranged for the Saturday afternoon, sailed with the principal members of the French and British colonies. But the first boat, which was to carry the Government and the Legations, did not leave, for on the Saturday came a sudden change in the situation. Belgium had made a last despairing appeal to Britain for help, and news had arrived that this help was on the way.

On Sunday, about one o'clock, the British First Lord of the Admiralty arrived in Antwerp, and stayed for three days. He visited the firing lines, exposing himself with his usual courage, and he managed to convince the authorities that there was still a reasonable chance of victory. Late on the Sunday night the first instalment of the British reinforcements arrived by train from Ostend in the shape of a brigade of Royal Marines, 2,000 strong, with several naval guns. They at once marched out to the front, and took up a position on the Nethe to the left of the Belgians. Next day came the remainder of the reinforcements, two naval brigades, totalling 6,000 men—the whole British force being commanded by General Paris of the Royal Marines, who was himself under the direction of General de Guise. The two naval brigades, the cadres of which were drawn from the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Fleet Reserve, and the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, had been constituted in the third week of August, and were still busily recruiting at the beginning of October. Most of the officers and men had no previous military experience, and some of those recently joined had come straight from civil life, and had not yet handled a rifle. Their equipment was very imperfect: many had no pouches to carry their ammunition, or water-bottles, or overcoats; while some were compelled to stick their bayonets in their putties, or tie them to their belts with string. The four battalions of Marines were, of course, regulars, representing the full efficiency of their splendid service. Each naval brigade was organized in four battalions named after famous admirals. The 1st Brigade was made up of the "Drake," "Benbow," "Hawke," and "Collingwood" battalions; the 2nd of the "Nelson," "Howe," "Hood," and "Anson."

Oct. 4.

Oct. 5.

The arrival of the British had an electrical effect on the spirits of the Belgians, both soldiers and civilians. The spruce, well-set-up lads looked business-like and fit, and only trained observers could see that the majority of them were novices at soldiering. Cheering crowds followed them in the streets, and the sorely-tried Belgian soldiery marched out to their trenches with songs on their lips and a new light in their eyes. It was not only for themselves that our men were welcomed, but as an earnest of what might follow. The Belgians could not believe that Britain would put

her hand to the business unless she meant to see it through. The military authorities thought that the better part of an army corps was on its way, and that the six naval guns were only the beginning of a great influx of artillery, sufficient to equalize their strength in this arm with that of the enemy. The London motor omnibuses with their homely legends, lumbering through the Antwerp streets with the ammunition and supplies of the Naval Division, seemed a proof that their Allies had come at last. Another ground of confidence was the British armoured train, under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Littlejohn, which had been built in an engineering yard at Hoboken, and which mounted four 4.7 naval guns. Whatever may have been the actual achievement of this train, it served wonderfully to raise Belgian spirits. The other four 6.5 guns were mounted close to Forts 3 and 4 in the inner circle of the defences.

We have seen that from Friday, 2nd October, the fight for Antwerp had become more in the nature of a field battle, the Belgians holding a line of trenches just north of the Nethe. They were not good trenches, their head-cover was bad, and certainly they were not prepared to resist the storm of shrapnel which the Germans directed against them. Something between 300 and 400 field-guns were brought into the attack. The villages in the Belgian rear, especially Waerloos and Linth, were destroyed by the German fire, and the inhabitants of all the district north of the Nethe began to flock towards Antwerp. On the Saturday the Germans attempted to cross the river at Waelhem. Several pontoon bridges were built, but in each case they were blown to pieces before they could be used, and here probably the invaders incurred their heaviest losses.

Oct. 3.

On the Sunday a crossing was attempted between Duffel and Lierre, and was vigorously resisted by the British Marines, who were stationed in this section. But the numbers, both of men and artillery, were too great to be long denied, and on the afternoon of Monday, the 5th, the left wing of the defence fell back from its trenches on the river bank to a second line some hundreds of yards to the north. On the Monday night there was a great German attack, covered by powerful artillery, on the Belgian centre. The defenders managed to prevent the building of pontoons, but in the night several thousand Germans swam or waded the river, and established themselves on the northern shore. Early on the morning of Tuesday, the 6th, the passage of the Nethe had been won, and there was nothing for it but to fall back upon the inner circle of forts, whose armament was obsolete, and as little fitted to face the German howitzers as a liner to meet the shock of a battleship.

Oct. 4.

Oct. 5.

Oct. 6.

That day, the 6th, revealed to every one the desperate case of the city. It had, indeed, been at the mercy of the big howitzers from the moment they were brought up close to the Nethe. But the Germans did not choose to use these for the bombardment, but contented themselves with bringing their field-guns and their lesser siege pieces against the inner forts. The country between the Nethe and the inner circle became uninhabitable. In that land of closely-tilled fields and windmills and poplars, in the pleasant autumn weather, when the labourers should have been busy with getting in the root crops and preparing the soil for the spring sowing, there was only desolation and destruction. Many villages had been levelled by the Belgian army, and some, set on fire by the enemy's shells, smouldered in the windless air, instead of the common October bonfires of garden refuse; while the inhabitants with their scanty belongings poured along the guarded highways to Antwerp or to Holland.

In the city the truth was faced at last. The British troops could not delay the inevitable, and there was no hope of further reinforcements. In the evening the Belgian Government and the Legations of the Allies went on board the two steamers which had been kept in readiness, and early on the 7th sailed down the Scheldt for the coast of France. That evening, too, the machinery of the German ships lying in Antwerp docks was rendered useless by dynamite explosions. During the night the citizens had another proof of Antwerp's impending doom. On the western side of the Scheldt, beyond the bridge of boats which led to the railway terminus at Waes, stood the great oil-tanks which formed one of the chief depôts in north-western Europe. These tanks were tapped by order of the authorities; but, since the oil ran off too slowly, they were set on fire. When the people of Antwerp woke on the morning of the 7th, they smelt the rank odour of burning petroleum, and saw drifting above the city a dense black cloud which obscured the sunlight.

Oct. 7.

Wednesday, the 7th, brought the official announcement that all was over. Proclamations, signed by General de Guise, were posted throughout the city declaring that a bombardment was imminent, while the burgomaster advised all who wished to leave to lose no time, and recommended those who intended to stay to take shelter in their cellars. The newspapers announced that the enemy was already attacking the inner forts, and that a service of steamers had been provided for refugees, and would begin at midday. The more dangerous wild beasts in the Zoological Gardens, many of them treasured gifts from the Congo State, were shot by their keepers. The day before von Beseler had sent a message to General de Guise, warning him of the intended bombardment, and the Belgian governor had

answered that he accepted responsibility for the consequences. That day there came another message from the German lines, asking for a plan of Antwerp with the hospitals, public buildings, and museums clearly marked, that, as far as possible, they might be spared. Such a plan was carried to General von Beseler by an official from the American Consulate; but the inhabitants, suspicious of the honour of the enemy, gave all such places a wide berth, and regarded them as likely to be the first objects of the German attack.

Meanwhile the nerve of the townspeople had at last broken. Up till now they had kept their spirits high, but the official proclamation, the sound of the great guns ever drawing nearer, the black pall of smoke, the blaze at night of the shell-fire to the south, and above all the sight of their own soldiers marching westward over the bridge of boats towards Waes, convinced them that the doom of the city was sealed. Small blame to them that, with Louvain and Aerschot in their memories, they expected a carnival of unimaginable horrors. Antwerp, on the morning of the 7th, contained little short of half a million people, for the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts had flocked to it for refuge. By the evening a quarter of a million had gone; by the next night the place was as solitary as a desert. Half at least went by water. The quaysides were packed with frantic crowds, carrying household goods on their backs and in their hands, and struggling for places on any kind of raft that could keep afloat. Tramps, ferries, dredgers, trawlers, pleasure-yachts, steam-launches, fishing-boats, and even rafts were put in use. There was desperate confusion, for there were no police; and vessels, sunk almost to the water-line with a weight of humanity, lay for hours in the stream, till the actual bombardment began, and the incendiary bombs made lurid patches below the dark canopy of smoke from the oil-tanks. One correspondent reported that as each shell burst there came a great sigh of terror from the vessels lingering in the dark waters.

Oct. 7-8.

The exodus was even more terrible by land. Many crossed the Scheldt by the bridge of boats and the ferries, and fled to Ghent; but most took the road where the tramways ran to the Dutch frontier and Bergen-op-Zoom. This little town, which has only 16,000 inhabitants in normal times, received in these days at least 200,000 exiles; and it says much for the patient kindliness of the Dutch people that somehow or other food and shelter were forthcoming. Most of the refugees had been too hurried to provide themselves with provisions, and many fell weary and famished by the wayside. Infants were prematurely born, and the sick and the old died from exposure. Women, who had been delicately nurtured, ate raw turnips and potatoes from the fields. Every kind of conveyance from motor cars to wheelbarrows was

utilized, and many an Æneas carried Anchises on his shoulders. Mr. Powell, whom we have already quoted, saw the melancholy procession on the Ghent road.[2]

> "I saw women of fashion in fur coats and high-heeled shoes staggering along clinging to the rails of the caissons or to the ends of wagons. I saw white-haired men and women grasping the harness of the gun teams or the stirrup leathers of the troopers, who, themselves exhausted from many days of fighting, slept in their saddles as they rode. I saw springless farm-wagons literally heaped with wounded soldiers with piteous white faces; the bottoms of the wagons leaked and left a trail of blood behind them. A very old priest, too feeble to walk, was trundled by two young priests in a handcart. A young woman, an expectant mother, was tenderly and anxiously helped on by her husband. . . . Here were a group of Capuchin monks abandoning their monastery; there a little party of white-faced nuns shepherding a flock of children—many of them fatherless—who had been entrusted to their care. The confusion was beyond all imagination, the clamour deafening; the rattle of wheels, the throbbing of motors, the clatter of hoofs, the cracking of whips, the curses of the drivers, the groans of the wounded, the cries of women, the whimpering of children, threats, pleadings, oaths, screams, imprecations, and always the monotonous shuffle, shuffle of countless weary feet."

