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John Buchan

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NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR.

By John Buchan.

Volume XII. The Retreat from Bagdad, the Evacuation of Gallipoli, and the Derby Report.

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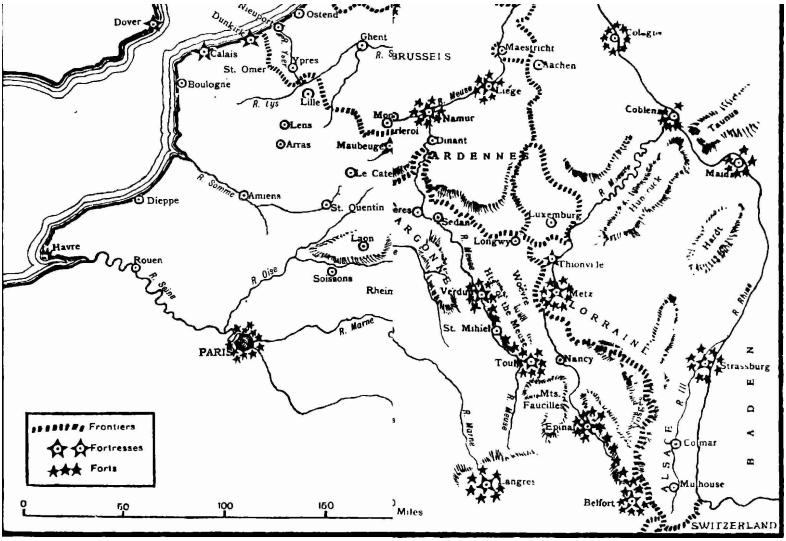

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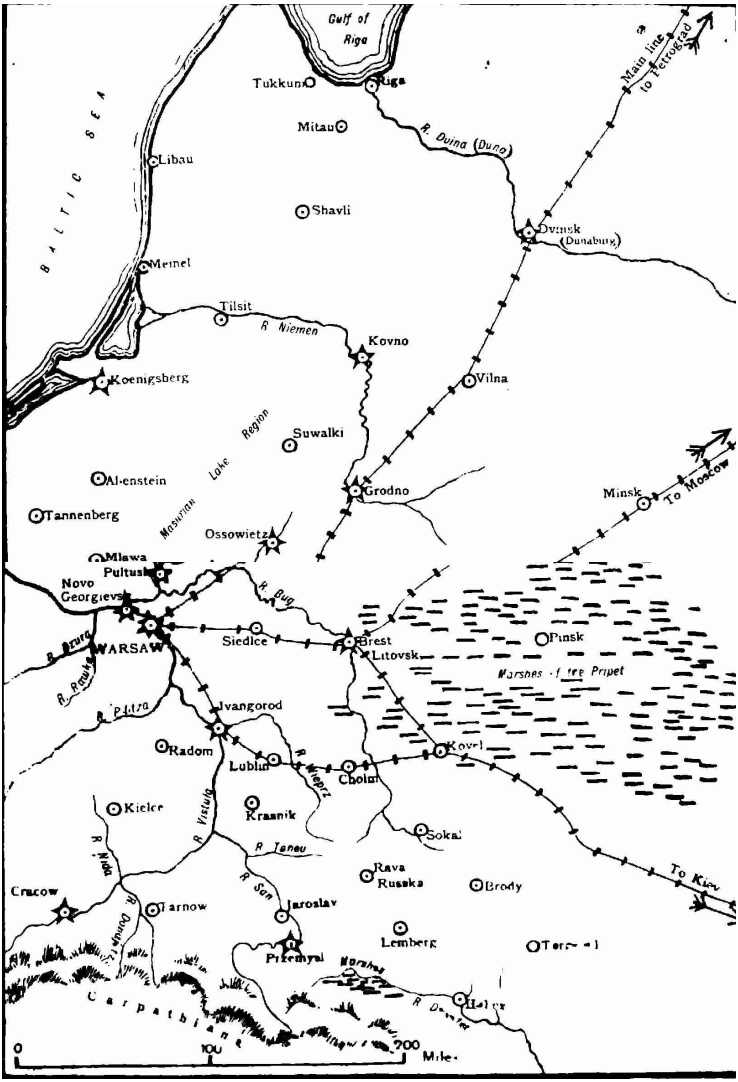


Eastern Theatre of the War.

NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR
VOLUME XII

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

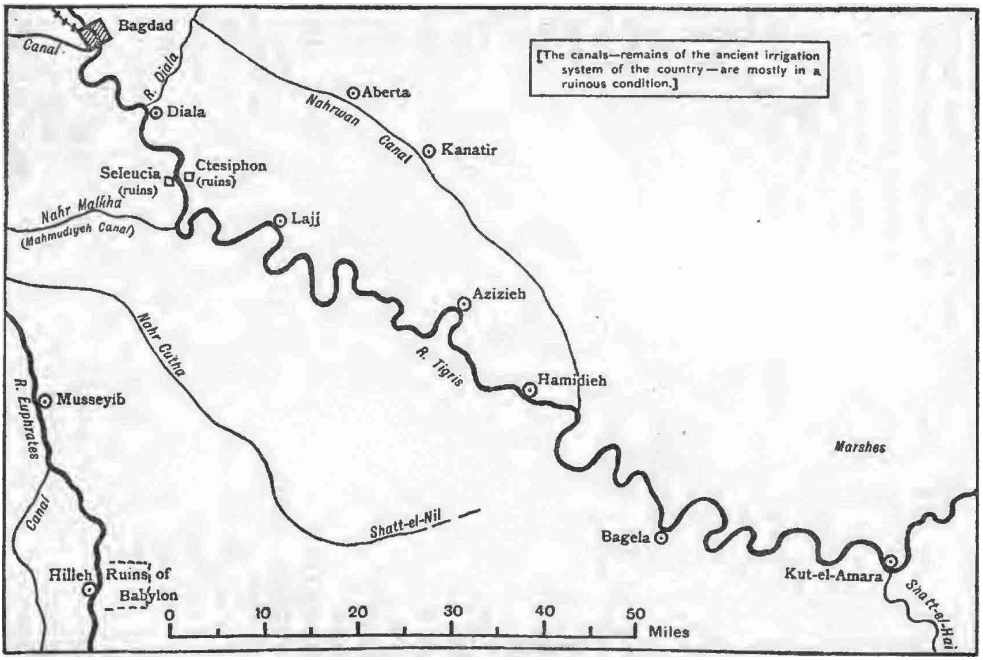
THE BAGDAD EXPEDITION.

Reasons for the Advance to Bagdad—Dangers of the Enterprise—Mr. Asquith's Statement—The Opposing Forces—The Advance up the Tigris—Nature of Ctesiphon Position—The British Plan—The First Day's Fighting—British capture Turkish First-line Trenches—Arrival of Turkish Reinforcements—General Townshend's Retreat—Kut surrounded—Von der Goltz at Aleppo—The Situation in Northern Persia—Prince Reuss's Doings—Revolt of the Gendarmerie—Russians take Hamadan and Kum.

When, at the end of September, the Turkish defence was broken at Kut-el-Amara, the British force began its advance on Bagdad. General Townshend was now in the position in which many British generals have found themselves since the days of Elizabeth. He commanded little more than a single division, and was outnumbered by the enemy's forces directly opposed to him, and vastly outnumbered by their potential levies. He was well over three hundred miles from his base on the sea. He had a river for his sole communication, and, after our amphibious fashion, was assisted by armed vessels from the water; but that river was full of shallows and mudbanks more formidable than the cataracts of the Nile. All around him lay a country ill-suited for operations by white troops—sparsely-watered desert and reeking marshes, baked by the hottest of Asian suns, and brooded over by those manifold diseases which heat and desert soil engender. The local tribes were either treacherous or openly hostile, and might at any moment strike at his long, straggling connections with the coast. Before him, a hundred miles off by the short cut across the loop of the Tigris, lay one of the most famous cities of the world. That a little British army, wearied with ten months' incessant fighting, should advance to conquer a mighty province of a still powerful empire might well seem one of the rashest enterprises ever embarked upon by man. It was the war in the Sudan undertaken under far more difficult conditions, for the fall of Bagdad would not mean, like the fall of Khartum, the end of serious resistance, and no Sirdar had planned a Sudan railway to bring supplies and reserves more quickly than the route of the winding river.

It may well be asked why an advance was ordered. The Turkish army which we had beaten at Kut-el-Amara could be readily reinforced. They had the Mosul Corps to draw upon; by the Tigris troops could be brought from Kurdistan; and from Damascus and Aleppo, by the caravan routes through the desert, reserves could be sent from the Army of Syria. Turkey had by no means used up all her supplies of men. The fronts in Gallipoli and Transcaucasia were stagnant, and the Allied embarrassments in the Balkans made any immediate pressure there unlikely. The British, on the other hand, could only add to their army by drafts from India or the Western front, a matter of weeks in one case and months in the other. In the face of a demoralized enemy a bold dash for the capital might succeed. But the Turks, as we well knew, were not demoralized. If they had failed at Kut they had to all intents succeeded at Gallipoli, and there stood by their side their German taskmasters to keep them to their business.

Moreover, Bagdad was no easy problem. The Tigris for some miles below the town loops itself into fantastic whorls, which meant that at many parts any land force, whose aim was speed, would be deprived of the co-operation of its flotilla. Again, some twenty miles below the city, the river Diala, entering the main stream on its left bank, provided a strong line of defence. Finally, Bagdad was an open city, and, even if won, would be hard to defend. In fact, it was an impossible halting-place. Once there, for the sake of security we should have been compelled to go on seventy-five miles to Samara, on the Tigris, the terminus of the railway from Bagdad. We should also be obliged to occupy Khanikin, where the Diala crosses the Persian frontier. From Samara it would soon be necessary to advance another hundred miles to Mosul. Indeed, there was no natural end, save exhaustion, to the progress which the need of security would impose on us. There was no attainable point where that security could be assured, for between the Tigris valley and the Russian front in Transcaucasia lay the wild mountains of Kurdistan. And all the while our communications would be lengthening out crazily. At Bagdad we should be 573 miles by river from the Gulf, and between 300 and 400 by the shortest land route. We should be hopelessly out of touch with our sea-power. On every ground of strategy and common sense the advance was indefensible.



The Country between Bagdad and Kut-el-Amara.

On the other hand, it was undeniable that the conquest of Bagdad would have great political advantages—if it could be achieved. As we have argued in an earlier chapter, its fall would be a makeweight to the German domination at Constantinople. It would cut at their nodal point the principal routes of German communications with Persia and the Indian frontier. But even this success would not be final. There would remain the great caravan routes of the Northern Shammar desert, which followed the projected line of the Bagdad railway to Mosul, and thence to Rowandiz on the Persian frontier. Full success in our objective really demanded the control of the whole of Northern Mesopotamia. Such a control might have been won, but it required an adequate force—at least two army corps fully equipped, and not one weary division.

The British Prime Minister, in his speech in the House of Commons on 2nd November, defined the objects of the Mesopotamia Expedition as "to secure the neutrality of the Arabs, to safeguard our interests in the Persian Gulf, to protect the oil-fields, and generally to maintain the authority of our Flag in the East." Of these aims the first may be dismissed as trivial. The Arab tribes of Mesopotamia were a much overrated folk, notable rather for low cunning than for military virtues. Their hostility and their friendship alike were worth little. The third we secured when we held Amara and the

desert route to Ahwaz; the second when we won Basra. The fourth was a vague aspiration which did not involve any specific military operations, but which did demand that we should not get ourselves into impossible situations. All the objects defined by Mr. Asquith were, in fact, realized when General Townshend took Kut-el-Amara, and, by holding the northern end of the Shatt-el-Hai, prevented the enemy cutting his communications by a flank march. At Kut the extreme purpose of the original expedition was fulfilled. The advance to Bagdad was a new scheme involving a new policy.

If we remember the situation at the end of September we shall find a possible clue to the reasons for the adventure. The great advance of the Allies in the West had reached its limit without a decision. The Balkan affair had gone from bad to worse, Serbia was about to be isolated, Bulgaria was entering the field on Germany's side, and von Mackensen's guns had begun to sound on the Danube. Our diplomacy, justly or unjustly, had suffered a serious loss of credit. Looking round the globe for something to restore our drooping prestige at the moment, the eyes of soldiers and statesmen naturally fell on Mesopotamia. The expedition there had been up to date a brilliant success. No mistakes had been made. Miracles had been performed with a handful of troops. But the names of Kut-el-Amara and Nasiriyeh were not familiar to Europe. Now Bagdad was known to all the world. If the old city of the Caliphs fell to British arms there would be a resounding success wherewith to balance our failure in the Ægean. Our much-tried diplomacy would have something to point to in its painful negotiations with suspicious neutrals. Therefore let us make a dash for Bagdad, and trust to the standing luck of the British army. It was commonly assumed in Britain at the time that the enterprise was primarily conceived by the politicians, and that we had embarked on a scheme politically valuable without counting the military cost. It was urged that we had forgotten one of Jomini's most pregnant aphorisms: "The choice of political objectives ought to be subordinate to the interests of strategy, at any rate until the great military issues have been decided by arms." But for this most natural assumption there was in fact no warrant. The advance to Bagdad was advocated by the soldiers chiefly concerned, and on the information at our disposal we believed it to be a practicable undertaking. General Townshend was understood to have protested against an advance with such inadequate forces, but Sir John Nixon and the Indian military authorities thought differently.