That was on the Ghent road; but it was worse on the road to Bergen, by which the poorest and the weakest fled. There the highway, and the fields for miles on either side, were black with the panting crowds, stumbling over the forms of those who had fallen from exhaustion. And ever behind them roared the great guns, and the horrible fleur-de-lis of pitchy smoke seemed to form a barrier between the tortured earth and the merciful heavens.

Such was the "passion" of Antwerp. Let us return to the final stage of the conflict north of the Nethe. Early on Tuesday, the 6th, the Germans had won the crossings of the river, and the defenders had fallen back on the inner forts. On that day the withdrawal of the Belgian army began, and several divisions, chiefly cavalry and cyclists, were hurried through Antwerp across the Scheldt towards the Ghent railway. Their duty was to hold the western road and block any flank attack. All day the Germans were busy bringing their guns over the river, and by the evening the inner forts were subjected to a heavy bombardment. The great howitzers were not brought north of the Nethe, and the

Oct. 6.

Germans confined their activity to common shell, shrapnel, and incendiary bombs. On the 7th there was desperate fighting on the Scheldt, for von Beseler seems to have at last resolved to do something to cut off the retreat of the garrison. German troops crossed that river at Termonde, as well as at Schoonaerde and Wetteren, and began a movement towards the railway line at Lokeren. Now was proved the usefulness of the advance guard of the Belgians which had been sent west on the night of the 6th. They made a gallant stand at Zele, and prevented for nearly two days the German approach to the railway.

Oct. 7.

The official bombardment began at midnight on the 7th, and the suburb of Barchen was set on fire. During Thursday, the 8th, there was fierce fighting along the inner ring of forts, while the Belgian and British troops were being withdrawn across the Scheldt. General Paris asked that his Naval Division should act as rearguard, but General de Guise reserved the privilege for his own men. All through the day the inner forts were assailed, and by the evening Forts 3 and 4 had fallen. By this time the defence was at an end. Nearly all the garrison had fallen back, and much of it was over the Scheldt. The Naval Division had stuck to the end to the forts and the trenches between, and for new troops had acquitted themselves most gallantly, considering the badness of the commissariat arrangements and the weakness of their artillery supports. Unfortunately the Staff work proved faulty, as it well might in such a confusion. The 2nd Naval Brigade was on the west of the Malines road, and the 1st Brigade was on the east, around Forts 1-4. The order to retire does not seem to have reached the "Hawke," "Benbow," and "Collingwood" battalions of the latter brigade, and the result was that they were almost the last to leave the now useless defences.

Oct. 8.

By the morning of Friday, the 9th, practically the whole of the garrison was across the Scheldt. The three laggard battalions of the Naval Division arrived to find that the bridge of boats had been destroyed, but they managed to cross on rafts and barges, and found a train at Waes. Then their difficulties began. One party got as far as Lokeren, where they heard that the Germans had cut the railway ahead; probably a false report, for the Germans do not seem to have reached that part of the line till the evening. Accordingly they marched north to the Dutch frontier. A second party got as far as Niewerken, the station east of St. Nicholas, where they found the Germans in possession, and were forced to surrender. Some seem to have gone down the Scheldt in boats, and to have landed in Dutch territory, out of ignorance of the law as to internment. About 18,000 of the Belgian troops were also driven into Holland,

Oct. 9.

and some, probably those who fought at Zele, were made prisoners by the Germans. The British losses were 37 killed, 193 wounded, nearly 1,000 missing, of whom over 800 became prisoners of war, and 1,560 interned in Holland. Of the 1st Naval Brigade which had arrived at Antwerp 3,000 strong, less than 1,000 returned to England.

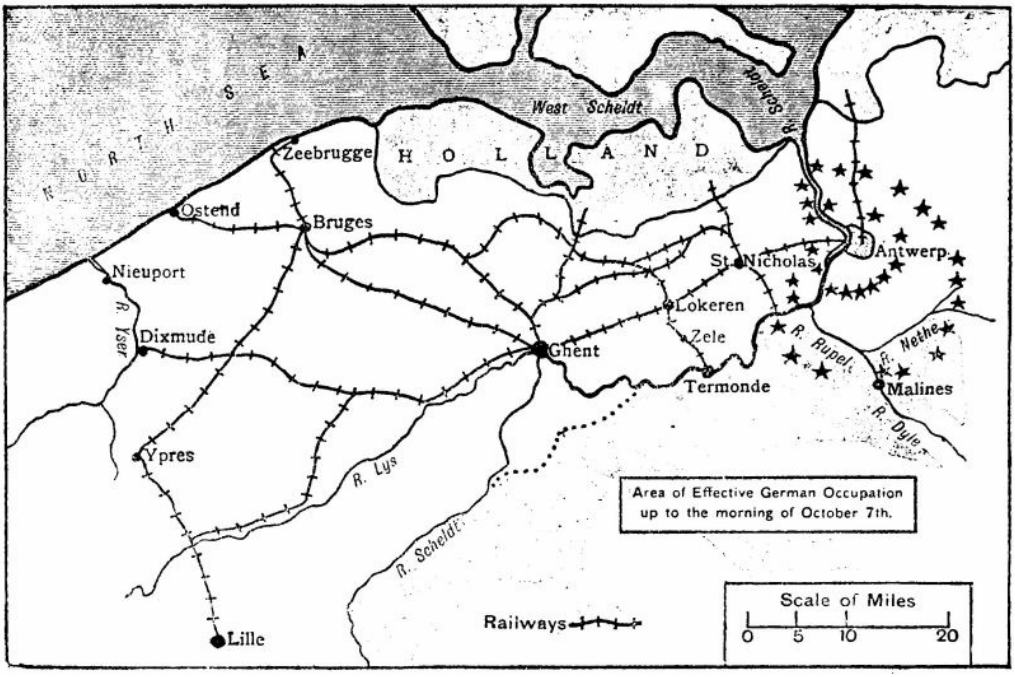
The expedition to Antwerp occasioned at the time much heart-searching in Britain and among our troops in France. It was a side-show, and side-shows are condemned by sound strategy. Some cynics found comfort in the fact that we had never won success in Continental war without a disastrous adventure in the Low Countries organized by politicians. But to see in the Antwerp affair a second Walcheren Expedition does less than justice to the sanity of the scheme. It was clearly no escapade of a single minister, but part of a larger strategical plan which had the approval of the Secretary of State for War. The Admiralty announcement, published on 17th October, contained some significant sentences. The naval brigades were chosen, so it ran,

> "Because the need for them was urgent and bitter; because mobile troops could not be spared for fortress duties; because they were the nearest, and could be embarked the quickest; and because their training, although incomplete, was as far advanced as that of a large portion, not only of the forces defending Antwerp, but of the enemy force attacking."

These reasons provide some justification for the dispatch of troops imperfectly trained; and it should be recognized that our men, in spite of defects in experience and equipment, did credit to their service and their country.

The question of the larger strategical purpose is still full of difficulty. Let us quote again from the Admiralty message: "The Naval Division was sent to Antwerp not as an isolated incident, but as part of a large operation for the relief of the city. Other and more powerful considerations prevented this from being carried through." What were these other considerations? The British brigades undoubtedly, by delaying the fall of the city for a few days, enabled much useful destructive work to be done in the city and among the ships in the harbour. They did not cover the retreat of the Belgian army, for it is now clear that the Belgians covered the retreat of the Naval Division; and it is not improbable that this duty increased the total of Belgian losses. Had the garrison retired on the 4th or 5th it would have got clear away. In any case, in the serious defence of Antwerp and the task of holding North Belgium, a force of such quality and numbers could do little. What was the larger operation spoken of

by the Admiralty? The Fourth Army Corps, under Sir Henry Rawlinson, had landed at Zeebrugge in the early days of October, and, as we shall see, did invaluable work in covering the Belgian retreat and in delaying the great German swing towards the sea. It may be that it was originally intended to occupy the country between Ostend and Antwerp, hold the line of the Scheldt and Lys, and deflect the new German front north-eastward from Arras. But "other and more powerful considerations" intervened, and what these were we can only conjecture. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the "timing" of the extension of the Allied front northward, which demanded a shorter line than would have been given by the occupation of North Flanders. Perhaps the Allied headquarters had received a hint of the new German formations which were already moving westward from Aix. Whatever the cause, the "larger operation" miscarried, and the most we could do was to help to save the bulk of the Belgian field army for the Allied front. It may be argued with some truth that even success would scarcely have justified the sending of the Naval Division, for a force so weak could only succeed by one of those desperate flukes which should be outside the consideration of sound strategy. As it was it not only failed, but was saved from complete obliteration by little short of a miracle; for only the strange supineness of the German left prevented von Beseler making prisoners of both Belgians and British.



Sketch Map showing the Lines of Retreat open to the Antwerp Garrison.

Oct. 8-9.

The bombardment, which began at midnight on the 7th, lasted throughout the 8th. Antwerp was like a city of the dead. Only the hospitals remained, working hard to get off their patients, and here and there a bolder citizen out to take the air from his cellar, and a few Belgian soldiers left behind on special duty. Shells whistled overhead, and now and then the gable of a building would fall into the street; but it did little harm, for there was no one near to be hurt. The few people left remained indoors, behind shuttered windows. Night, when it came, presented an appalling spectacle, as in old pictures of the fall of Troy. Fires had broken out in various districts, and burned luridly in the still air. A number of flaming lighters lit up the Scheldt, till the waters flowed blood-red like some river of Hades. Overhead was the black mushroom of petroleum smoke, which seemed to brood over the housetops, and only on the far horizon was there a belt of clear star-sown sky. There were no lamps in the city, so that acres of abysmal darkness were varied with patches of glaring shell-light. But all the time the desperate cannonade went on, and sometimes an incendiary bomb would make a rosy cavern in the heart of the dark cloud.

Oct. 9.

Early on the 9th the bombardment ceased. The inner forts had fallen, and the gates of the city lay open. About one o'clock German motor cars entered by the Porte de Malines, and an officer informed the burgomaster that Antwerp was now a German city. Then, during the rest of the day and on the Saturday, the army marched in, its vanguard hastening across the Scheldt in pursuit of the retreating Belgians. When Admiral von Schroeder made his stately entrance down the broad boulevards to the Hôtel de Ville a very different sight met his eye from that which had greeted von Arnim's forces when they entered Brussels. There were no spectators to admire the Prussian parade step or be impressed by the precision of the part songs. It might have been an avenue of sepulchres instead of one of the gayest cities of Europe. No flag was flown, no inquisitive face looked out of the blind windows. As an American caustically observed, it was like a circus that had come to town before it was expected.

Oct. 10.

The world has never before seen such a migration of a people or such an emptying of a great city. It recalls the time when a king of Babylon carried Israel captive to eat the bread of sorrow by foreign streams, or those doings of ancient conquerors when they moved the inhabitants of a conquered town to some new site,

and razed and sowed with salt the old foundations. But those were affairs of little places and small numbers, and this involved half a million souls and one of the proudest cities of Europe. Fighting has its own decencies, and when it is done on the old lines of attack and counter-attack by normal armies, our habituation prevents us from realizing the colossal unreason of it all. But suddenly comes some such business as Antwerp and unseals our eyes. We see the laborious handiwork of man, the cloak which he has made to shelter himself from the outer winds, shrivel before a folly of his own devising. We see youth and age and innocence swept into the gulf because of the dreams of egotists and the blunders of governments. All the sacrifice and heroism, which are the poor recompenses of war, are suddenly overshadowed, and etched in with bitter clearness we note its horror and futility. Some day the world, when its imagination has grown quicker, will find the essence of war not in gallant charges and heroic stands, but in those pale women dragging their pitiful belongings through the Belgian fields in the raw October night. When that day comes the tumult and the shouting will die, and the kings and captains depart on nobler errands.

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[1] The Germans declared that the fall of Antwerp released 200,000 men; the British estimate put it at 60,000. The truth, judging from the number of troops required for the various operations which we know were undertaken, is probably about half-way between the two figures.

[2] *Fighting in Flanders*, p. 191.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.
DISPATCHES DEALING WITH THE BATTLE OF THE BIGHT OF HELIGOLAND.

ADMIRALTY, *21st October 1914.*

The following dispatches have been received from Vice-Admiral (Acting) Sir David Beatty, K.C.B., M.V.O., D.S.O., H.M.S. *Lion*; Rear-Admiral Arthur H. Christian, M.V.O., H.M.S. *Euryalus*; Commodore Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt, Commodore (T), H.M.S. *Arethusa*; and Commodore Roger J. B. Keyes, C.B., M.V.O., Commodore (S), reporting the engagement off Heligoland on Friday, the 28th August:—

1. DISPATCH FROM VICE-ADMIRAL SIR DAVID BEATTY, COMMANDING THE BATTLE CRUISER SQUADRON.

H.M.S. "Lion," 1st September 1914.

SIR,—I have the honour to report that on Thursday, 27th August, at 5 a.m., I proceeded with the First Battle Cruiser Squadron and First Light Cruiser Squadron in company, to rendezvous with the Rear-Admiral, *Invincible*.

At 4 a.m., 28th August, the movements of the Flotillas commenced as previously arranged, the Battle Cruiser Squadron and Light Cruiser Squadron supporting. The Rear-Admiral, *Invincible*, with *New Zealand* and four Destroyers having joined my flag, the Squadron passed through the prearranged rendezvous.

At 8.10 a.m. I received a signal from the Commodore (T), informing me that the Flotilla was in action with the enemy. This was presumably in the vicinity of their prearranged rendezvous. From this time until 11 a.m. I remained about the vicinity ready to support as necessary, intercepting various signals, which contained no information on which I could act.

At 11 a.m. the Squadron was attacked by three Submarines. The attack was frustrated by rapid manœuvring, and the four Destroyers were ordered to attack them. Shortly after 11 a.m., various signals having been received indicating that the Commodore (T) and Commodore (S) were both in need of assistance, I ordered the Light Cruiser Squadron to support the Torpedo Flotillas.

Later I received a signal from the Commodore (T), stating that he was being attacked by a large Cruiser, and a further signal informing me that he was being hard pressed and asking for assistance. The Captain (D), First Flotilla, also signalled that he was in need of help.

From the foregoing the situation appeared to me critical. The Flotillas had advanced only ten miles since 8 a.m., and were only about twenty-five miles from two enemy bases on their flank and rear respectively. Commodore Goodenough had detached two of his Light Cruisers to assist some Destroyers earlier in the day, and these had not yet rejoined. (They rejoined at 2.30 p.m.) As the reports indicated the presence of many enemy ships—one a large Cruiser—I considered that his force might not be strong enough to deal with the situation sufficiently rapidly, so at 11.30 a.m. the Battle Cruisers turned to E.S.E., and worked up to full speed. It was evident that to be of any value the support must be overwhelming and carried out at the highest speed possible.

I had not lost sight of the risk of Submarines, and possible sortie in force from the enemy's base, especially in view of the mist to the South-East.

Our high speed, however, made submarine attack difficult, and the smoothness of the sea made their detection comparatively easy. I considered that we were powerful enough to deal with any sortie except by a Battle Squadron, which was unlikely to come out in time, provided our stroke was sufficiently rapid.

At 12.15 p.m. *Fearless* and First Flotilla were sighted retiring West. At the same time the Light Cruiser Squadron was observed to be engaging an enemy ship ahead. They appeared to have her beat.

I then steered N.E. to sounds of firing ahead, and at 12.30 p.m. sighted *Arethusa* and Third Flotilla retiring to the Westward engaging a Cruiser of the *Kolberg* class on our Port Bow. I steered to cut her off from Heligoland, and at 12.37 p.m. opened fire. At 12.42 the enemy turned to N.E., and we chased at 27 knots.

At 12.56 p.m. sighted and engaged a two-funnelled Cruiser ahead. *Lion* fired two salvos at her, which took effect, and she disappeared into the mist, burning furiously and in a sinking condition. In view of the mist and that she was steering at high speed at right angles to *Lion*, who was herself steaming at 28 knots, the *Lion's* firing was very creditable.

Our Destroyers had reported the presence of floating mines to the Eastward, and I considered it inadvisable to pursue her. It was also essential that the Squadrons should remain concentrated, and I accordingly ordered a withdrawal. The Battle Cruisers turned North and circled to port to complete the destruction of the vessel

first engaged. She was sighted again at 1.25 p.m. steaming S.E. with colours still flying. *Lion* opened fire with two turrets, and at 1.35 p.m., after receiving two salvos, she sank.

The four attached Destroyers were sent to pick up survivors, but I deeply regret that they subsequently reported that they searched the area but found none.

At 1.40 p.m. the Battle Cruisers turned to the Northward, and *Queen Mary* was again attacked by a Submarine. The attack was avoided by the use of the helm. *Lowestoft* was also unsuccessfully attacked. The Battle Cruisers covered the retirement until nightfall. By 6 p.m., the retirement having been well executed and all Destroyers accounted for, I altered course, spread the Light Cruisers, and swept northwards in accordance with the Commander-in-Chief's orders. At 7.45 p.m. I detached *Liverpool* to Rosyth with German prisoners—7 officers and 79 men, survivors from *Mainz*. No further incident occurred.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient Servant,

(Signed) DAVID BEATTY,
Vice-Admiral.

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

2. Dispatch from Rear-Admiral Christian, Commanding the Seventh Cruiser Squadron.

"Euryalus," 28th September 1914.

Sir,—I have the honour to report that in accordance with your orders a reconnaissance in force was carried out in the Heligoland Bight on the 28th August, with the object of attacking the enemy's Light Cruisers and Destroyers.

The forces under my orders (viz., the Cruiser Force, under Rear-Admiral H. H. Campbell, C.V.O., *Euryalus*, *Amethyst*, First and Third Destroyer Flotillas and the Submarines) took up the positions assigned to them on the evening of the 27th August, and, in accordance with directions given, proceeded during the night to approach the Heligoland Bight.

The Cruiser Force under Rear-Admiral Campbell, with *Euryalus* (my Flagship) and *Amethyst*, was stationed to intercept any enemy vessels chased to the westward. At 4.30 p.m. on the 28th August these Cruisers, having proceeded to the eastward, fell in with *Lurcher* and three other Destroyers, and the wounded and prisoners in these vessels were transferred in boats to *Bacchante* and *Cressy*, which left for the Nore. *Amethyst* took *Laurel* in tow, and at 9.30 p.m. *Hogue* was detached to take *Arethusa* in tow. This latter is referred to in Commodore R. Y. Tyrwhitt's report, and I quite concur in his remarks as to the skill and rapidity with

which this was done in the dark with no lights permissible.

Commodore Reginald Y. Tyrwhitt was in command of the Destroyer Flotillas, and his report is enclosed herewith. His attack was delivered with great skill and gallantry, and he was most ably seconded by Captain William F. Blunt, in *Fearless*, and the Officers in command of the Destroyers, who handled their vessels in a manner worthy of the best traditions of the British Navy.

Commodore Roger J. B. Keyes, in *Lurcher*, had, on the 27th August, escorted some Submarines into positions allotted to them in the immediate vicinity of the enemy's coast. On the morning of the 28th August, in company with *Firedrake*, he searched the area to the southward of the Battle Cruisers for the enemy's Submarines, and subsequently, having been detached, was present at the sinking of the German Cruiser *Mainz*, when he gallantly proceeded alongside her and rescued 220 of her crew, many of whom were wounded. Subsequently he escorted *Laurel* and *Liberty* out of action, and kept them company till Rear-Admiral Campbell's Cruisers were sighted.