In October Turkey had in the field as many men as the British Empire. She was fighting nominally in four theatres of war—Transcaucasia, the Egyptian frontier, Gallipoli, and Mesopotamia. Of her four theatres three

were virtually in a state of stagnation. Probably not more than 150,000 men were mobilized along the Russian frontier; there was nothing doing on the Egyptian borders; the enemy in Gallipoli had shot his bolt; and in Mesopotamia alone was there any urgent question of defence. It was therefore open to Turkey, given a little time and some assistance from Germany in the way of supplies, to deploy on the Tigris little short of a quarter of a million men. To meet this possibility Sir John Nixon had his Anglo-Indian division and an extra brigade—all told, perhaps, 15,000 bayonets. One-third of the force were white soldiers, including such regular battalions as the 2nd Dorsets, the 2nd Norfolks, and the 1st Oxford Light Infantry, and territorial battalions of the Hampshires and Sussex. The remainder were Indian troops, including a number of Punjab battalions, the 103rd, 110th, and 117th Mahrattas, the 7th Rajputs, two Gurkha battalions, and four regiments of cavalry. The accompanying flotilla was composed of every conceivable type of boat, from ancient Admiralty sloops to Burma paddle-steamers, the river-boats of the firm of Lynch, motor launches, and the flat-bottomed native punts of the Delta. The whole British force was battle-worn and weary. Large numbers had contracted ailments and diseases, and all were jaded by the incessant struggle of the hot summer. But to cheer them they had a record of unbroken success. Wherever and in whatever numbers they had found the enemy they had soundly beaten him.

In Mesopotamia in October the days are bright and clear and the nights cold. It is the beginning of that bracing and clement winter which in subtropical deserts is the atonement for the arid summer. The normal period of floods was past, and the marshes were drying. It was the best season of the year for an advance, and no time was lost in making a start. After the victory of Kut the flotilla had pursued the enemy up the river, but the multitude of sandbanks made progress slow, and the chase was soon relinquished. Our aeroplanes watched the retreating Turks, and reported that they were falling back in hot haste, and were not halting short of the Ctesiphon line, which was their last defence south of Bagdad. They seem to have moved at the rate of twenty-five miles a day, and, though they shed quantities of ammunition and rifles by the roadside, they got away all the guns which we had not captured on the field of Kut. Reconnoitring parties were sent forward on steamers by General Townshend. In the early days of October the advance began, partly by land and partly by river. On 4th October there were troops already fifty miles up river from Kut, and only sixty by road from Bagdad. By 23rd October the bulk of the British force had reached Azizie, more than halfway to the capital. There had been a few skirmishes with

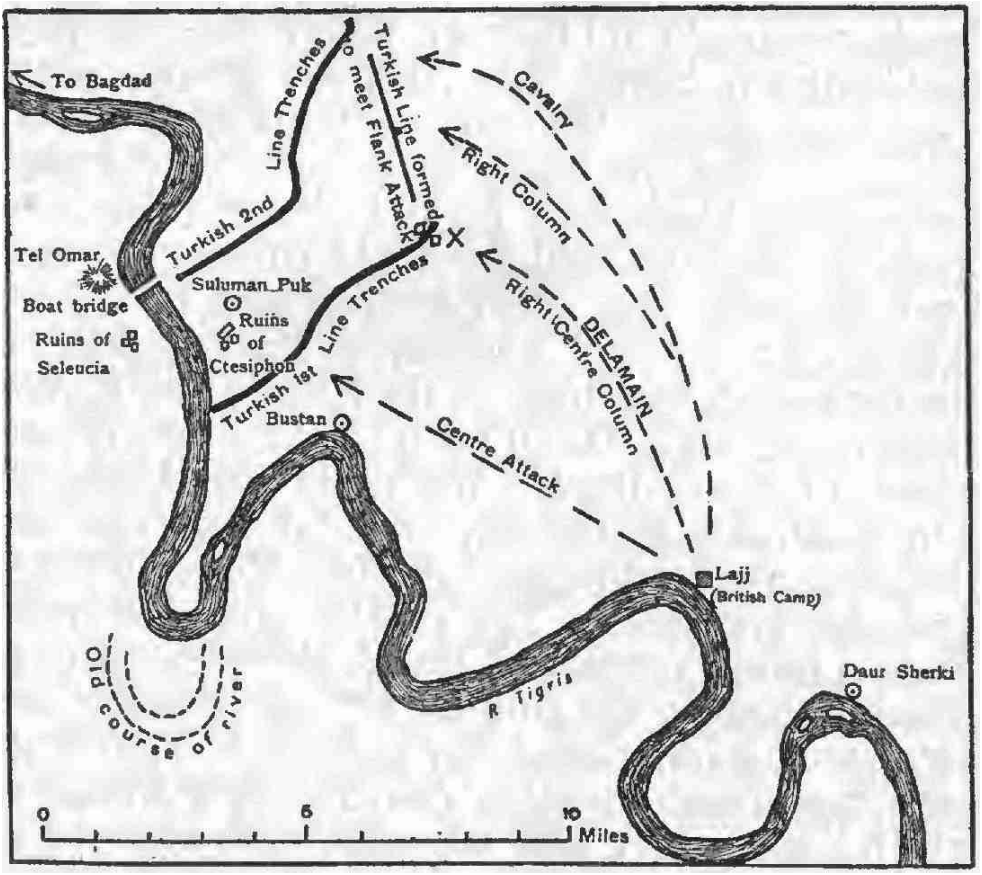
Oct. 4.

Oct. 23.

raiding Arabs, but no serious rearguard fighting. At Azizie, however, we found the Turkish advanced guard in position, and for a few days our progress halted. Then by a flank attack we routed the 3,000 or 4,000 of the enemy, and pushed them back to their main Ctesiphon standing-ground. In the first week of November our movement began again. On the 12th General Townshend was encamped at Lajj, seven miles from Ctesiphon, and about thirty miles from Bagdad. His outposts were almost in touch with the prepared Turkish positions.

Nov. 12.

The map will show the nature of the ground. At Ctesiphon the Euphrates and the Tigris approach within twenty miles of each other. Such a position was obviously well chosen, for the Turks' could bring reinforcements down the Euphrates from Aleppo and the Army of Syria. Had we been in sufficient force to send an expedition up that river, we should have won a double line of communications, and been able to adopt an enveloping strategy. But the enemy was perfectly familiar with our numbers, and knew that of such a movement there was no possible danger. Ctesiphon, the old Sassanid capital, had been the battle-ground of Romans and Parthians, but only the massive brick shell of the "Throne of Chosroes," rising above the squalid Turkish village, remained to tell of its former grandeur. Beyond the river lay the ruins of Seleucia, the old capital of the Seleucidae, for at this point Parthia and Syria had faced each other across the Tigris. The Turkish first position ran from the angle in the Tigris, with a second line about half a mile in the rear. The whole place had been strongly fortified according to the latest German fashion, and the wastes of old débris furnished admirable shelters for machine guns, of the same type as the redoubts on the Western front. The Turkish right wing was beyond the Tigris, but their centre and left, comprising three-fourths of their army, were on the left bank.



Battle of Ctesiphon.

Nov. 21.

On the evening of 21st November General Townshend advanced from Lajj. His force, as at Kut, was divided into three columns. tactical plan was almost the same as that at Kut. One column was to advance against the centre of the first Turkish position. A second column, under Delamain, was to envelop the left of that position; while a third was to make a wide detour, and come in on the left rear of the main Turkish force, and co-operate with Delamain in driving them back towards the river. We may call these columns the Centre, the Right Centre, and the Right. Behind the main Turkish position lay the village of Sulman Puk and the ruins of Ctesiphon. On the right flank of the second Turkish position was a bridge of boats across the Tigris, and it was towards this bridge that our Right Centre and Right columns were directed. The cavalry was sent round to the left of the Turkish reserve trenches in order to hinder any retirement. The scheme was an admirable one, but our

numbers were barely adequate. All told we had, perhaps, 12,000 men. The Turks had the remains of the three divisions which had fought at Kut, little less than 20,000 men, and they had reinforcements at hand.

Nov. 22.

The British troops marched seven miles in the bright moonlight, till they saw before them the ruins of Ctesiphon casting blue shadows on the yellow plain. Before dawn the Centre column had dug itself in in front of the main enemy line, Delamain's Right Centre had done the same on the flank, and the Right column had covered ten miles and taken ground well to the left rear of the enemy. The cavalry had wheeled to the north-east, and hung on the flank of the Turkish reserve trenches. Dawn broke, and the enemy were aware of our advent. We could see bodies of Turks moving northward, and our first idea was that they were relinquishing Ctesiphon and falling back on the Diala. The cavalry and the British Right promptly attacked the flank of the retreat, which formed in line to meet us, and revealed itself as a force several times our strength. The Turks were now drawn up along two sides of a square, of which the northern side was their reserve trenches, the western the Tigris, the southern their main position, and the eastern the force with which our Right and our cavalry were engaged. At the point marked **X** in the map was a group of buildings, forming the junction of the eastern and southern sides.

About a quarter to nine the great attack began. Our Centre moved against the main line, Delamain's Right Centre attacked at **X**, and the Right and the cavalry assaulted the east side. The last, being greatly outnumbered, at first made no progress. Indeed they lost ground, and Delamain was compelled to detach some of his battalions to support them. At eleven he carried **X** by artillery fire, and about half-past one the Centre, with Delamain's assistance, succeeded in piercing the main Turkish front. These successes gave us the first position; but the Turks, assisted by their eastern flank, which defied our Right and our cavalry, were able to retire in good order to their reserve lines. Our success so far had been brilliantly achieved, but there was to be no rout such as had followed the same tactics at Kut. Nur-ed-din had learned his lesson, and the real kernel of the position was the second line.

At half-past two in the afternoon we advanced against the second position. The eastern side of the former square was still intact, and our three columns drew together in an attempt to roll it up. But now we found out the true numbers of the enemy. Another division had joined him, and he counter-attacked with such force that he recovered the guns he had lost, and before evening had driven us back to his old first trenches. Delamain,

however, managed to hold the village of Sulman Puk in advance of these lines. Both sides were utterly wearied, and about 11.30 p.m. the battle died away.

Nov. 23.

Next day we saw fresh reinforcements arriving for the enemy, and all morning the two forces shelled each other. The Turkish attack came at three o'clock in the afternoon, and lasted till long after dark. It was now that they suffered their severest losses. Our men, being well-entrenched, beat them back time and again, but all night long there were intermittent assaults. Next day, the 24th, they fell back to their second line, and that day was filled with bombardments and counter-bombardments. Our force was badly disorganized, so we spent the day in consolidating our ground, and next day we received by river some much-needed supplies. Our aeroplanes reported that reinforcements were still reaching the enemy. Obviously we could now do nothing more. Our casualties were about a third of our force—some 4,500, with 800 killed, and the losses among officers and staff had been specially heavy. We had handled the enemy severely, for the prisoners in our hands were over 1,300, and the killed and wounded we reckoned at some 10,000. But his strength was being replenished, and ours was waning. There was nothing for it but to fall back. We had won his first position and encamped on the battlefield, but we were very far from having broken his army.

Nov. 24.

Nov. 25-26.

At midnight on the 25th we marched back to Lajj. Our wounded went by river, and reached Kut on the 27th. All the 26th we halted at Lajj to rest our men, and that evening we retreated twenty-three miles over a villainous road to Azizie. Four days later, on the 30th, we left Azizie and began to get news of the enemy. Tidings travel fast in the East, and the word of our retirement encouraged the riverine Arabs to make an attempt on our communications between Kut and Amara, an attempt frustrated by a watchful gunboat. Early in the evening of 1st December General Townshend's little army reached camp ten miles below Azizie, where they were much sniped, and where next morning they saw the smoke of the Turkish fires all around them. The slowness of the enemy's pursuit is a proof of how severely he had suffered at Ctesiphon, for, had he been able to follow our trail at once, the whole British force must have perished. We counter-attacked and beat him off, losing only 150 men to the enemy's 2,500, but all that day we fought rearguard actions and marched twenty-seven miles before we dared to halt. We rested for three hours and

Nov. 30.