As regards the Submarines Officers, I would specially mention the names of:—

(*a*) Lieutenant-Commander Ernest W. Leir. His coolness and resource in rescuing the crews of the *Goshawk's* and *Defender's* boats at a critical time of the action were admirable.

(*b*) Lieutenant-Commander Cecil P. Talbot. In my opinion, the bravery and resource of the Officers in command of Submarines since the war commenced are worthy of the highest commendation.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
A. H. CHRISTIAN,
Rear-Admiral.

The Secretary, Admiralty.

3. Dispatch from Commander R. Y. Tyrwhitt, Commanding the Destroyer Flotillas.

H.M.S. "Lowestoft," 26th September 1914.

Sir,—I have the honour to report that at 5 a.m. on Thursday, 27th August, in accordance with orders received from Their Lordships, I sailed in *Arethusa*, in company with the First and Third Flotillas, except *Hornet*, *Tigress*, *Hydra*, and *Loyal*, to carry out the prearranged operations. H.M.S. *Fearless* joined the Flotillas at sea that afternoon.

At 6.53 a.m. on Friday, 28th August, an enemy's Destroyer was sighted, and

was chased by the 4th Division of the Third Flotilla.

From 7.20 to 7.57 a.m. *Arethusa* and the Third Flotilla were engaged with numerous Destroyers and Torpedo Boats which were making for Heligoland; course was altered to port to cut them off.

Two Cruisers, with 4 and 2 funnels respectively, were sighted on the port bow at 7.57 a.m., the nearest of which was engaged. *Arethusa* received a heavy fire from both Cruisers and several Destroyers until 8.15 a.m., when the four-funnelled Cruiser transferred her fire to *Fearless*.

Close action was continued with the two-funnelled Cruiser on converging courses until 8.25 a.m., when a 6-inch projectile from *Arethusa* wrecked the fore bridge of the enemy, who at once turned away in the direction of Heligoland, which was sighted slightly on the starboard bow at about the same time.

All ships were at once ordered to turn to the westward, and shortly afterwards speed was reduced to 20 knots.

During this action *Arethusa* had been hit many times, and was considerably damaged; only one 6-inch gun remained in action, all other guns and torpedo tubes having been temporarily disabled.

Lieutenant Eric W. P. Westmacott (Signal Officer) was killed at my side during this action. I cannot refrain from adding that he carried out his duties calmly and collectedly, and was of the greatest assistance to me.

A fire occurred opposite No. 2 gun port side caused by a shell exploding some ammunition, resulting in a terrific blaze for a short period and leaving the deck burning. This was very promptly dealt with and extinguished by Chief Petty Officer Frederick W. Wrench, O.N. 158630.

The Flotillas were reformed in Divisions and proceeded at 20 knots. It was now noticed that *Arethusa's* speed had been reduced.

Fearless reported that the 3rd and 5th Divisions of the First Flotilla had sunk the German Commodore's Destroyer and that two boats' crews belonging to *Defender* had been left behind, as our Destroyers had been fired upon by a German Cruiser during their act of mercy in saving the survivors of the German Destroyer.

At 10 a.m., hearing that Commodore (S) in *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* were being chased by Light Cruisers, I proceeded to his assistance with *Fearless* and the First Flotilla until 10.37 a.m., when, having received no news, and being in the vicinity of Heligoland, I ordered the ships in company to turn to the westward.

All guns except two 4-inch were again in working order, and the upper deck supply of ammunition was replenished.

At 10.55 a.m. a four-funnelled German Cruiser was sighted, and opened a very

heavy fire at about 11 o'clock.

Our position being somewhat critical, I ordered *Fearless* to attack, and the First Flotilla to attack with torpedoes, which they proceeded to do with great spirit. The Cruiser at once turned away, disappeared in the haze, and evaded the attack.

About 10 minutes later the same Cruiser appeared on our starboard quarter. Opened fire on her with both 6-inch guns; *Fearless* also engaged her, and one Division of Destroyers attacked her with torpedoes without success.

The state of affairs and our position was then reported to the Admiral Commanding Battle Cruiser Squadron.

We received a very severe and almost accurate fire from this Cruiser; salvo after salvo was falling between 10 and 30 yards short, but not a single shell struck; two torpedoes were also fired at us, being well directed, but short.

The Cruiser was badly damaged by *Arethusa's* 6-inch guns and a splendidly directed fire from *Fearless*, and she shortly afterwards turned away in the direction of Heligoland.

Proceeded, and four minutes later sighted the three-funnelled Cruiser *Mainz*. She endured a heavy fire from *Arethusa* and *Fearless* and many Destroyers. After an action of approximately 25 minutes she was seen to be sinking by the head, her engines stopped, besides being on fire.

At this moment the Light Cruiser Squadron appeared, and they very speedily reduced the *Mainz* to a condition which must have been indescribable.

I then recalled *Fearless* and the Destroyers, and ordered cease fire.

We then exchanged broadsides with a large, four-funnelled Cruiser on the starboard quarter at long range, without visible effect.

The Battle Cruiser Squadron now arrived, and I pointed out this Cruiser to the Admiral Commanding, and was shortly afterwards informed by him that the Cruiser in question had been sunk and another set on fire.

The weather during the day was fine, sea calm, but visibility poor, not more than 3 miles at any time when the various actions were taking place, and was such that ranging and spotting were rendered difficult.

I then proceeded with 14 Destroyers of the Third Flotilla, and 9 of the First Flotilla.

Arethusa's speed was about 6 knots until 7 p.m., when it was impossible to proceed any further, and fires were drawn in all boilers except two, and assistance called for.

At 9.30 p.m. Captain Wilmot S. Nicholson, of the *Hogue*, took my ship in tow in a most seamanlike manner, and, observing that the night was pitch dark and the

only lights showing were two small hand lanterns, I consider his action was one which deserves special notice from Their Lordships.

I would also specially recommend Lieutenant-Commander Arthur P. N. Thorowgood, of *Arethusa*, for the able manner he prepared the ship for being towed in the dark.

H.M. Ship under my command was then towed to the Nore, arriving at 5 p.m. on the 29th August. Steam was then available for slow speed, and the ship was able to proceed to Chatham under her own steam.

I beg again to call attention to the services rendered by Captain W. F. Blunt, of H.M.S. *Fearless*, and the Commanding Officers of the Destroyers of the First and Third Flotillas, whose gallant attacks on the German Cruisers at critical moments undoubtedly saved *Arethusa* from more severe punishment and possible capture.

I cannot adequately express my satisfaction and pride at the spirit and ardour of my Officers and Ship's Company, who carried out their orders with the greatest alacrity under the most trying conditions, especially in view of the fact that the ship, newly built, had not been 48 hours out of the Dockyard before she was in action.

It is difficult to specially pick out individuals, but the following came under my special observation:—

H.M.S. "Arethusa."

Lieutenant-Commander Arthur P. N. Thorowgood, First Lieutenant, and in charge of the After Control.

Lieutenant-Commander Ernest K. Arbuthnot (G.), in charge of the Fore Control.

Sub-Lieutenant Clive A. Robinson, who worked the range-finder throughout the entire action with extraordinary coolness.

Assistant Paymaster Kenneth E. Badcock, my Secretary, who attended me on the bridge throughout the entire action.

Mr. James D. Godfrey, Gunner (T.), who was in charge of the torpedo tubes.

The following men were specially noted:—

Armourer Arthur F. Hayes, O.N. 342026 (Ch.).

Second Sick Berth Steward George Trolley, O.N. M.296 (Ch.).

Chief Yeoman of Signals Albert Fox, O.N. 194656 (Po.), on fore bridge during entire action.

Chief Petty Officer Frederick W. Wrench, O.N. 158630 (Ch.) (for ready resource in extinguishing fire caused by explosion of cordite).

Private Thomas Millington, R.M.L.I., No. Ch. 17417.

Private William J. Beirne, R.M.L.I., No. Ch. 13540.

First Writer Albert W. Stone, O.N. 346080 (Po.).

I also beg to record the services rendered by the following Officers and Men of H.M. Ships under my orders:—

H.M.S. "Fearless."

Mr. Robert M. Taylor, Gunner, for coolness in action under heavy fire.

The following Officers also displayed great resource and energy in effecting repairs to *Fearless* after her return to harbour, and they were ably seconded by the whole of their staffs:—

Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Charles de F. Messervy.

Mr. William Morrissey, Carpenter.

H.M.S. "Goshawk."

Commander the Hon. Herbert Meade, who took his Division into action with great coolness and nerve, and was instrumental in sinking the German Destroyer V187, and, with the boats of his Division, saved the survivors in a most chivalrous manner.

H.M.S. "Ferret."

Commander Geoffrey Mackworth, who, with his Division, most gallantly seconded Commander Meade, of *Goshawk*.

H.M.S. "Laertes."

Lieutenant Commander Malcolm L. Goldsmith, whose ship was seriously damaged, taken in tow, and towed out of action by *Fearless*.

Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Alexander Hill, for repairing steering gear and engines under fire.

Sub-Lieutenant George H. Faulkner, who continued to fight his gun after being wounded.

Mr. Charles Powell, Acting Boatswain, O.N. 209388, who was gunlayer of the centre gun, which made many hits. He behaved very coolly, and set a good example when getting in tow and clearing away the wreckage after the action.

Edward Naylor, Petty Officer, Torpedo Gunner's Mate, O.N. 189136, who fired a torpedo which the Commanding Officer of *Laertes* reports undoubtedly hit the *Mainz*, and so helped materially to put her out of action.

Stephen Pritchard, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 285152, who very gallantly dived

into the cabin flat immediately after a shell had exploded there, and worked a fire hose.

Frederick Pierce, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 307943, who was on watch in the engine room and behaved with conspicuous coolness and resource when a shell exploded in No. 2 boiler.

H.M.S. "Laurel."

Commander Frank F. Rose, who most ably commanded his vessel throughout the early part of the action, and after having been wounded in both legs, remained on the bridge until 6 p.m., displaying great devotion to duty.