Dec. 1.

Dec. 2.

then moved on for fifteen miles more. We were now only four miles from Kut, but we could not go a yard further. Both men and beasts were utterly leg-weary. Next morning, 3rd December, the remains of the Bagdad Expedition, which had set out with high hopes six weeks before, staggered into Kut. From north, east, and west the enemy closed in upon us, and the siege of Kut had begun. It had been a brilliant and memorable episode in the history of British arms, but, judged from the standpoint of scientific warfare, it had been no better than a glorious folly. Once again, as in the Nile Campaign, a beleaguered town far up an Eastern river became the centre of the anxious thought of our people.

Dec. 3.

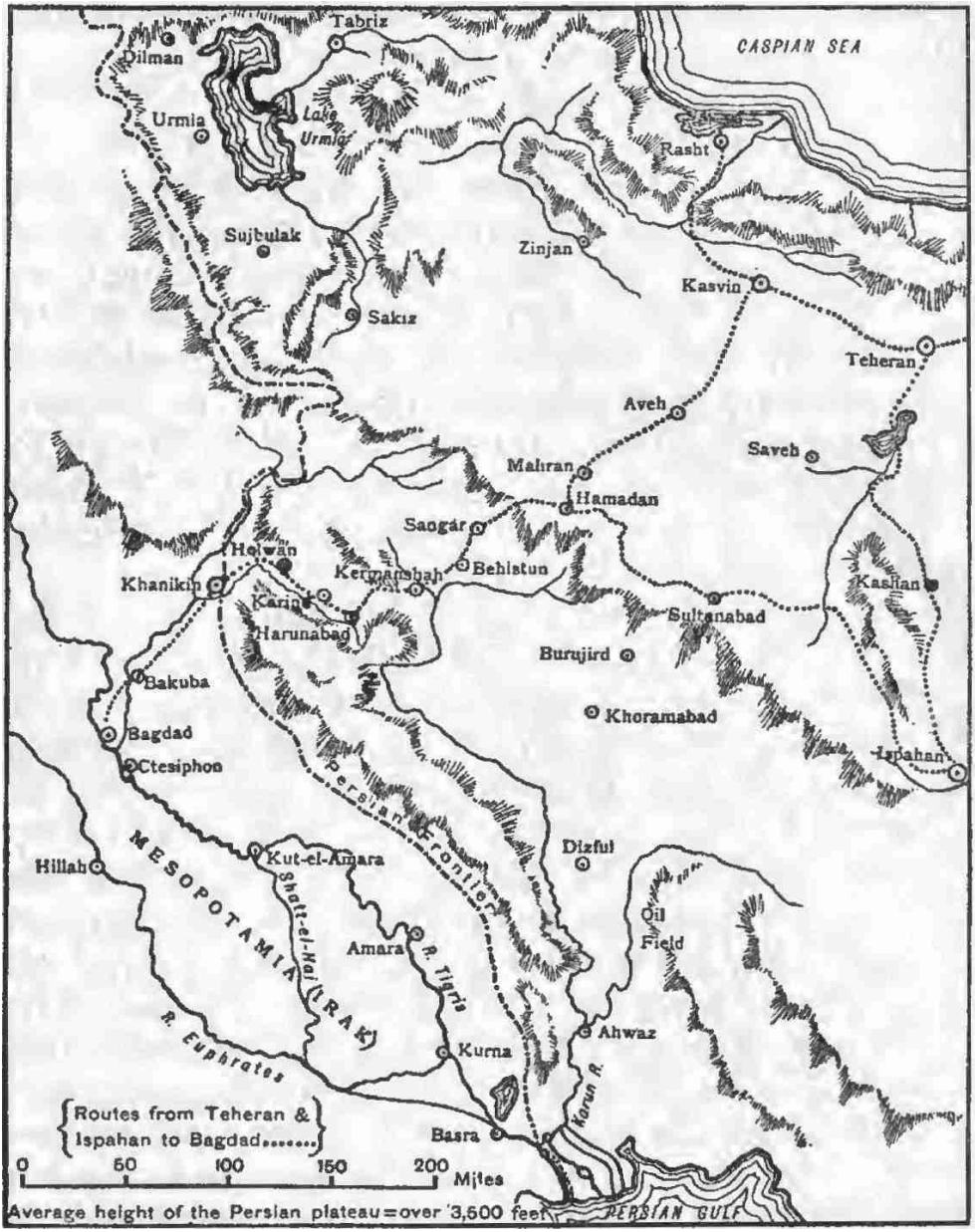
British reserves were on the way. The two Indian divisions, which for a year had been on the Western front, had reached Egypt *en route* for the Persian Gulf. By a wise decision Mesopotamia was selected as the *terrain* for the concentration of our Indian fighting strength. But Turkey was also awake, and her German masters saw in the check at Ctesiphon a chance for a blow which should drive the British from the Delta. The veteran Marshal von der Goltz had been for months in Constantinople, and had prepared the first Turkish armies for the field. He was now sent to take general charge of the Mesopotamia armies, a fitting honour for one who had been the chief military instructor of modern Turkey. On 24th November he was at Aleppo, and at a banquet given in his honour announced that in the appointment of so old a man to so great a command he recognized the hand of God. "I hope that, with God's help, the sympathy of the Ottoman Empire and the friendliness of the whole people will enable me to achieve success, and that I shall be able to expel the enemy from Turkish soil."

Nov. 24.

Meanwhile things were going ill in northern Persia. The German Minister, Prince Reuss XXXI., had won over to his side many of the Persian Ministers, a number of the local tribes, and the 6,000 men of the Gendarmerie, officered by Swedes, which had been established by Russia and Britain to police the country. The standstill of the Russians in the Caucasus and the British retirement from Ctesiphon brought these intrigues to a head. There were numerous local risings, and the British civilians at Yezd and Shiraz were made prisoners. In the capital, Teheran, things presently rose to the pitch of crisis. In the second week of November a detachment of the Russian Army of the Caucasus moved upon that city. The German, Austrian, and Turkish *corps diplomatique* left on 14th November for the village of Shah Abdul Azim, on the Ispahan road, and frantic efforts

were made to induce the Shah to accompany them, and so put himself into German hands. Prince Firman Firma and one or two of his advisers resisted the proposal, and after much wavering the boy-king resolved to remain. It was a difficult decision, for he had no troops to rely on against the Gendarmerie and the Turkish irregulars except the Persian Cossack Brigade, which remained true to its salt.

Nov. 14.



Map of the Scene of the Russian Operations in Persia, showing its relation to the Mesopotamian region.

Prince Reuss now showed his hand. He raised the standard of revolt, and with the 6,000 men of the Gendarmerie, a number of tribesmen, and at least 3,000

Dec. 7.

Turkish irregulars from Mesopotamia—a total strength of some 15,000—endeavoured to hold the key points, which would allow him to keep in touch with his friends on the Tigris. One was Kum, eighty miles south of Teheran, on the Ispahan road, which, being a telegraph junction, tapped all the communications with southern Persia. The other was Hamadan, near the ancient Ecbatana, two hundred miles from Teheran, on the Bagdad road. Prince Reuss divided his forces between these two places, and also held the pass which led to Hamadan from the north. By the end of November the Russians were in Teheran. One detachment marched south towards Kum, but the main force was at Kasvin, moving on Hamadan. On 7th December the rebels were driven out of Aveh, and two days later were routed at the Sultan Bulak Pass and forced back upon Hamadan. On the 11th Hamadan submitted, and on 17th December the Russians were pursuing the enemy through the mountains towards Kermanshah. The rebel strength at Hamadan was estimated at 8,000 irregulars and 3,000 gendarmes, all plentifully supplied with rifles and machine guns. Prince Reuss departed for Kermanshah to take counsel with the emissaries of von der Goltz. On the 20th the Russian left took Saveh and Kum, and put an end to rebel activity in that notorious centre of intrigue. Five days later the Persian Government fell, and Prince Firman Firma, a staunch friend of the Allies, was appointed Premier.

Dec. 11.

Dec. 20.

Dec. 25.

For a moment the air was clear. But all Persia was in a ferment; the rebels who had been driven towards Kermanshah were in touch with the Turkish Army of Mesopotamia, and could call upon reserves which might gravely embarrass the far-flung Russian detachments. Germany had succeeded in one of her purposes. She had kindled a fire in the inflammable Middle East, and she was whistling for a wind to fan it.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

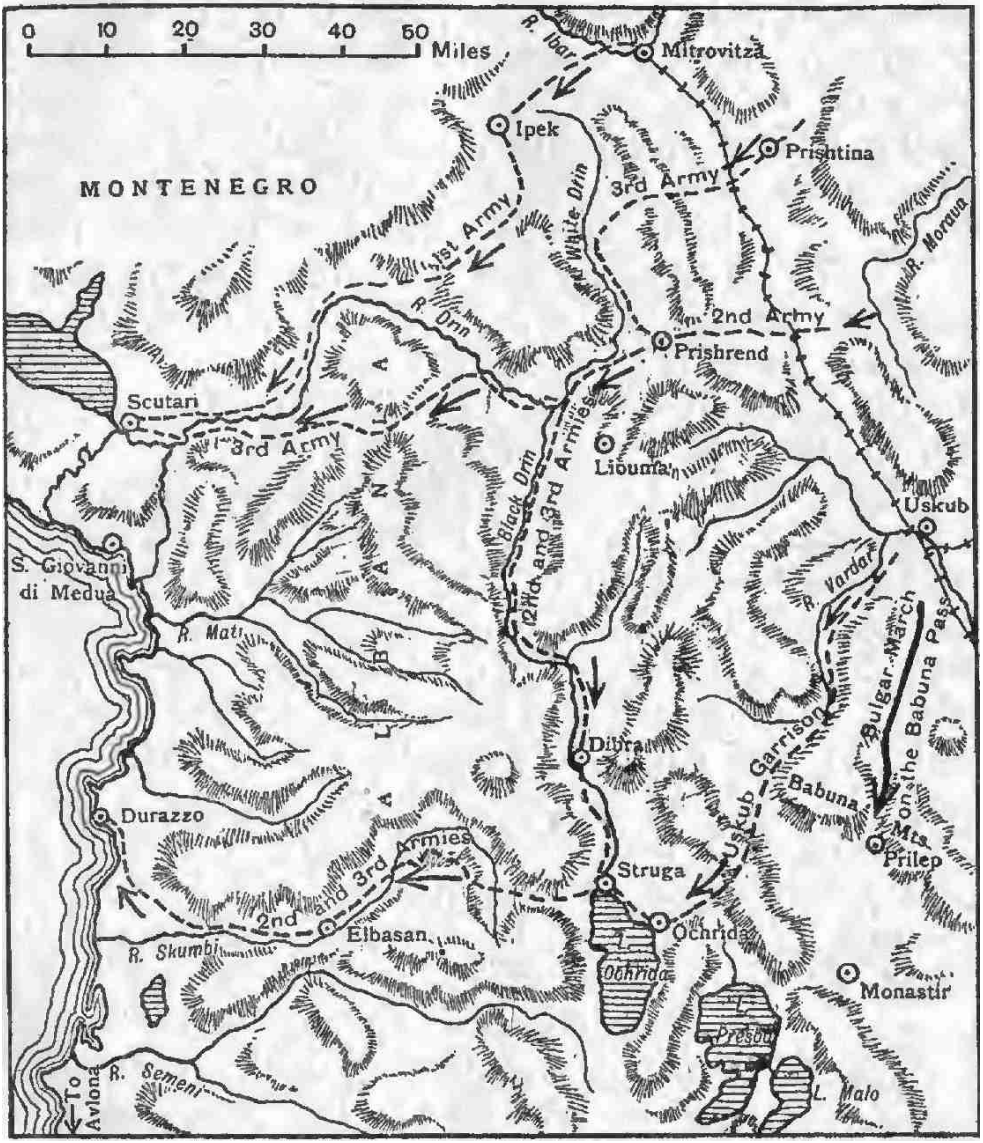
THE SITUATION IN THE ÆGEAN.

The Serbian Retreat—Essad Pasha—The Work of Italy—King Peter's Journey—Monastir entered—Sarrail's Retreat from Kavadar—British Retreat from Lake Doiran—Work of the 10th Division—Allies reach Salonika Zone—The Conduct of Greece—Decision to hold Salonika—Nature of the Adjacent Country—The Allied Lines—The Christmas Air Attack—Arrest of Enemy Consuls—The Overrunning of Montenegro—Fall of Mount Lovtchen—Behaviour of King Nicholas—Austrians enter Scutari—French occupy Island of Castelloriza—German Division in Constantinople—Meeting of Kaiser and King Ferdinand—The Situation in Egypt—Chances of Invasion—The Western Frontier—The Senussi—Withdrawal of Frontier Posts to Matruh—Fighting on the Libyan Plateau.

By the middle of November fighting had ceased through Serbia, save in the far south, where the Allied contingent was holding the gorge of the Vardar. The Serbian remnant was straining westward by every hill road which led to Montenegro and Albania. The tale of that strange migration is confused, as all such tales must be, for it was not only the retreat of an army but the flight of a people. The weaker and poorer fugitives were left behind in the foothills; but many women and children struggled on, cumbering the infrequent roads and suffering untold privations, till they reached the shores of the Adriatic. The campaign had already shown great national dispersions—the evacuation of Belgium, the move of the Russian Poles eastward; and it had shown the retirement of mighty armies—from the Meuse to the Marne, from the Vistula to the Dvina. But no army in retreat and no people in flight had ever sought a city of refuge through so inhospitable a desert. The stony ridges of the Coastal Mountains were already deep in snow. The few roads were tracks which led over high passes and through narrow gorges beside flooded torrents. The Albanian tribes were eager to profit from the misery of the fugitives. If they sold food it was at a famine price, and they lay in wait, like the Spanish guerillas in the Peninsula, to cut off stragglers. At the end of the journey was a barren sea-coast with few harbours, and between it and Italy lay the Adriatic, sown with enemy mines and searched by enemy submarines.

The main lines of the retreat are clear. Mishitch's 1st Army and the detachment which had held Belgrade retreated by the upper glens of the Ibar to the little plain of Ipek, which is tucked away among the Montenegrin hills. Thence they made their way through the land of the Black Mountain to Scutari. Yourashitch's 3rd Army fell back upon Prishtina, whence they moved to Prisrend on the Albanian border. They then tramped down the White Drin to its junction with the Black, and while a portion followed the river to Scutari, the majority went south by the Black Drin to Dibra, and made their way by Struga to Elbasan, and so to Durazzo. Stepanovitch's 2nd Army followed much the same course, concentrating on Prisrend; and the Uskub garrison, after it had been driven from the Babuna Pass, moved straight by way of Ochrida upon Elbasan. The peculiar difficulty of the retreat for the southern armies lay in the fact that the Bulgarians, after the success at Katchanik and Babuna, had cut the route from Prisrend southward, and so forced the Serbians, in order to reach Elbasan, to make the journey on Albanian soil among the wild ravines of the Black Drin.

Few of the guns got away. Many reached Ipek, where they were destroyed and abandoned, since the paths west of Prisrend were only for foot travellers lightly burdened. Every hour of the retirement was a nightmare. The hill roads were strewn with fainting and starving men, and the gorges of the two Drins found their solitude disturbed by other sounds than the angry rivers. Happily the conditions which made the retreat so hard imposed discretion upon the pursuit. The German armies took no part in the chase. They were busy repairing the Orient railway, and getting ready to enter the country of their new allies. But the Bulgarians pressed the pursuit hard, and, had the land been more practicable, and had they occupied Struga and Elbasan, they might have cut off at least one-half of the Serbian force. But the time was too short, and the Serbians were well on the way to Durazzo before the Bulgarian advanced guards had entered Albania.



The Retreat of the Serbian Army.

One other piece of good fortune attended the retreat. Essad Pasha, who after many vicissitudes had made for himself a little Albanian kingdom after the flight of the ill-fated Prince of Wied, declared himself on the side of the Allies. He expelled all Austrian and Bulgarian subjects from the territories under his control, and gave to the Teutonic agents who appeared in December to stir up the northern tribes a taste of Albanian justice. He did his best to welcome the

Dec. 21.

fugitives, and loyally assisted the efforts of the British, French, and Italian missions to prepare for their reception. These efforts were made in the face of immense difficulties. Food was sent by Britain and France, and Italy provided the shipping. It was necessary to bring the Serbian remnant to Durazzo, and for this purpose jetties had to be built, rivers and marshes had to be bridged, and roads had to be repaired and constructed. Italian troops arrived at Durazzo from Avlona on 21st December, to provide a rallying point. In one way and another nearly 130,000 men of the Serbian army were brought to the coast in safety. The civilian refugees went for the most part to Southern Italy.

Jan. 1, 1916.

King Peter himself had a journey of strange vicissitudes. He reached Prisrend with his troops, and then pressed on to Liuma, across the Albanian border. Thence he set out incognito, accompanied by three officers and four soldiers, and journeyed on muleback and horseback through the hills held by the Albanian Catholic tribes. After four days he reached Scutari, where he rested for a fortnight, and then continued along the coast by San Giovanni di Medua, Alessio, and Durazzo to Avlona. He crossed to Brindisi, and remained there six days unrecognized. Then he took ship to Salonika, and arrived there on New Year's Day, crippled with rheumatism and all but blind, but undefeated in spirit. If his country was for the moment lost, he had sought the nearest camp of its future deliverers. "I believe in the liberty of Serbia," he said, "as I believe in God. It was the dream of my youth. It was for that I fought throughout manhood. It has become the faith of the twilight of my life. I live only to see Serbia free. I pray that God may let me live until the day of redemption of my people. On that day I am ready to die, if the Lord wills. I have struggled a great deal in my life, and am tired, bruised, and broken from it; but I will see—I shall see—this triumph. I shall not die before the victory of my country."

Nov. 16.

The chronicle of the war is now concerned only with the southern border of Serbia and the fifty miles of Greek territory between it and the port of Salonika. On 16th November Vassitch and the remnant of the Uskub garrison which had held the Babuna Pass retired on Prilep. Teodorov's forces at first moved slowly, but on 2nd December Vassitch was forced back on Monastir, and evacuated that town on 5th December. To begin with, Monastir was administered by German officers, in order to avoid rousing the jealousy of Greece; but in a few days the farce was dropped, and it was handed over to the Bulgarians.

The position of Teodorov's armies made it dangerous for Sarrail to remain longer in the camp of Kavadar, and compelled him to begin his retirement to the Greek frontier. As early as 27th November the troops holding bridgehead at Vozarci, on the left bank of the Tcherna, were withdrawn to the right bank. On the 2nd of December, while a detachment feinted eastward from Kara Hodjali, the French drew in their lines from the Tcherna to the railway, and began their retirement. The passage of the Demir Kapu ravine was not attained without hard fighting. The railway and bridges were destroyed behind them, and by 10th December the French were clear of the gorge and in position along the little river Bojimia, which enters the Vardar from the east. On their right lay the British 10th Division, which had been protecting the right rear of the advance to Kavadar.

Nov. 27.

Meantime the British had been seriously engaged. They held the ground among the hills west and south of Lake Doiran, with their right crossing the railway which runs from Salonika by Dedeagatch to Adrianople. Teodorov struck at them with his left wing, which contained the equivalent of two army corps. On 6th December the British were driven out of their first trenches, and the weight of the enemy made retreat imperative. Next morning the attack was repeated, and slowly, at the rate of about two miles a day, they were pressed back from Lake Doiran towards the Vardar valley. We exacted a heavy penalty from the attack, and lost ourselves some 1,300 men, as well as eight guns, which in that rugged country could not be moved in time. The Irish battalions of the New Army showed fine stamina in rearguard fighting, and the Connaught Rangers, the Munster Fusiliers, the Dublin Fusiliers, and the Inniskillings added to the regimental laurels which their other battalions had won at Gallipoli and in the West. The Allies were now disposed from the mouth of the Bojimia south-eastward towards the village of Doiran. On the 4th the Bulgarians drove hard against their centre at Furka, but were beaten off with the loss of several thousands.

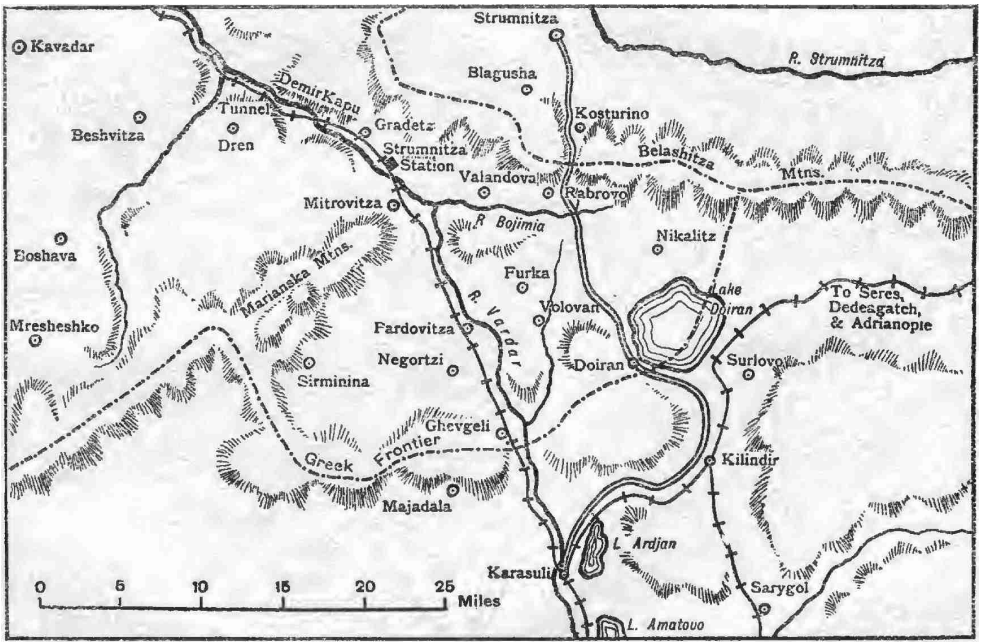
Dec. 6.

There was little time to waste if Sarrail was to avoid having his flanks turned. By 12th December the French under Bailloud and the British under Mahon had crossed the Greek frontier. The fourteen miles of the retreat had been completed methodically; transport and stores were got clean away, and no foodstuffs remained in the countryside for the enemy. Railways and roads were wrecked, and the frontier village of Ghevgeli was left in flames. Such a retreat, with casualties which scarcely exceeded 3,000, was an achievement of which any commander might well be proud. Sarrail had ventured his

Dec. 12.

force into as ugly a strategic country as could be conceived. That he was able to withdraw it intact spoke volumes for the skill of his generalship and the resolution of his men.

The Allies were now in position about thirty miles from the port, on a line running from Karasuli, on the Vardar and on the Nish railway, to Kilindir, on the Salonika-Dedeagatch railway. A branch railway connected the two points, and gave the Allies lateral communication. It was a strong position, since it covered the main routes to Salonika, and could be reinforced at will. There were now in this theatre eight Allied divisions—three French, and the 10th, 22nd, 26th, 27th, and 28th British. Any Bulgarian invasion could be held long enough to provide for the creation of a new Torres Vedras based on the sea.



The Positions on the Serbo-Greek Border (Ghevgeli, Lake Doiran, etc.).

Nov. 23.

The retreat from Kavadar brought to a head the unsettled problems between Greece and the Allies. M. Skouloudis had succeeded M. Zaimis as Premier, and it was his opinion that any Allied troops which were driven across the Greek frontier must be disarmed and interned. On 23rd November France and Britain presented a Note to Greece, asking for assurances that this should not happen, and guaranteeing that all occupied territory would be restored and an indemnity

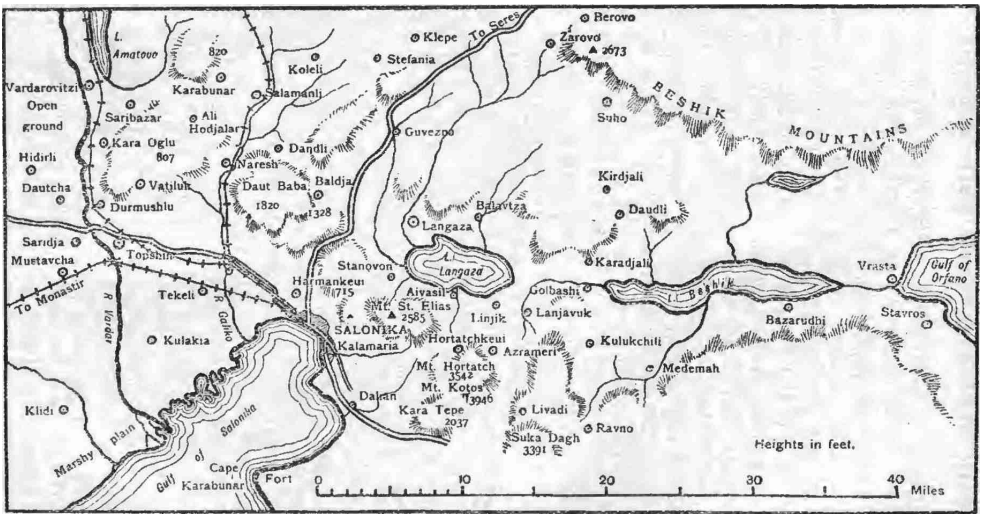
paid for the use of it. The first Greek reply was vague, and a second Note on the 26th reiterated the demand. Meantime the Allies acted without waiting for an answer, and when the reply came, a fortnight later, it was a friendly compliance. Most of the Greek troops were removed from Salonika, and the whole "zone of manœuvre," together with the roads and railways, was handed over to the Allies. Undoubtedly it was not an easy position for Greece, if she sought a correct neutrality, but it was the inevitable consequence of her acquiescence in the Allied landing. The Bulgarians waited on the frontier, but for the moment did not cross. Greece had announced with a certain voice that she would not permit her ancestral rivals to tread her soil; and caution was enjoined on Bulgaria by Germany, who did not want at the moment to have a belligerent Greece on her hands.