Lieutenant Charles R. Peploe, First Lieutenant, who took command after Commander Rose was wounded, and continued the action till its close, bringing his Destroyer out in an able and gallant manner under most trying conditions.

Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Edward H. T. Meeson, who behaved with great coolness during the action, and steamed the ship out of action, although she had been very severely damaged by explosion of her own lyddite, by which the after funnel was nearly demolished. He subsequently assisted to carry out repairs to the vessel.

Sam Palmer, Leading Seaman (G.L. 2) O.N. 179529, who continued to fight his gun until the end of the action, although severely wounded in the leg.

Albert Edmund Sellens, Able Seaman (L.T.O.), O.N. 217245, who was stationed at the fore torpedo tubes; he remained at his post throughout the entire action, although wounded in the arm, and then rendered first aid in a very able manner before being attended to himself.

George H. Sturdy, Chief Stoker, O.N. 285547, and

Alfred Britton, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 289893, who both showed great coolness in putting out a fire near the centre gun after an explosion had occurred there; several lyddite shells were lying in the immediate vicinity.

William R. Boiston, Engine Room Artificer, 3rd class, O.N. M.1369, who showed great ability and coolness in taking charge of the after boiler room during the action, when an explosion blew in the after funnel and a shell carried away pipes and seriously damaged the main steam pipe.

William H. Gorst, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 305616.

Edward Crane, Stoker Petty Officer, O.N. 307275.

Harry Wilfred Hawkes, Stoker 1st class, O.N. K.12086.

John W. Bateman, Stoker 1st class, O.N. K.12100.

These men were stationed in the after boiler room, and conducted themselves

with great coolness during the action, when an explosion blew in the after funnel, and shell carried away pipes and seriously damaged the main steam pipe.

H.M.S. "Liberty."

The late Lieutenant-Commander Nigel K. W. Barttelot commanded the *Liberty* with great skill and gallantry throughout the action. He was a most promising and able Officer, and I consider his death is a great loss to the Navy.

Engineer-Lieutenant-Commander Frank A. Butler, who showed much resource in effecting repairs during the action.

Lieutenant Henry E. Horan, First Lieutenant, who took command after the death of Lieutenant-Commander Barttelot, and brought his ship out of action in extremely able and gallant manner under most trying conditions.

Mr. Harry Morgan, Gunner (T), who carried out his duties with exceptional coolness under fire.

Chief Petty Officer James Samuel Beadle, O.N. 171735, who remained at his post at the wheel for over an hour after being wounded in the kidneys.

John Galvin, Stoker, Petty Officer, O.N. 279946, who took entire charge, under the Engineer Officer, of the party who stopped leaks, and accomplished his task although working up to his chest in water.

H.M.S. "Laforey."

Mr. Ernest Roper, Chief Gunner, who carried out his duties with exceptional coolness under fire.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
R. Y. TYRWHITT,
Commodore (T).

4. Dispatch from Commander Roger J. B. Keyes, Commanding the Eighth Submarine Flotilla.

H.M.S. "Maidstone," 17th October 1914.

Sir,—In compliance with Their Lordships' directions, I have the honour to report as follows upon the services performed by Submarines since the commencement of hostilities:—

Three hours after the outbreak of war, Submarines E6 (Lieutenant-Commander Cecil P. Talbot), and E8 (Lieutenant-Commander Francis H. H. Goodhart), proceeded unaccompanied to carry out a reconnaissance in the Heligoland Bight.

These two vessels returned with useful information, and had the privilege of being the pioneers on a service which is attended by some risk.

During the transportation of the Expeditionary Force the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* and all the Submarines of the Eighth Submarine Flotilla occupied positions from which they could have attacked the High Sea Fleet, had it emerged to dispute the passage of our transports. This patrol was maintained day and night without relief, until the *personnel* of our Army had been transported and all chance of effective interference had disappeared.

These Submarines have since been incessantly employed on the Enemy's Coast in the Heligoland Bight and elsewhere, and have obtained much valuable information regarding the composition and movement of his patrols. They have occupied his waters and reconnoitred his anchorages, and, while so engaged, have been subjected to skilful and well executed anti-submarine tactics; hunted for hours at a time by Torpedo Craft and attacked by gunfire and torpedoes.

At midnight on the 26th August, I embarked in the *Lurcher*, and, in company with *Firedrake* and Submarines D2, D8, E4, E5, E6, E7, E8, and E9, of the Eighth Submarine Flotilla, proceeded to take part in the operations in the Heligoland Bight arranged for the 28th August. The Destroyers scouted for the Submarines until nightfall on the 27th, when the latter proceeded independently to take up various positions from which they could co-operate with the Destroyer Flotillas on the following morning.

At daylight on the 28th August the *Lurcher* and *Firedrake* searched the area, through which the Battle Cruisers were to advance, for hostile Submarines, and then proceeded towards Heligoland in the wake of Submarines E6, E7, and E8, which were exposing themselves with the object of inducing the enemy to chase them to the westward.

On approaching Heligoland, the visibility, which had been very good to seaward, reduced to 5,000 to 6,000 yards, and this added considerably to the anxieties and responsibilities of the Commanding Officers of Submarines, who handled their vessels with coolness and judgment in an area which was necessarily occupied by friends as well as foes.

Low visibility and calm sea are the most unfavourable conditions under which Submarines can operate, and no opportunity occurred of closing with the Enemy's Cruisers to within torpedo range.

Lieutenant-Commander Ernest W. Leir, Commanding Submarine E4, witnessed the sinking of the German Torpedo Boat Destroyer V187 through his periscope, and, observing a Cruiser of the *Stettin* class close, and open fire on the British

Destroyers which had lowered their boats to pick up the survivors, he proceeded to attack the Cruiser, but she altered course before he could get within range. After covering the retirement of our Destroyers, which had had to abandon their boats, he returned to the latter, and embarked a Lieutenant and nine men of *Defender*, who had been left behind. The boats also contained two Officers and eight men of V187, who were unwounded, and eighteen men who were badly wounded. As he could not embark the latter, Lieutenant-Commander Leir left one of the Officers and six unwounded men to navigate the British boats to Heligoland. Before leaving he saw that they were provided with water, biscuit, and a compass. One German Officer and two men were made prisoners of war.

Lieutenant-Commander Leir's action in remaining on the surface in the vicinity of the enemy and in a visibility which would have placed his vessel within easy gun range of an enemy appearing out of the mist, was altogether admirable.

This enterprising and gallant Officer took part in the reconnaissance which supplied the information on which these operations were based, and I beg to submit his name, and that of Lieutenant-Commander Talbot, the Commanding Officer of E6, who exercised patience, judgment, and skill in a dangerous position, for the favourable consideration of Their Lordships.

On the 13th September, E9 (Lieutenant-Commander Max K. Horton), torpedoed and sank the German Light Cruiser *Hela* six miles South of Heligoland.

A number of Destroyers were evidently called to the scene after E9 had delivered her attack, and these hunted her for several hours.

On the 14th September, in accordance with his orders, Lieutenant-Commander Horton examined the outer anchorage of Heligoland, a service attended by considerable risk.

On the 25th September, Submarine E6 (Lieutenant-Commander C. P. Talbot), while diving, fouled the moorings of a mine laid by the enemy. On rising to the surface she weighed the mine and sinker; the former was securely fixed between the hydroplane and its guard; fortunately, however, the horns of the mine were pointed outboard. The weight of the sinker made it a difficult and dangerous matter to lift the mine clear without exploding it. After half an hour's patient work this was effected by Lieutenant Frederick A. P. Williams-Freeman and Able Seaman Ernest Randall Cremer, Official Number 214235, and the released mine descended to its original depth.

On the 6th October, E9 (Lieutenant-Commander Max K. Horton), when patrolling off the Ems, torpedoed and sank the enemy's destroyer, S126.

The enemy's Torpedo Craft pursue tactics, which, in connection with their

shallow draft, make them exceedingly difficult to attack with torpedo, and Lieutenant-Commander Horton's success was the result of much patient and skilful zeal. He is a most enterprising submarine officer, and I beg to submit his name for favourable consideration.

Lieutenant Charles M. S. Chapman, the Second in Command of E9, is also deserving of credit.

Against an enemy whose capital vessels have never, and Light Cruisers have seldom, emerged from their fortified harbours, opportunities of delivering Submarine attacks have necessarily been few, and on one occasion only, prior to the 13th September, has one of our Submarines been within torpedo range of a Cruiser during daylight hours.

During the exceptionally heavy westerly gales which prevailed between the 14th and 21st September, the position of the Submarines on a lee shore, within a few miles of the Enemy's coast, was an unpleasant one.

The short steep seas which accompany westerly gales in the Heligoland Bight made it difficult to keep the conning tower hatches open. There was no rest to be obtained, and even when cruising at a depth of 60 feet, the Submarines were rolling considerably, and pumping—*i.e.*, vertically moving about twenty feet.

I submit that it was creditable to the Commanding Officers that they should have maintained their stations under such conditions.

Service in the Heligoland Bight is keenly sought after by the Commanding Officers of the Eighth Submarine Flotilla, and they have all shown daring and enterprise in the execution of their duties. These Officers have unanimously expressed to me their admiration of the cool and gallant behaviour of the Officers and men under their command. They are, however, of the opinion that it is impossible to single out individuals when all have performed their duties so admirably, and in this I concur.

The following Submarines have been in contact with the enemy during these operations:—

D1 (Lieutenant-Commander Archibald D. Cochrane).
D2 (Lieutenant-Commander Arthur G. Jameson).
D3 (Lieutenant-Commander Edward C. Boyle).
D5 (Lieutenant-Commander Godfrey Herbert).
E4 (Lieutenant-Commander Ernest W. Leir).
E5 (Lieutenant-Commander Charles S. Benning).
E6 (Lieutenant-Commander Cecil P. Talbot).
E7 (Lieutenant-Commander Ferdinand E. B. Feilmann).
E9 (Lieutenant-Commander Max K. Horton).