The Allied statesmen had decided that Salonika should not be relinquished. Though the purpose for which its occupation had been designed had failed, there were insurmountable objections against letting it fall into German hands. It would provide a formidable submarine base in the Eastern Mediterranean. It would give Austria that Ægean port to which her tortuous policy had so long been directed. Accordingly preparations were made at once to defend it, as Verdun had been defended, by far-stretched lines.

Salonika was, after Athens and Constantinople, the most famous city of the Near East. It had been the chief port of the kings of Macedon, and in its vicinity the fate of the Old World had been decided when Antony and Octavian defeated the murderers of Julius. Under the early emperors it was a free city, and the emporium of all the country between the Adriatic and the Marmora—the halfway house between Rome and Byzantium. It had seen many vicissitudes—the massacres by Theodosius, for which he did penance in Milan Cathedral; the sack by Berber pirates in the days of Leo the Wise; the capture by the Normans, with the short-lived rule of Boniface of Montferrat; the Turkish conquest under Murad the First; Venetian rule; the second Turkish dominion, which was destined to endure for centuries; the arrival of the Jews of the Sephardim from Spain, which was the key to its modern history; the inception of the Young Turk movement; the conquest by the Greeks in the Balkan War, and the murder in its streets of the Greek king.

In fortifying such a base it was necessary to find suitable points on the sea to form the flanks of the lines. Salonika lies at the head of the long gulf of the name, and, to prevent a turning movement of the enemy, a large tract of country had to be brought into the defended zone. West of the city is a

swampy level extending to the mouth of the unfordable Vardar. Due north is a treeless plain rising to a range of hills, which are continued up the Vardar valley, but farther east sink into flats, where lie the two large lakes Langaza and Beshik. The trough which holds the lakes is continued in a wooded valley to the Gulf of Orphani. The country between the Vardar delta and the gulf was an admirable position for defence. At the Vardar end the deep and wide river with its salt marshes constituted a formidable barrier to envelopment, and any attack from Orphani was made difficult by the mouth of the Struma and the long Tahiros lake. Further, at Seres, at the north end of that lake, a portion of the Greek garrison of Salonika lay, thereby providing an awkward diplomatic obstacle to any Bulgarian attack. No narrower zone could give security. It was necessary to draw the Allied lines from the Vardar to the Gulf of Orphani, a distance of over sixty miles. Such a position included not only the immediate neighbourhood of the port, but the whole three-pronged peninsula of Chalcidice.



The Salonika Position.

The preparation of the lines and the communications behind them was pushed on with surprising speed. The now considerable numbers of the Allied troops, and the hosts of refugees which poured ceaselessly into the city, made labour plentiful. The French held the western section from the Vardar mouth to east of the Dedeagatch railway. The coast part of their line did not need to be defended by entrenchments; indeed, in the marshes trenches could not have been dug. The true defence lay in artillery fire. The lines bent back from the Vardar some ten miles above its mouth, and crossed

the plain to the low ridges along the Dedeagatch railway. Here the position was very strong. The field of fire was perfect, and immense barbed wire entanglements cloaked all the possible points of attack. The British section included several parallel ridges of hills, and then the long trough of the lakes, which acted as a natural bulwark. A correspondent described the position: "Our trenches guard the northern slopes of one of the lines of hill that rib the plain. Our principal trenches lie deep and well-sandbagged, and from the front they are invisible. Three hundred yards after you have passed them and look back there is nothing but the blue smoke of camp fires behind them, mingling with the mists that rise from the clayey soil, to mark the lines on which they lie. Farther on, across the brown flats that stretch in unbroken treeless monotony to where the next hill ridge rises six or seven miles away, there are more earthworks, outworks, and advanced posts, covering possible lines of approach along the folds of the ground, with machine guns and trenches buried so flush with the surface that even the sun cannot find enough disturbance in the earth to cast a shadow. It is a most shelterless plain; but its very flatness and absence of cover make it a stout stronghold."

Dec. 30.

By Christmas Day the defence of Salonika was virtually complete. At the nearest point the lines ran ten miles from the city, following the analogy of Verdun, Dvinsk, and Riga. General de Castelnau, now chief of the French General Staff, visited the place on 20th December, and approved the plan. The 30th of December saw the first act of war. At ten o'clock in the morning enemy airplanes appeared, and dropped several bombs, one of which fell close to a Greek general who was parading a body of troops. Little damage was done, but the French airplanes which went up in pursuit failed to catch the invaders. That afternoon General Sarrail put into effect the scheme he had decided on in case of such an event. Salonika was a nest of spies, and the polyglot mob in the poorer quarters of the city offered dangerous material for the agitator to work upon. Accordingly, quietly and methodically, the German, Austrian, Bulgarian, and Turkish Consuls and Vice-Consuls, with their staffs and families, were gathered in, and taken on board a French warship. Search at the various consulates revealed ample warrant for this drastic step. The Austrian Consulate in especial was an arsenal of rifles and ammunition, stored for some sinister purpose. The measure was wholly correct and judicious. Military necessities were urgent. The enemy had boasted that Salonika would be his by 15th January, and it behoved General Sarrail to see that he had no foes in his own household.

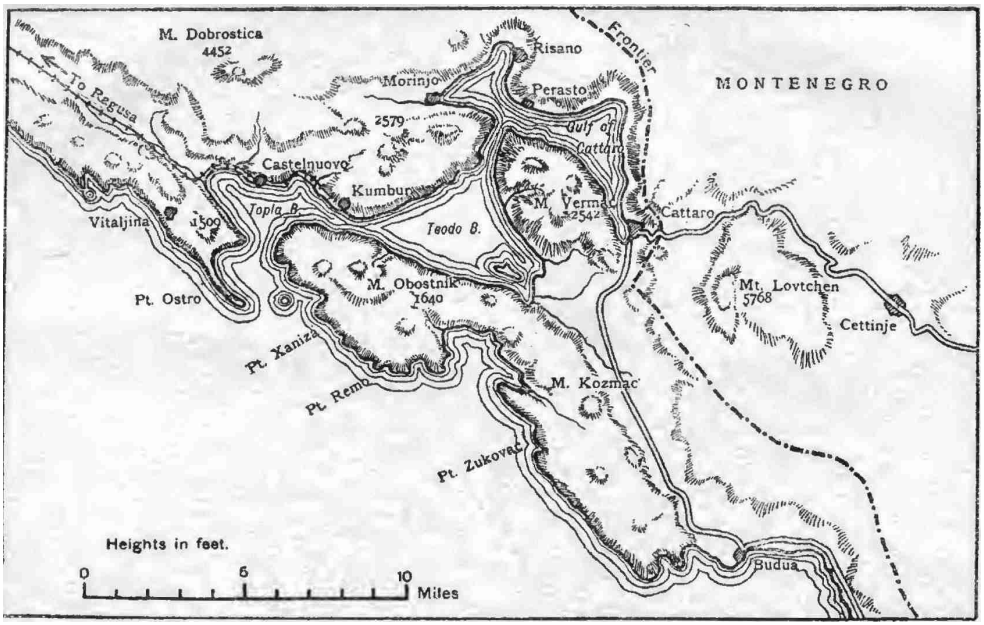
The scene now changes to the shores of the Adriatic. Early in December Italy had landed the better part of two divisions at Avlona, and, as we have seen, had pushed forward troops to Durazzo. Serbia having fallen, it remained for Austria to overrun the little kingdom of Montenegro, the last of the Balkan Allies which still held the field. For this purpose she had her armies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the troops which had taken Ushitza and were now on the eastern Montenegrin border, and the support of the Bulgarians on the Albanian frontier. By the end of the year the plain of Ipek was in her hands, and the towns of Plevlie and Bielopolie, and she was advancing up the Tara and the Lim, the upper streams of the Drina. More important, Mount Lovtchen, the fortified height up which the road to Cettinje climbs from the fiord of Cattaro, was being resolutely bombarded by warships in the gulf. If Lovtchen fell Cettinje must follow, and with the enemy pressing in from the east the days of the little kingdom were numbered. The Montenegrin fortification of Lovtchen was old and rudimentary, and there was much speculation at the time why Italy, whose immediate business it was, did not take steps while there was yet time to secure this vital position. The explanation seems to have been that she had her hands full with providing for the Serbian retreat on the Albanian coast, and that the activity of Austrian submarines made the transport of troops and stores so difficult that the task was beyond her. The fortification of Lovtchen should have been done six months before. It was another case where in Balkan matters the foresight of the Allies was to seek.

Jan. 10, 1916.

Lovtchen fell on 10th January to an infantry attack supported by ships' fire. It had been held by a few thousand men, lamentably short of food, guns, and munitions. Three days later the Austrians entered Cettinje. Then followed a curious comedy. Berlin and Vienna announced with great jubilation the unconditional surrender of Montenegro. Silence followed, and it was assumed that King Nicholas, making the best of a bad business, had come to terms with the conqueror. But gradually it came out that there had been no surrender. The Montenegrin army was retreating towards Podgoritza and Scutari; King Nicholas was on his way to France; the Black Mountain had fallen, but with its flag flying. It is idle as yet to seek for an explanation. King Nicholas may have treated with the enemy, and then broken off negotiations, either because he could not carry his army and people with him, or because he was indignant at the harshness of the Austrian terms. In any case his principality was gone. On 23rd January the enemy occupied Scutari; on the 25th, San Giovanni di Medua, and moved south against the Italian lines at Durazzo. The Teutonic League had

Jan. 23.

secured a third little country to add to its trophies, and rouse the enthusiasm of those of its subjects who measured success in geographical terms.



The Bocche di Cattaro, Mount Lovtchen, and the Road to Cettinje.

Dec. 29.

Elsewhere in the Near East there was little to record. The most significant event, the offensive of Ivanov in the Bukovina, belongs to another chapter. On three occasions the Bulgarian port of Varna was bombarded by Russian warships. On 29th December the French occupied the island of Castelloriza, in the Dodekanese group, east of Rhodes, which might be useful as a base for operations against Adalia. Greece protested, but with little reason, for since the Tripoli war the group had been nominally occupied by Italy. Meantime, to guard against possible danger from Rumania and Russia, the main Austro-German forces had entered Bulgaria, and were watching the Danube line and preparing to resist any landing on the Black Sea coast. Germany was making haste to reap the fruits of her conquest. The Belgrade bridge and the Ottoman railway were being repaired, special rolling-stock was being sent out for the Constantinople journey, and time-tables were prepared for the through route from Berlin to Bagdad. If these doings seemed to argue a complete confidence in the future, there were others which betokened some uneasiness as to Turkey's position. Undoubtedly there was a growing hostility among the Ottoman people to the new *régime*. Turkish and German

soldiers came often to blows, and Enver remained in power solely by terror. Secret murder became the order of the day, and the fame of Abdul Hamid in this respect was wholly eclipsed. At the end of the year it was believed that two divisions of German troops were in Constantinople, and, since the Egyptian expedition was hanging fire and was none too favourably regarded by von Falkenhayn, their presence could only have a political explanation.

Jan. 18, 1916.

The Kaiser himself visited Bulgaria in the beginning of the year. At Nish on 18th January he hailed his ally as an illustrious War Lord, and praised "the sublime leaves of glory" which he had added to Bulgarian history. The grateful Ferdinand returned the compliment in doubtful Latin, greeting his guest as "imperator gloriosus," the redeemer of a stricken people. It was a strange piece of mock-heroic. Times had changed since, two years earlier, one of the official spokesmen of Prussianism had contemptuously dismissed the monarch of Bulgaria as a "hedge-king." The Kaiser declared that he could expect no greater honour than to be honorary colonel of a Bulgarian regiment. It was the language of courtesy, but it had an ironical truth. Megalomania makes strange bed-fellows, and the tragedy-king, *grandiosus et gloriosus*, was reduced to hobnob with Pantaloon.