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) ROGER KEYES,
Commodore (S).

APPENDIX II.

Sir John French's Third Dispatch.

THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE.

My Lord,—I have the honour to report the operations in which the British Forces in France have been engaged since the evening of the 10th September.

Advance to the Aisne.

1. In the early morning of the 11th the further pursuit of the enemy was commenced; and the three Corps crossed the Ourcq practically unopposed, the Cavalry reaching the line of the Aisne River; the 3rd and 5th Brigades south of Soissons, the 1st, 2nd, and 4th on the high ground at Couvrelles and Cerseuil.

On the afternoon of the 12th from the opposition encountered by the 6th French Army to the west of Soissons, by the 3rd Corps south-east of that place, by the 2nd Corps south of Missy and Vailly, and certain indications all along the line, I formed the opinion that the enemy had, for the moment at any rate, arrested his retreat and was preparing to dispute the passage of the Aisne with some vigour.

South of Soissons the Germans were holding Mont de Paris against the attack of the right of the French 6th Army when the 3rd Corps reached the neighbourhood of Buzancy, south-east of that place. With the assistance of the Artillery of the 3rd Corps the French drove them back across the river at Soissons, where they destroyed the bridges.

The heavy artillery fire which was visible for several miles in a westerly direction in the valley of the Aisne showed that the 6th French Army was meeting with strong opposition all along the line.

On this day the Cavalry under General Allenby reached the neighbourhood of Braine and did good work in clearing the town and the high ground beyond it of strong hostile detachments. The Queen's Bays are particularly mentioned by the General as having assisted greatly in the success of this operation. They were well supported by the 3rd Division, which on this night bivouacked at Brenelle, south of the river.

The 5th Division approached Missy, but were unable to make headway.

The 1st Army Corps reached the neighbourhood of Vauxcéré without much opposition.

In this manner the Battle of the Aisne commenced.

Description of Aisne Valley.

2. The Aisne Valley runs generally East and West, and consists of a flat-bottomed depression of width varying from half a mile to two miles, down which the river follows a winding course to the West at some points near the southern slopes of the valley and at others near the northern. The high ground both on the north and south of the river is approximately 400 feet above the bottom of the valley, and is very similar in character, as are both slopes of the valley itself, which are broken into numerous rounded spurs and re-entrants. The most prominent of the former are the Chivre spur on the right bank and Sermoise spur on the left. Near the latter place the general plateau on the south is divided by a subsidiary valley of much the same character, down which the small River Vesle flows to the main stream near Sermoise. The slopes of the plateau overlooking the Aisne on the north and south are of varying steepness, and are covered with numerous patches of wood, which also stretch upwards and backwards over the edge on to the top of the high ground. There are several villages and small towns dotted about in the valley itself and along its sides, the chief of which is the town of Soissons.

The Aisne is a sluggish stream of some 170 feet in breadth, but, being 15 feet deep in the centre, it is unfordable. Between Soissons on the west and Villers on the east (the part of the river attacked and secured by the British Forces) there are eleven road bridges across it. On the north bank a narrow-gauge railway runs from Soissons to Vailly, where it crosses the river and continues eastward along the south bank. From Soissons to Sermoise a double line of railway runs along the south bank, turning at the latter place up the Vesle Valley towards Bazoches.

The position held by the enemy is a very strong one, either for a delaying action or for a defensive battle. One of its chief military characteristics is that from the high ground on neither side can the top of the plateau on the other side be seen except for small stretches. This is chiefly due to the woods on the edges of the slopes. Another important point is that all the bridges are under either direct or high-angle artillery fire.

The tract of country above described, which lies north of the Aisne, is well adapted to concealment, and was so skilfully turned to account by the enemy as to render it impossible to judge the real nature of his opposition to our passage of the river, or to accurately gauge his strength; but I have every reason to conclude that strong rearguards of at least three army corps were holding the passages on the early

morning of the 13th.

The Crossing of the Aisne, September 13.

3. On that morning I ordered the British Forces to advance and make good the Aisne.

The 1st Corps and the Cavalry advanced on the river. The 1st Division was directed on Chanouille *viâ* the canal bridge at Bourg, and the 2nd Division on Courteçon and Presles *viâ* Pont-Arcy and on the canal to the north of Braye *viâ* Chavonne. On the right the Cavalry and 1st Division met with slight opposition, and found a passage by means of the canal which crosses the river by an aqueduct. The Division was therefore able to press on, supported by the Cavalry Division on its outer flank, driving back the enemy in front of it.

On the left the leading troops of the 2nd Division reached the river by 9 o'clock. The 5th Infantry Brigade were only enabled to cross, in single file and under considerable shell fire, by means of the broken girder of the bridge which was not entirely submerged in the river. The construction of a pontoon bridge was at once undertaken, and was completed by 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

On the extreme left the 4th Guards Brigade met with severe opposition at Chavonne, and it was only late in the afternoon that it was able to establish a foothold on the northern bank of the river by ferrying one battalion across in boats.

By nightfall the 1st Division occupied the area Moulins-Paissy-Geny, with posts in the village of Vendresse.

The 2nd Division bivouacked as a whole on the southern bank of the river, leaving only the 5th Brigade on the north bank to establish a bridge head.

The Second Corps found all the bridges in front of them destroyed, except that of Condé, which was in the possession of the enemy, and remained so until the end of the battle.

In the approach to Missy, where the 5th Division eventually crossed, there is some open ground which was swept by heavy fire from the opposite bank. The 13th Brigade was, therefore, unable to advance; but the 14th, which was directed to the east of Venizel at a less exposed point, was rafted across, and by night established itself with its left at St. Marguérite. They were followed by the 15th Brigade; and later on both the 14th and 15th supported the 4th Division on their left in repelling a heavy counter-attack on the Third Corps.

On the morning of the 13th the Third Corps found the enemy had established himself in strength on the Vregny Plateau. The road bridge at Venizel was repaired

during the morning, and a reconnaissance was made with a view to throwing a pontoon bridge at Soissons.

The 12th Infantry Brigade crossed at Venizel, and was assembled at Bucy Le Long by 1 p.m., but the bridge was so far damaged that artillery could only be man-handled across it. Meanwhile the construction of a bridge was commenced close to the road bridge at Venizel.

At 2 p.m. the 12th Infantry Brigade attacked in the direction of Chivres and Vregny with the object of securing the high ground east of Chivres, as a necessary preliminary to a further advance northwards. This attack made good progress, but at 5.30 p.m. the enemy's artillery and machine-gun fire from the direction of Vregny became so severe that no further advance could be made. The positions reached were held till dark.

The pontoon bridge at Venizel was completed at 5.30 p.m., when the 10th Infantry Brigade crossed the river and moved to Bucy Le Long.

The 19th Infantry Brigade moved to Billy Sur Aisne, and before dark all the artillery of the Division had crossed the river, with the exception of the Heavy Battery and one Brigade of Field Artillery.

During the night the positions gained by the 12th Infantry Brigade to the east of the stream running through Chivres were handed over to the 5th Division.

The section of the Bridging Train allotted to the Third Corps began to arrive in the neighbourhood of Soissons late in the afternoon, when an attempt to throw a heavy pontoon bridge at Soissons had to be abandoned, owing to the fire of the enemy's heavy howitzers.

In the evening the enemy retired at all points and entrenched himself on the high ground about two miles north of the river, along which runs the Chemin-des-Dames. Detachments of Infantry, however, strongly entrenched in commanding points down slopes of the various spurs, were left in front of all three corps with powerful artillery in support of them.

During the night of the 13th and on the 14th and following days the Field Companies were incessantly at work night and day. Eight pontoon bridges and one foot bridge were thrown across the river under generally very heavy artillery fire, which was incessantly kept up on to most of the crossings after completion. Three of the road bridges, *i.e.*, Venizel, Missy, and Vailly, and the railway bridge east of Vailly, were temporarily repaired so as to take foot traffic, and the Villers Bridge made fit to carry weights up to six tons.

Preparations were also made for the repair of the Missy, Vailly, and Bourg Bridges so as to take mechanical transport.

The weather was very wet and added to the difficulties by cutting up the already indifferent approaches, entailing a large amount of work to repair and improve.

The operations of the Field Companies during this most trying time are worthy of the best traditions of the Royal Engineers.

Sir Douglas Haig's Advance.

4. On the evening of the 14th it was still impossible to decide whether the enemy was only making a temporary halt, covered by rearguards, or whether he intended to stand and defend the position.

With a view to clearing up the situation, I ordered a general advance.

The action of the First Corps on this day under the direction and command of Sir Douglas Haig was of so skilful, bold, and decisive a character that he gained positions which alone have enabled me to maintain my position for more than three weeks of very severe fighting on the north bank of the river.

The Corps was directed to cross the line Moulins-Moussy by 7 a.m.

On the right the General Officer Commanding the 1st Division directed the 2nd Infantry Brigade (which was in billets and bivouacked about Moulins), and the 25th Artillery Brigade (less one battery), under General Bulfin, to move forward before daybreak, in order to protect the advance of the Division sent up the valley to Vendresse. An officers' patrol sent out by this Brigade reported a considerable force of the enemy near the factory north of Troyon, and the Brigadier accordingly directed two regiments (the King's Royal Rifles and the Royal Sussex Regiment) to move at 3 a.m. The Northamptonshire Regiment was ordered to move at 4 a.m. to occupy the spur east of Troyon. The remaining regiment of the Brigade (the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment) moved at 5.30 a.m. to the village of Vendresse. The factory was found to be held in considerable strength by the enemy, and the Brigadier ordered the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment to support the King's Royal Rifles and the Sussex Regiment. Even with this support the force was unable to make headway, and on the arrival of the 1st Brigade the Coldstream Guards were moved up to support the right of the leading Brigade (the 2nd), while the remainder of the 1st Brigade supported its left.

About noon the situation was, roughly, that the whole of these two brigades were extended along a line running east and west, north of the line Troyon and south of the Chemin-des-Dames. A party of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment had seized and were holding the factory. The enemy had a line of entrenchments north and east of the factory in considerable strength, and every effort to advance against

this line was driven back by heavy shell and machine-gun fire. The morning was wet and a heavy mist hung over the hills, so that the 25th Artillery Brigade and the Divisional Artillery were unable to render effective support to the advanced troops until about 9 o'clock.

By 10 o'clock the 3rd Infantry Brigade had reached a point one mile south of Vendresse, and from there it was ordered to continue the line of the 1st Brigade and to connect with and help the right of the 2nd Division. A strong hostile column was found to be advancing, and by a vigorous counter stroke with two of his battalions the Brigadier checked the advance of this column and relieved the pressure on the 2nd Division. From this period until late in the afternoon the fighting consisted of a series of attacks and counter-attacks. The counter-strokes by the enemy were delivered at first with great vigour, but later on they decreased in strength, and all were driven off with heavy loss.

On the left the 6th Infantry Brigade had been ordered to cross the river and to pass through the line held during the preceding night by the 5th Infantry Brigade and occupy the Courteçon Ridge, whilst a detached force, consisting of the 4th Guards Brigade and the 36th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, under Brigadier-General Perceval, were ordered to proceed to a point east of the village of Ostel.

The 6th Infantry Brigade crossed the river at Pont-Arcy, moved up the valley towards Braye, and at 9 a.m. had reached the line Tilleul-La Buvelle. On this line they came under heavy artillery and rifle fire, and were unable to advance until supported by the 34th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, and the 44th Howitzer Brigade and the Heavy Artillery.

The 4th Guards Brigade crossed the river at 10 a.m. and met with very heavy opposition. It had to pass through dense woods; field artillery support was difficult to obtain; but one section of a field battery pushed up to and within the firing line. At 1 p.m. the left of the Brigade was south of the Ostel Ridge.

At this period of the action the enemy obtained a footing between the First and Second Corps, and threatened to cut the communications of the latter.

Sir Douglas Haig was very hardly pressed and had no reserve in hand. I placed the Cavalry Division at his disposal, part of which he skilfully used to prolong and secure the left flank of the Guards Brigade. Some heavy fighting ensued, which resulted in the enemy being driven back with heavy loss.

About 4 o'clock the weakening of the counter-attacks by the enemy and other indications tended to show that his resistance was decreasing, and a general advance was ordered by the Army Corps Commander. Although meeting with considerable opposition and coming under very heavy artillery and rifle fire, the position of the

corps at the end of the day's operations extended from the Chemin-des-Dames on the right, through Chivy, to Le Cour de Soupir, with the 1st Cavalry Brigade extending to the Chavonne-Soissons road.

On the right the corps was in close touch with the French Moroccan troops of the 18th Corps, which were entrenched in echelon to its right rear. During the night they entrenched this position.

Throughout the Battle of the Aisne this advanced and commanding position was maintained, and I cannot speak too highly of the valuable services rendered by Sir Douglas Haig and the Army Corps under his command. Day after day and night after night the enemy's infantry has been hurled against him in violent counter-attack which has never on any one occasion succeeded, whilst the trenches all over his position have been under continuous heavy artillery fire.

The operations of the First Corps on this day resulted in the capture of several hundred prisoners, some field pieces, and machine guns.

The casualties were very severe, one brigade alone losing three of its four Colonels.

The 3rd Division commenced a further advance and had nearly reached the plateau of Aizy when they were driven back by a powerful counter-attack supported by heavy artillery. The division, however, fell back in the best order, and finally entrenched itself about a mile north of Vailly Bridge, effectively covering the passage.

The 4th and 5th Divisions were unable to do more than maintain their ground.

The German Guns.

5. On the morning of the 15th, after close examination of the position, it became clear to me that the enemy was making a determined stand; and this view was confirmed by reports which reached me from the French Armies fighting on my right and left, which clearly showed that a strongly entrenched line of defence was being taken up from the north of Compiègne, eastward and south-eastward, along the whole valley of the Aisne up to and beyond Reims.

A few days previously the Fortress of Maubeuge fell, and a considerable quantity of siege artillery was brought down from that place to strengthen the enemy's position in front of us.

During the 15th shells fell in our position which have been judged by experts to be thrown by 8-inch siege guns with a range of 10,000 yards. Throughout the whole course of the battle our troops have suffered very heavily from this fire, although its effect latterly was largely mitigated by more efficient and thorough entrenching, the

necessity for which I impressed strongly upon our Army Corps Commanders. In order to assist them in this work all villages within the area of our occupation were searched for heavy entrenching tools, a large number of which were collected.

In view of the peculiar formation of the ground on the north side of the river between Missy and Soissons, and its extraordinary adaptability to a force on the defensive, the 5th Division found it impossible to maintain its position on the southern edge of the Chivres Plateau, as the enemy in possession of the village of Vregny to the west was able to bring a flank fire to bear upon it. The Division had, therefore, to retire to a line the left of which was at the village of Marguérite, and thence ran by the north edge of Missy back to the river to the east of that place.

With great skill and tenacity Sir Charles Fergusson maintained this position throughout the whole battle, although his trenches were necessarily on lower ground than that occupied by the enemy on the southern edge of the plateau, which was only 400 yards away.

General Hamilton with the 3rd Division vigorously attacked to the north, and regained all the ground he had lost on the 15th, which throughout the battle has formed a most powerful and effective bridge head.

The Fighting from September 16 to 24.

6. On the 16th the 6th Division came up into line.

It had been my intention to direct the First Corps to attack and seize the enemy's position on the Chemin-des-Dames, supporting it with this new reinforcement. I hoped from the position thus gained to bring effective fire to bear across the front of the 3rd Division which, by securing the advance of the latter, would also take the pressure off the 5th Division and the Third Corps.

But any further advance of the First Corps would have dangerously exposed my right flank. And, further, I learned from the French Commander-in-Chief that he was strongly reinforcing the 6th French Army on my left, with the intention of bringing up the Allied left to attack the enemy's flank and thus compel his retirement. I therefore sent the 6th Division to join the Third Corps with orders to keep it on the south side of the river, as it might be available in general reserve.

On the 17th, 18th, and 19th the whole of our line was heavily bombarded, and the First Corps was constantly and heavily engaged. On the afternoon of the 17th the right flank of the 1st Division was seriously threatened. A counter attack was made by the Northamptonshire Regiment in combination with the Queen's, and one battalion of the Divisional Reserve was moved up in support. The Northamptonshire

Regiment, under cover of mist, crept up to within a hundred yards of the enemy's trenches and charged with the bayonet, driving them out of the trenches and up the hill. A very strong force of hostile infantry was then disclosed on the crest line. This new line was enfiladed by part of the Queen's and the King's Royal Rifles, which wheeled to their left on the extreme right of our infantry line, and were supported by a squadron of cavalry on their outer flank. The enemy's attack was ultimately driven back with heavy loss.

On the 18th, during the night, the Gloucestershire Regiment advanced from their position near Chivy, filled in the enemy's trenches, and captured two maxim guns.

On the extreme right the Queen's were heavily attacked, but the enemy were repulsed with great loss. About midnight the attack was renewed on the First Division, supported by artillery fire, but was again repulsed.

Shortly after midnight an attack was made on the left of the 2nd Division with considerable force, which was also thrown back.

At about 1 p.m. on the 19th the 2nd Division drove back a heavy infantry attack strongly supported by artillery fire. At dusk the attack was renewed and again repulsed.

On the 18th I discussed with the General Officer Commanding the Second Army Corps and his Divisional Commanders the possibility of driving the enemy out of Condé, which lay between his two Divisions, and seizing the bridge which has remained throughout in his possession.

As, however, I found that the bridge was closely commanded from all points on the south side, and that satisfactory arrangements were made to prevent any issue from it by the enemy by day or night, I decided that it was not necessary to incur the losses which an attack would entail, as, in view of the position of the Second and Third Corps, the enemy could make no use of Condé, and would be automatically forced out of it by any advance which might become possible for us.

Change in Allied Plan.

7. On this day information reached me from General Joffre that he had found it necessary to make a new plan, and to attack and envelop the German right flank.

It was now evident to me that the battle in which we had been engaged since the 12th instant must last some days longer, until the effect of this new flank movement could be felt and a way opened to drive the enemy from his positions.

It thus became essential to establish some system of regular relief in the trenches, and I have used the infantry of the 6th Division for this purpose with good results.

The relieved brigades were brought back alternately south of the river, and, with the artillery of the 6th Division, formed a general reserve on which I could rely in case of necessity.

The Cavalry have rendered most efficient and ready help in the trenches, and have done all they possibly could to lighten the arduous and trying task which has of necessity fallen to the lot of the Infantry.

On the evening of the 19th and throughout the 20th the enemy again commenced to show considerable activity. On the former night a severe counter-attack on the 3rd Division was repulsed with considerable loss, and from early on Sunday morning various hostile attempts were made on the trenches of the 1st Division. During the day the enemy suffered another severe repulse in front of the 2nd Division, losing heavily in the attempt. In the course of the afternoon the enemy made desperate attempts against the trenches all along the front of the First Corps, but with similar results.

After dark the enemy again attacked the 2nd Division, only to be again driven back.

Our losses on these two days were considerable, but the number, as obtained, of the enemy's killed and wounded vastly exceeded them.

As the troops of the First Army Corps were much exhausted by this continual fighting, I reinforced Sir Douglas Haig with a brigade from the reserve, and called upon the 1st Cavalry Division to assist them.

On the night of the 21st another violent counter-attack was repulsed by the 3rd Division, the enemy losing heavily.

On the 23rd the four 6-inch howitzer batteries, which I had asked to be sent from home, arrived. Two batteries were handed over to the Second Corps and two to the First Corps. They were brought into action on the 24th with very good results.

Our experiences in this campaign seem to point to the employment of more heavy guns of a larger calibre in great battles which last for several days, during which time powerful entrenching work on both sides can be carried out.