The situation in Egypt, since that day a year before when a British Protectorate had been proclaimed and Sultan Hussein placed on the throne of the deposed Khedive, had been one of internal tranquillity. Great masses of British troops had been under training, a Turkish force had reached the banks of the Suez Canal, and later the place had been the base for the Gallipoli operations; but these military doings had small effect on the serenity of the land. Nationalism, in the old bad sense, was quiescent. Its leaders were either in detention camps or in exile, and the attempts on the life of the Sultan and one of his Ministers were the only flickering of what Germany had hoped would be a consuming fire. The secret of this tranquillity is not to be sought only in the firm hand of the British Military Governor, but rather in the very real economic prosperity of the country. Egypt was in the rare position of being untouched, so far as her pockets were concerned, by the world war. The presence of great armies brought money into the country, and provided an inexhaustible market for local produce. Her crops were good; even her cotton crop, which at one moment gave cause for disquiet, belied her fears. The peasant farmer of the Nile valley might owe a shadowy allegiance to the Khalif, but he was first and foremost a man who had to get his living. Lord Cromer had long before

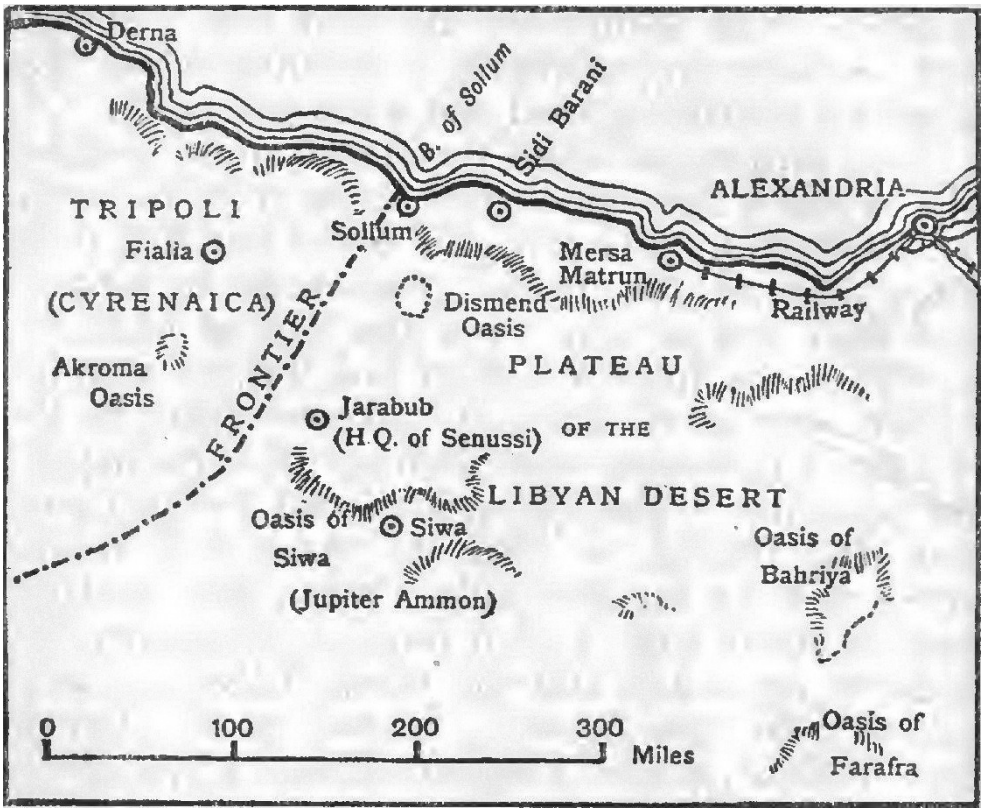
discovered that the centre of gravity was economic, and that political stability would be assured if among the labouring masses there was a modest security and comfort.

By the end of the year the German threats of invasion were very generally discounted. The so-called "Army of Egypt" was watching the Bulgarian frontier; and its former commander, von Mackensen, was at grips with Ivanov on the Dniester. Had Turkey been in earnest, preparations for the great assault should have been begun in early December. But in spite of rumours of pipe lines and light railways being built westward from Beersheba, it was clear that no serious effort was being made to prepare the ramshackle Syrian railways for the transport of a great army. The invasion could only succeed if it were conducted on a colossal scale with the most elaborate preliminaries, and these neither Djemal at Damascus nor Enver at Constantinople had seriously envisaged. Part of the Syrian army had gone to reinforce Bagdad; part, it was clear, might soon be called for in Transcaucasia. The Turkish aims were distracted; and Germany, having locked up eight Allied divisions at Salonika, showed some disposition to rest on these laurels. The *Drang nach Osten* had not had the popular success which its promoters expected.

But it behoved the Allies to be ready for all emergencies. Their position in the Eastern Mediterranean was roughly that of an army holding interior lines, and, with the command of the sea, their communications were simple. From a proper base they could reinforce Salonika and Gallipoli at will. That base must clearly be Egypt, which had the further advantage that it was the most convenient base for the Mesopotamia campaign. Accordingly the defence of the Nile valley could be combined with the provision of a base for all the other activities in the Near East. Egypt, said one of the characters in Mr. Kipling's stories, was "an eligible central position for the next row." Britain was fortunate in controlling a territory which was at once a training-ground and a starting-point.

The only cloud which threatened immediately—and it was a very small one—came from the west. The western frontier of Egypt, seven hundred miles long, adjoined the Italian possessions in Tripoli, and Italy was an ally. But the writ of Italy ran feebly in the interior. After the Tripoli war the Italian suzerainty, formally acknowledged in the Treaty of Lausanne, was not made effective beyond the coast line. Turkish regulars and Turkish guns remained behind to help the Arab and Berber tribes to resist the alien rule. When Italy declared war on Austria the Italian force of occupation fell back to the coast, and the inland tribesmen were left to their own devices. Stirred

up by German and Turkish agents, these tribesmen prepared for action. They hoped to gather to their standard the Bedouins of the Libyan plateau, and to win the support of the great Senussi brotherhood. The Senussi form one of those strange religious fraternities common in North Africa. Their founder had been a firm friend of Britain, and had resisted all overtures from the Mahdi. He had preached a spiritual doctrine which Islam for the most part regarded as heterodox, and his followers were outside the main currents of the Moslem world. In especial they were untainted with Pan-Islamism, and had held themselves aloof from politics. Their headquarters were the oases of the North Libyan desert, and they had no fault to find with British rule in Egypt. Their Grand Sheikh, Ahmed Sherif, had given assurance of friendliness to the Anglo-Egyptian authorities, and his official representatives lived on the Nile banks in cordial relations with the Government. But a mass of tribesmen called themselves Senussi who were only loosely attached to the main organization; and there was the danger that these, whatever the attitude of the Grand Sheikh, might join hands with the Tripolitan Berbers and the less reputable of the Bedouins in an assault from the west, which would disarrange our military plans.



The Western Frontier of Egypt.

It was only at the north end that the Tripoli frontier had to be guarded. South lay the endless impassable wastes of the Libyan desert. But along the coast ran the Libyan plateau, with many little oases linked up by caravan tracks. A railway runs from Alexandria as far as Mersa Matruh, a port on the coast, and beyond that were Egyptian forts at Sidi Barani and at Sollum close to the Italian border. When trouble began to threaten, the posts at Sollum and Sidi Barani were drawn in, and Matruh was held in some strength. With the railway behind it and the sea at its doors it was amply equipped to defend the marches.

Dec. 13.

The first hostilities began on 13th December, when 1,300 Arabs were driven back with heavy losses. Towards the end of the month a force of 3,000 gathered on the outskirts of Matruh. A British force, consisting of part of a new New Zealand Brigade then training in Egypt, the 15th Sikhs, and detachments of the Australian Light Horse and British Yeomanry, went out against this, the first invasion of Egypt from the west since the Fatimites in the tenth century. The enemy

was located in a donga some eight miles from Matruh, and was completely routed by the British infantry with a loss of over 500 killed and prisoners. Our own casualties were inconsiderable. The mounted troops swept up most of the transport and supplies of the raiders.

Jan. 13, 1916.

The invasion was handicapped from the start. It had no sea bases by which to receive reinforcements from Turkey, and it was confined by the nature of the land to certain well-marked routes. There was another attempt on 13th January, and the tribesmen after their fashion still hung around our camp. On 23rd January our forces, under General Wallace, now increased by part of General Lukin's South African Brigade, marched out in two columns, fell on the tents of the enemy, now 4,500 strong, and drove them westward in utter rout, with losses of over 600. After this the attack languished. The eastern and western tribesmen took to quarrelling, refugees came in in starving mobs, and the tribes on the Egyptian side, notably the Walad Ali, petitioned the British Government and the Grand Sheikh of the Senussi for protection against their former allies. The affair soon degenerated into little more than frontier brigandage. If Germany hoped to make of the Arabs and Bedouins of the Tripoli hinterland, a fanatical horde which should sweep to the gates of Cairo, she had wholly misjudged their temper. To build up armies from such material was like an attempt to make ropes of desert sand.

Meanwhile, as this skirmishing proceeded, the troops in Egypt received a sudden accession. By one of the miracles of the war the forces in Gallipoli had been safely withdrawn from the peninsula, and with scarcely a casualty the wildest adventure of the campaign had come to a fortunate close.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

THE EVACUATION OF GALLIPOLI.

Autumn Fighting at Gallipoli—A Great Storm—Casualties up to 11th December—Evacuation decided upon—Difficulties of the Decision—The General Plan—The Final Days at Suvla and Anzac—All Troops embarked—The Great Bonfires—The Succeeding Gale—Special Difficulties at Helles—The Covering Attack of 19th December—Fighting on 7th January—The Evacuation—A Storm rises—Total Casualties—Nature of the Achievement—General Monro's Order—An Exploit without Parallel—The "Sporting Chance" in War.

Nov. 15.

While the Serbian army were in retreat to the Adriatic and the Allies at Salonika were slowly falling back to the coast zone, the campaign at Gallipoli languished. Neither side had any inducement to a great attack. The Allies had shot their bolt and failed; the Turks were still awaiting the new munitionment which Germany's success in the Balkans had ensured to them. There were minor affairs on both sides which came to nothing, such as the attack on 15th November by the 156th Brigade of the 52nd (Scottish Lowland) Division—4th and 7th Royal Scots, 7th and 8th Scottish Rifles, and Ayrshire Yeomanry—which captured nearly 300 yards of front-line trench at the Krithia nullah. As November wore on it became apparent that the Turks were getting bigger guns and an ampler supply of shells. New roads were being made, as we learned from prisoners, to facilitate the progress of the Krupp and Skoda monsters, and the six-inch batteries on the Asiatic shore became unpleasantly industrious in the bombardment of the Helles beaches. It must be remembered that the Turkish possession of the high ground forming the spine of the peninsula gave excellent observation posts, and in the circumstances it was a miracle that their artillery did so little damage. But any increase in their batteries could not but be viewed by the Allied command with grave disquiet.

Nov. 27.

The weather of late autumn was mild and equable, but towards the end of November our men had a taste an Ægean winter storm. On the 27th it rained without ceasing for twelve hours. The trenches became canals, the dug-outs cisterns, and every

nullah held a raging torrent. Next day the wind shifted to the north, and there was a spell of bitter frost. This was followed by a snow blizzard, which recalled the worst days of the Crimea. "Frozen, buffeted by wind and sleet, with hardly a possibility of motion to keep the circulation alive, the men endured agonies. Sentries watching through the loopholes in the parapets were found dead at their posts when their turn came to be relieved, frozen solid, their stiff fingers still clutching the rifle in an iron-fast grip, the blackened face still leaning under its sackcloth curtain against the loophole." This weather bore especially hard on the Australian Corps, many of whom had never seen snow before, and who longed now for the dust and stifling heat of the August battles. The force of the storm was felt chiefly at Suvla, where there were over 200 deaths from exposure. Over 10,000 sick were evacuated in the succeeding week as a further consequence.

Dec. 11.

The gale lasted three days, and was followed by a spell of mild weather which gave us leisure to repair the damage. But the experience was ominous; the Dardanelles winter had scarcely begun, and the worst storms might be looked for in the first months of the new year. Our troops were dependent for every necessary of life and war on seaborne supplies, and it became a question how our ships could keep the water if the gales were frequent. Without the aid of the warships we had no real answer to the Turkish bombardment, and without the transports and cargo-boats we should certainly starve. The publication of the Gallipoli casualties up to 11th December enabled the world to judge of the cost of the enterprise. In seven months over 25,000 officers and men had perished, over 75,000 were wounded, and over 12,000 missing—casualties nearly twice the number of the force which landed on 25th April. Sickness had been rife, and over 96,000 cases had been admitted to hospital. The chief causes were dysentery and para-typhoid, and the prevalent type of the former was one which demanded careful nursing and a long convalescence if it were not permanently to impair the constitution. An enterprise which had shown such unparalleled losses, and which, what with the probability of ill weather and the certainty of an increased enemy strength, boded so ill for the future, ought clearly to be relinquished, if relinquishment was possible.

The decision to evacuate Gallipoli was made in the course of November by the British Government in deference to the clearly expressed opinion of General Monro. It was not an easy decision. It meant in the view of all concerned a considerable loss, and even those who took the optimistic side put that loss at not less than a division. Historical precedents were clear on the point. An embarkation in the face of the enemy had always meant a stiff rearguard fight and many casualties. Corunna was a typical case. There we

succeeded well, but in most instances the cost had been far greater. Take, for example, an almost forgotten episode in the Seven Years' War. In 1758 a British expedition attacked St. Malo. The troops disembarked six miles west of the town and tried to cross the Rance to the south of the place. This movement was prevented by the numbers of the enemy, and we fell back on the bay of St. Cast, where we re-embarked after heavy losses. It was the accepted military doctrine that re-embarkation without disaster was only possible after a victorious battle with the enemy, and that even then a considerable price must be paid for getting away.

The difficulty was increased by the fact that the evacuation of Gallipoli must be lengthy and must be piecemeal. It was not a question of shipping a division or two, but three army corps. It was impossible to move them all at once with our existing transports. There must be a gap between the operations, and this meant that with regard to the later movements the enemy would be abundantly forewarned. Moreover, a protracted embarkation put us terribly at the mercy of the winter weather. Even a mild wind from the south or south-west raised such a groundswell as to make communication with the beaches precarious. Those who looked for the loss of a third of our strength had good historical warrant for their pessimism. Few more anxious decisions have ever fallen to the lot of a British commander than that on which Sir Charles Monro was required to pronounce the final word.

The problem fell into three parts: Suvla, Anzac, and Cape Helles. From Suvla the 10th Division had already gone to Salonika, as well as one French division from Cape Helles, and the 2nd Mounted Division had left for Egypt. But in each zone there remained a matter of three or more divisions to be moved. The whole thing was a gigantic gamble with fate, but every precaution was taken to lessen the odds. The plan, which was mainly the work of General Birdwood, was to remove the *matériel*, including the heavy guns, by instalments during a period of ten days, working only at night. A large portion of the troops would also be got off during these days, certain picked battalions being left to the last. New lines of trenches would be constructed to cover the embarkation points in case a rearguard action became necessary. Everything must be kept normal during the daylight—the usual artillery shelling and spurts of rifle fire. Every morning before daybreak steps must be taken to hide the results of the night work. Any guns brought nearer the shore must be covered up so as to be unrecognizable by an enemy airplane. Success depended upon two things mainly—fine weather and secrecy. The first was the gift of the gods, and the second was attained by sheer bluff. It was a marvellous achievement, considering that every man

in the British force had been talking for three weeks about the coming "rest camp." Its success may have been due partly to the curious apathy which at the moment had seized the Turks and made them disinclined for the offensive. The new big howitzers were arriving and settling down on their concrete emplacements. Enver proposed to wait till these could be used to blow the British off the peninsula. Unfortunately for him these pledges of German friendship arrived too late for the fair.

Before the end of November the battalions holding the firing lines were conscious of great nocturnal activity in their rear. Stores which had been accumulated at advanced bases were shifted nearer the coast, and at Suvla, especially on the two flanks, trenches and entanglements were being created which seemed irrelevant to any military purpose. On the 8th of December it was whispered that orders for the evacuation had arrived, and night after night our men watched the shrinking of their numbers. There was a generous rivalry as to who should stay to the last—a proof of spirit when we remember that every man believed that the rearguard was almost certainly doomed to death or capture. Presently only those in the prime of physical strength were left. All the weak and sickly had gone to the transports, which nightly stole in and out the moonlit bay. Soon it became clear that the heavy batteries had also gone. To the ordinary observer in daylight they still appeared to be in position, but the guns in the emplacements were bogus. Then the field guns began to disappear, leaving only a sufficiency to keep up the daily pretence of bombardment. It was an eery business for the last battalions as they heard their protecting guns rumbling shorewards in the darkness. The hospitals were all evacuated, and their stores moved to the beach. New breakwaters had been built there, and all night long there was a continuous procession of lighters and motor boats. Soon the horses and motor cars were also shipped, and by Friday, 17th December, very few guns were left. To the Turkish observers the piles of boxes on the beaches looked as if fresh supports had been landed, and we were preparing to hold the place indefinitely. These beaches were shelled all day, principally by the heavy howitzers behind the Anafarta ridge. But at night, fortunately for us, the shelling ceased.

The weather was warm and clement, with light moist winds and a low-hanging screen of clouds. Coming in the midst of an Ægean winter it seemed to our men a direct interposition of Providence. It was like the land beyond the North Wind which Elizabethan mariners believed in, where he who pierced the outer crust of the Polar snows found a country of roses and

eternal summer. No fisherman ever studied the weather signs more anxiously than did the British commanders during those days. Hearts sank when the wind looked like moving to the west. But the weather held, and, when the days consecrated to the final effort arrived, the wind was still favourable, the skies were clear, and the moon was approaching its full. Nature had joined the wild conspiracy.

Dec. 18.

On Saturday, 18th December, only picked battalions held the front. The final embarkation had been fixed for the two succeeding nights, and it was believed that if the first night was successful the whole enterprise would go through. Evening fell in a perfect calm. The sea was as still as a quarry-hole, and scarcely a breath of wind blew in the sky. Moreover, a light blue mist clothed all the plain of Suvla, and made a screen against the enemy observers, while a haze also shrouded the moon. At 6 p.m. the crews of the warships went to action stations, and in the darkness the transports stole into the bay. Not a shot was fired. In dead quiet, showing no lights, the transports moved in and out. Every unit found its proper place. By 1 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, the 19th, all had gone, and the bay lay empty in the moonlight.

That Sunday was one of the most curious in the war. Our lines lay to all appearances as they had been for the past four months, but they were only a blind. We kept up our usual fire, and received the Turkish answer, but had any body of the enemy chosen to attack they would have found the trenches held by a handful. There were 20,000 Turks on the Suvla and Anzac fronts, and 60,000 in immediate reserve. Had they known it, they had before them the grand opportunity of the campaign. But our warships plastered their front and they "watered" our routes of transport as methodically as they had done since the August battles. Lala Baba came in for a heavy bombardment, but there was no longer a gun on the little hill. An attack by our troops at Helles on that day distracted the enemy's mind from their immediate opponents. Night fell with the same halcyon weather. The transports—destroyers, trawlers, picket boats, every kind of craft—slipped once again into the bay, and before midnight the last guns had been got on board. At 1.30 a.m. on Monday morning the final embarkation of the troops began. Platoon by platoon they filed in perfect order down the communication trenches, a detachment occupying one of the new defensive positions till the other had passed. Strange receptions were provided for the first enemy who should enter the deserted trenches in the way of mines and traps and automatic bomb-throwers. There were messages left, too, congratulating "Johnnie Turk" on being a clean and gallant fighter, and expressing hopes that we might meet him again under

Dec. 20.

happier conditions. By 3.30 the last of the troops were on the beach, and long before the dawn broke all were aboard. One man had been hit by a bullet in the thigh; that was the only casualty. The Highland Mounted Brigade acted as the rearguard to fight the expected action which never came. Among the last to embark were 200 men who had been the foremost to land in August. They left from the very spot where they had first set foot ashore.

The operations at Anzac were conducted on the same lines. The beaches at Suvla were five miles or so from the enemy, and open to his observation. At Anzac they were less than two miles in places, but concealed from view under the steep seaward bluffs. But the intricate Anzac lines, and the exceeding precariousness of many of the positions, made the movement of guns and troops far more difficult. Some of our gun positions there were on dizzy heights, down which a gun could only be brought part by part. This work was brilliantly performed. Half the guns and half the men of the New Zealand batteries disappeared in a single night. As at Suvla, only picked battalions were left to the end, and there was desperate rivalry as to who should be chosen to act as rearguard. On the Saturday night three-fifths of the entire force was got on board the transports. On Sunday night the rest left, with two men wounded as the total casualties. By 5.30 a.m. on Monday morning the last transports moved from the coast, leaving the warships to follow.

Then on the twelve miles of beach from Suvla Burnu to Gaba Tepe began one of the strangest spectacles of the campaign. All the guns but four 18-pounders, two old 5-inch howitzers, one 4.7 naval gun, one anti-aircraft and two 3-pounder Hotchkiss guns had been removed, and these were rendered useless;[1] ammunition and the more valuable stores had been cleared, but there was a quantity of supplies, chiefly bully-beef, which was not worth the risk of human life. These were piled in great heaps on the shores and drenched with petrol. Before the last men left parties of Royal Engineers set them on fire. About 4 a.m. on the Monday morning the bonfires began, blazing most fiercely near Suvla Point. The Australians at Anzac about 3.30 had exploded a big mine on Russell's Top, and this called forth from the Turks an hour's rifle fire. As the beach fires blazed up the enemy, thinking that some disaster had befallen us, shelled the place to prevent our extinguishing the flames. The warships shelled back, and all along that broken coast great pharoses flamed to heaven, like giant beacon-fires in some strife of the Immortals. At 4.30 a.m. a motor lighter at Suvla, which had been wrecked some weeks before, was blown up, and added to the glare. Watchers on the Bulgarian coast, looking seaward, saw the

peninsula wrapped in flames, as if its stony hills had become volcanoes vomiting fire.

It was not till dawn that the Turkish guns ceased. Even then they did not know what had happened. They shelled the bonfires still blazing in the bright sunrise; they searched the solitudes of Lala Baba and Chocolate Hill with high explosives, and the British warships fired a final volley. Picket boats at Anzac and Suvla up to eight o'clock were still collecting a few stragglers from the beaches. By 9 a.m. it was all over, and the last warship steamed away from a coast which had been the grave of so many high hopes and gallant men.

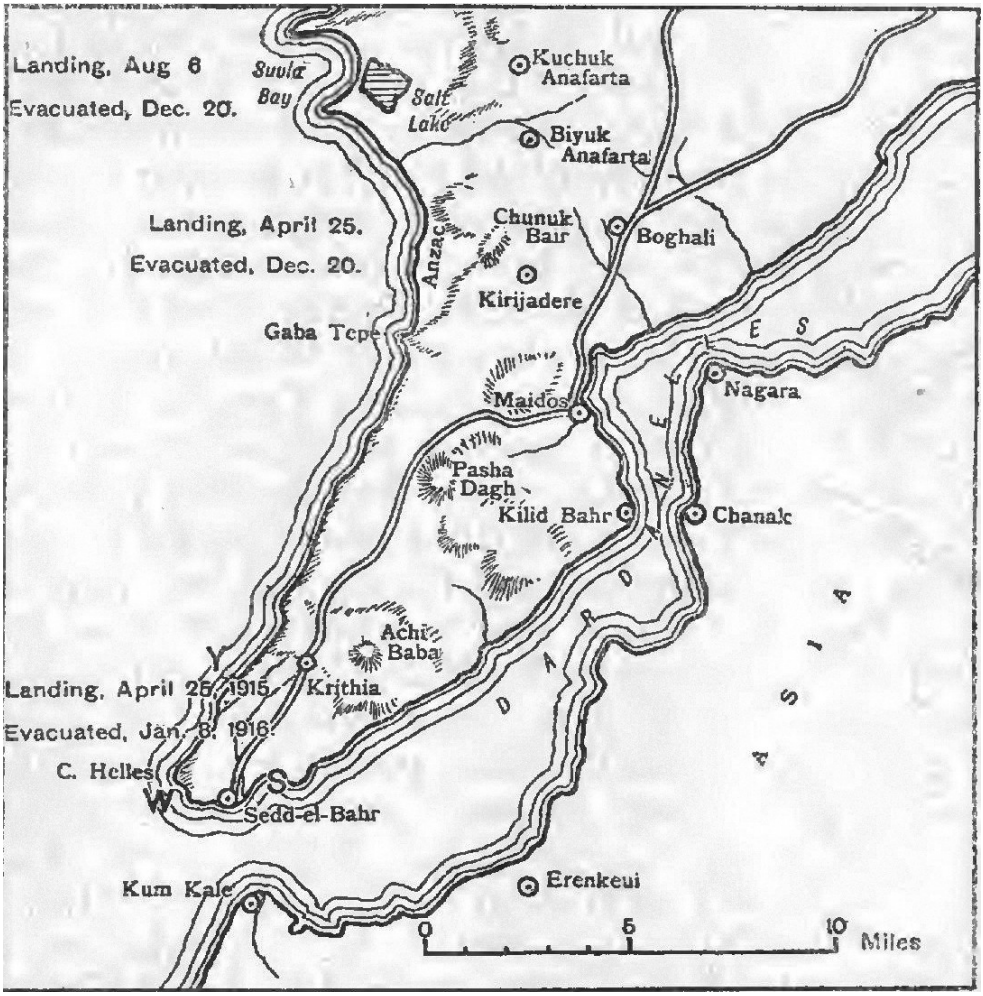
We were just in time. That night the weather broke, and a furious gale blew from the south, which would have made all embarkation impossible. Rain fell in sheets and quenched the fires, and soon every trench at Suvla and Anzac was a torrent. Great seas washed away the landing-stages. The puzzled enemy sat still and waited. They saw that we had gone, but they distrusted the evidence of their eyes. History does not tell what fate befell the first Turks who penetrated our empty trenches, what heel first tried conclusions with the hidden mines, or with what feelings they viewed the parting Australian message left on Walker's Ridge—a gramophone with the disc set to "The Turkish Patrol."