These batteries were used with considerable effect on the 24th and the following days.

Climax of German Attack, September 26-28.

8. On the 23rd the action of General de Castelnau's Army on the Allied left developed considerably, and apparently withdrew considerable forces of the enemy away from the centre and east. I am not aware whether it was due to this cause or

not, but until the 26th it appeared as though the enemy's opposition in our front was weakening. On that day, however, a very marked renewal of activity commenced. A constant and vigorous artillery bombardment was maintained all day, and the Germans in front of the 1st Division were observed to be "sapping" up to our lines and trying to establish new trenches. Renewed counter-attacks were delivered and beaten off during the course of the day, and in the afternoon a well-timed attack by the 1st Division stopped the enemy's entrenching work.

During the night of 27th-28th the enemy again made the most determined attempts to capture the trenches of the 1st Division, but without the slightest success.

Similar attacks were reported during these three days all along the line of the Allied front, and it is certain that the enemy then made one last great effort to establish ascendency. He was, however, unsuccessful everywhere, and is reported to have suffered heavy losses. The same futile attempts were made all along our front up to the evening of the 28th, when they died away, and have not since been renewed.

On former occasions I have brought to your Lordship's notice the valuable services performed during this campaign by the Royal Artillery.

Throughout the Battle of the Aisne they have displayed the same skill, endurance, and tenacity, and I deeply appreciate the work they have done.

Sir David Henderson and the Royal Flying Corps under his command have again proved their incalculable value. Great strides have been made in the development of the use of aircraft in the tactical sphere by establishing effective communication between aircraft and units in action.

It is difficult to describe adequately and accurately the great strain to which officers and men were subjected almost every hour of the day and night throughout this battle.

I have described above the severe character of the artillery fire which was directed from morning till night, not only upon the trenches, but over the whole surface of the ground occupied by our Forces. It was not until a few days before the position was evacuated that the heavy guns were removed and the fire slackened. Attack and counter-attack occurred at all hours of the night and day throughout the whole position, demanding extreme vigilance, and permitting only a minimum of rest.

The fact that between the 12th September and the date of this dispatch the total numbers of killed, wounded, and missing reached the figures amounting to 561 officers, 12,980 men, proves the severity of the struggle.

The tax on the endurance of the troops was further increased by the heavy rain and cold which prevailed for some ten or twelve days of this trying time.

The Battle of the Aisne has once more demonstrated the splendid spirit, gallantry, and devotion which animates the officers and men of His Majesty's Forces.

Officers mentioned.

With reference to the last paragraph of my dispatch of September 7th, I append the names of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men brought forward for special mention by Army Corps commanders and heads of departments for services rendered from the commencement of the campaign up to the present date.

I entirely agree with these recommendations and beg to submit them for your Lordship's consideration.

I further wish to bring forward the names of the following officers who have rendered valuable service:—General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien and Lieutenant-General Sir Douglas Haig (commanding First and Second Corps respectively) I have already mentioned in the present and former dispatches for particularly marked and distinguished service in critical situations.

Since the commencement of the campaign they have carried out all my orders and instructions with the utmost ability.

Lieutenant-General W. P. Pulteney took over the command of the Third Corps just before the commencement of the Battle of the Marne. Throughout the subsequent operations he showed himself to be a most capable commander in the field and has rendered very valuable services.

Major-General E. H. H. Allenby and Major-General H. de la P. Gough have proved themselves to be Cavalry leaders of a high order, and I am deeply indebted to them. The undoubted moral superiority which our Cavalry has obtained over that of the enemy has been due to the skill with which they have turned to the best account the qualities inherent in the splendid troops they command.

In my dispatch of 7th September I mentioned the name of Brigadier-General Sir David Henderson and his valuable work in command of the Royal Flying Corps; and I have once more to express my deep appreciation of the help he has since rendered me.

Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Murray has continued to render me invaluable help as Chief of the Staff; and in his arduous and responsible duties he has been ably assisted by Major-General Henry Wilson, Sub-Chief.

Lieutenant-General Sir Nevil Macready and Lieutenant-General Sir William Robertson have continued to perform excellent service as Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General respectively.

The Director of Army Signals, Lieutenant-Colonel J. S. Fowler, has materially assisted the operations by the skill and energy which he has displayed in the working of the important department over which he presides.

My Military Secretary, Brigadier-General the Hon. W. Lambton, has performed his arduous and difficult duties with much zeal and great efficiency.

I am anxious also to bring to your Lordship's notice the following names of officers of my Personal Staff, who throughout these arduous operations have shown untiring zeal and energy in the performance of their duties:—

Aides-de-Camp.
Lieutenant-Colonel Stanley Barry.
Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Brooke.
Major Fitzgerald Watt.

Extra Aide-de-Camp.
Captain the Hon. F. E. Guest.

Private Secretary.
Lieutenant-Colonel Brindsley Fitzgerald.

Major His Royal Highness Prince Arthur of Connaught, K.G., joined my Staff as Aide-de-Camp on the 14th September.

His Royal Highness's intimate knowledge of languages enabled me to employ him with great advantage on confidential missions of some importance, and his services have proved of considerable value.

I cannot close this dispatch without informing your Lordship of the valuable services rendered by the Chief of the French Military Mission at my Headquarters, Colonel Victor Huguet, of the French Artillery. He has displayed tact and judgment of a high order in many difficult situations, and has rendered conspicuous service to the Allied cause.

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.

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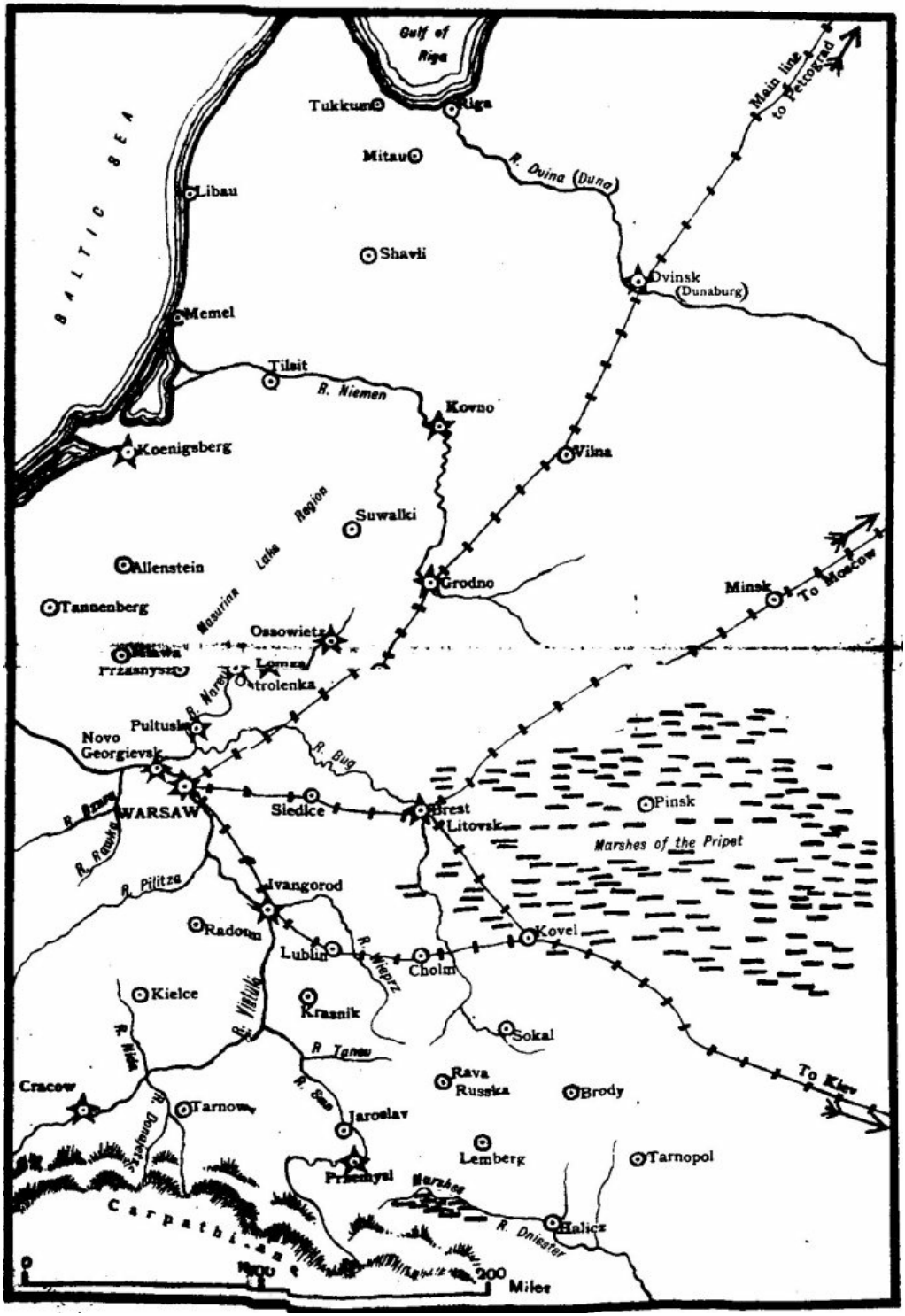
Gulf of Riga
BALTIC SEA
Tukkum
Riga
Mitau
Libau
Shavli
R. Duina (Duna)
Main line to Petrograd
Dvinsk (Dunaburg)
Memel
Tilsit
R. Niemen
Kovno
Koenigsberg
Vilna
Suwalki
Region
Lake
Allenstein
Grodno
Minsk
To Moscow
Tannenberg
Masurian
Ossowietz
Przasnysz
Lomza
Strolenka
R. Narew
Pultusk
Novo Georgievsk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

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

Inconsistency in accents has been retained.

Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.

Some photographs have been enhanced to be more legible.

The dates found in sidenotes have been relocated between paragraphs and are only shown in some output formats.

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