The success, the amazing success, of the Suvla and Anzac evacuation made the position at Cape Helles the more difficult. Few observers in the West believed that there was any chance of a similar operation there. At the most they looked to see a new Torres Vedras fortified at the butt-end of the peninsula, where, with the help of the ships, the enemy might be held off till the situation cleared. It was true that Helles was ill placed for such a policy. It was too well commanded by the heights on the European and Asian shores, and it was doubtful how the Torres Vedras plan would work in the face of the big Austro-German howitzers, of which the departing Australians at Anzac had seen the first shots. But there seemed no other way. The first bluff had worked to admiration; but it is of the nature of bluff that it can scarcely be repeated against the same opponent. Moreover, the Turkish aerial reconnaissance had now become active over all our positions.

Dec. 19.

Sunday, 19th December, the second last day of the Suvla and Anzac embarkation, saw a covering attack of the troops at Helles. At two in the afternoon the ships opened a bombardment of the enemy's front, which was soon taken up by all the land batteries, including those of the French, which had remained after most of their infantry had been withdrawn. Under this cover a brigade attacked up

the Krithia nullah, and with some 250 casualties won 200 yards of trench, and left the Turks with an awkward salient to defend. After that came the storm, and then another spell of fine weather. The Turks did not press their advantage, though they now outnumbered the British by more than three to one. They did not occupy the old Anzac lines, and men from Cape Helles made excursions there, and brought back among other things some welcome cases of champagne. Perhaps the enemy was still busy getting his new big guns in place. Perhaps he thought that he had us at his mercy, and could finish the business at his leisure. What is certain is that he never dreamed that the Suvla and Anzac enterprise could be repeated.



Evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Towards the close of the year,[2] in the first quarter of the new moon, guns and supplies and supernumerary troops were brought down to the beaches and quickly embarked. The French used S beach and the British used the famous landing-places of April. The French troops under General Brulard were now reduced to 4,000 men, and all except the gunners were embarked on the first night of January. On the last three days of the year the 52nd Division made a demonstration, and during the first days of 1916 there was a good deal of artillery fire along our depleted front. As at Suvla and Anzac, two nights had been allotted to the final evacuation, those of 7th and 8th January. New positions covering the landing-places were prepared, and an embarkation zone was created under the general commanding the 52nd Division, Major-General the Hon. H. A. Lawrence. There was no time to be lost, for all must be finished before the moon reached the full and while the fine weather held. It would appear that one interesting device, which had already been adopted at Anzac, was used to mislead the Turk, who was, of course, on the lookout for an attempt at withdrawal. Our trenches would be perfectly silent for a day or two, but when the enemy made a reconnaissance they woke to aggressive life. The intention was to implant firmly in the Turkish mind the notion that quiet on our side did not mean that we had gone, in order that the real silence after the withdrawal might for a time pass undetected.

Jan. 7, 1916.

On Friday, 7th January, it looked for a moment as if a general action would have to be fought by way of farewell, a necessity which would have wrecked our carefully laid plans. From 1.30 to 3 o'clock in the afternoon all the front-line trenches held by the 13th and Royal Naval Divisions were continuously shelled, and the Turks opened a heavy musketry fire. At four they sprang two mines, and their parapets were manned with bayonets. But the infantry attack miscarried. We could see the officers trying to urge their men forward, but only at one point did a charge come; and then a battalion of the Staffords beat back the enemy. Our losses were six officers and 158 men—casualties which had nothing to do with the evacuation proper. That night the Scottish Lowland Division embarked, and rather more than half of the troops had left the peninsula.

Jan. 8.

Next day, Saturday the 8th, was calm and fine, the enemy were quiet, and all seemed in train for the final effort. But about four in the afternoon the weather changed. A strong south-westerly wind blew, which by 11 p.m. had increased to thirty-five miles an hour. This storm covered our retirement so far as the enemy were concerned, but it all but made it impossible. Hitherto, for example, our

troops had been embarked in destroyers alongside the sunken ships at W beach, but the seas washed away the connecting piers, and lighters had to be used. At one beach, which felt the full force of the wind, shipment was impracticable, and the troops directed there had to march on to W beach. In one sense the weather was a blessing in disguise. An enemy submarine had been reported off Cape Helles at 9 p.m., but the seas made its efforts futile.[3] By 2.30 a.m. on the morning of 9th January Y and W beaches had been cleared, and by 3:30 p.m. the last troops of the 29th Division were on board. An officer has described the final moments: "In the actual end, we said good-bye to our dug-outs after a last and very good dinner, and leaving the candles still alight in the banqueting-hall just for luck, we up-anchored and moved down to the water's edge, looking for all the world as if we were going to catch the 10.15 at Waterloo. I had on my best railway platform waddle, carrying, as I did, my helmet-case in a bucket, a loose blanket in one hand and my other blankets and waterproof sheet in the other. Strung all round me were the various impedimenta which a soldier has to carry about with him when he cannot avoid doing so. It was the funniest sight. And in the end we just calmly stepped on the lighter and left Turkey-in-Europe, I suppose for ever. Practically nothing was left behind. No, I forgot. On our mess dug-out table we left the German book *J'accuse* for the edification of our successors there!"

The Turks all night gave no sign. But when the transports had moved off, the stores left behind were fired simultaneously by time fuses.

Instantly red lights burned along the enemy lines, and heavy shelling began on the beaches and our empty support trenches. Till sunrise the red lights burned and the bombardment continued. When the enemy learned the truth he made the best of the business, and proudly announced to the world that he had driven us from Sedd-el-Bahr, and that no Ally was left in the peninsula. He added that the retreat had been attended with desperate losses, and that he had made great captures of guns. The claim was untrue. We blew up and left behind the ruins of seventeen old worn-out pieces. Our total casualties amounted to one man wounded.

The evacuation of Gallipoli was a triumph of Staff work, and of co-operation between the Army and the Fleet. To Sir Charles Monro, to Generals Davies, Birdwood, and Byng, to Admirals de Robeck and Wemyss, and not less to the divisional, brigade, and battalion commanders, the highest praise is due for an achievement which, in the words of the Prime Minister, was "without parallel in military or naval history." Nor must we

forget the splendid discipline and stamina of their men. General Monro's special order, issued after the Suvla and Anzac evacuations, stated without exaggeration the difficulties surmounted:—

> "The arrangements made for withdrawal, and for keeping the enemy in ignorance of the operation which was taking place, could not have been improved. The General Officer Commanding the Dardanelles Army, and the General Officers Commanding the Australian and New Zealand and 9th Army Corps, may pride themselves on an achievement without parallel in the annals of war. The Army and Corps Staffs, Divisional and subordinate Commanders and their Staffs, and the Naval and Military Beach Staffs proved themselves more than equal to the most difficult task which could have been thrown upon them. Regimental officers, non-commissioned officers, and men carried out, without a hitch, the most trying operation which soldiers can be called upon to undertake—a withdrawal in the face of the enemy—in a manner reflecting the highest credit on the discipline and soldierly qualities of the troops.
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> "It is no exaggeration to call this achievement one without parallel. To disengage and to withdraw from a bold and active enemy is the most difficult of all military operations; and in this case the withdrawal was effected by surprise, with the opposing forces at close grips—in many cases within a few yards of each other. Such an operation, when succeeded by a re-embarkation from an open beach, is one for which military history contains no precedent.
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> "During the past months the troops of Great Britain and Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, Newfoundland and India, fighting side by side, have invariably proved their superiority over the enemy, have contained the best fighting troops in the Ottoman Army in their front, and have prevented the Germans from employing their Turkish allies against us elsewhere.
>
> "No soldier relishes undertaking a withdrawal from before the enemy. It is hard to leave behind the graves of good comrades, and to relinquish positions so hardly won and so gallantly maintained as those we have left. But all ranks in the Dardanelles Army will realize that in this matter they were but carrying out the orders of his Majesty's Government, so that they might in due course be

more usefully employed in fighting elsewhere for their King, their country, and the Empire.

> "There is only one consideration—what is best for the furtherance of the common cause. In that spirit the withdrawal was carried out, and in that spirit the Australian and New Zealand and the 9th Army Corps have proved, and will continue to prove, themselves second to none as soldiers of the Empire."

The news was received in France and Britain with incredulity, which speedily changed to profound relief. To be sure, there was something shamefaced in our pride. We were celebrating a failure and a retreat. The gallantry of the wonderful April landings, the long struggle for Krithia, the heroic Australasian attack on Sari Bair had gone for nothing. We had spilled blood like water to win a mile or two of land, and now we had relinquished all. Fifty thousand Allied graves with their rude crosses passed under the sway of the Crescent. But these melancholy reflections properly belonged to the subject of the original Gallipoli adventure. Having failed, we had succeeded in escaping the worst costs of failure. We had brought off three Army Corps to be refitted and reorganized for use in more hopeful theatres. We had defeated the calculations of the enemy. We had stultified our pessimists and amazed even the most optimistic. To frustrate the consequences of a disaster is, as a military operation, usually more difficult than to win a victory. There is less chance of the spirit of the offensive, for it is proof of the generosity of the human spirit that safety is less of an incentive to effort than the hope of victory. A retreat, on the confession of the greatest soldiers, is the most difficult task which a general can be called on to undertake. The evacuation of Gallipoli, in point of pure technical skill and soldierly resolution, deserves to rank in the story of the campaigns with the retirement of the Allies from Mons and the withdrawal of Russia from the Vistula to the Dvina.

We had upset every precedent in history. The impossible had been achieved by a series of incalculable chances. But for the two spells of fine weather and the unexplained preoccupation of the enemy the odds would have been crushingly against us. It is true that without a perfect organization and discipline we should not have been able to take advantage of our good fortune, but no human merit would have availed had the fates been unkind. It was an instructive lesson in the folly of dogmatism. In the spring of 1915, our ships had attempted to beat down the forts of the Dardanelles without the assistance of a land army. That effort failed, and it was condemned as contrary to all the lessons of history. The criticism was just; but those who

claimed that precedents were not the whole of war were also justified. For in the evacuation of Gallipoli we saw an enterprise as flagrantly heterodox succeed. The "sporting chance" is not as a rule a desirable obsession for any commander. It is his business to use the accumulated experience of his predecessors, and to follow soberly the path of common prudence. But if some great end is to be won or some great misfortune avoided, there may come a day when it is his duty to defy precedents. For it should never be forgotten that the lost hope, the desperate remedy, and the outside chance may win.

Across the ribbon of the Dardanelles, on the green plain of Troy, the most famous of the wars of the old world had been fought. The European shores had now become a no less classic ground of arms. If the banks of Scamander had seen men strive desperately with fate, so had the slopes of Achi Baba and the loud beaches of Helles. Had the fashion endured of linking the strife of mankind with the gods, what strange myth would not have sprung from the rescue of the British troops in the teeth of winter gales and uncertain seas! It would have been rumoured, as at Troy, that Poseidon had done battle for his children.

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[1] These were at Anzac; every gun, vehicle, and animal was got away from Suvla.

[2] In these days one of the most gallant of the actions which have earned the Victoria Cross was performed at Krithia by Second-Lieutenant A. V. Smith of the I/5 East Lancashire Regiment on 22nd December. To quote the official account, "he was in the act of throwing a grenade when it slipped from his hand and fell to the bottom of the trench, close to several of our officers and men. He immediately shouted out a warning, and himself jumped clear and into safety; but, seeing that the officers and men were unable to get into cover, and knowing well that the grenade was due to explode, he returned without any hesitation and flung himself down on it. He was instantly killed by the explosion."

[3] H.M.S. *Prince George*, *en route* for Mudros, was struck about midnight by a torpedo which failed to explode.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

SOME SIDELIGHTS ON THE GERMAN TEMPER.

Difficulties of estimating the Temper of the enemy—German Appeal for a Super-diplomacy—*Ballons d'essai* of Peace—The Military View—Perplexity—Von Bernhardi—Recognition of the Meaning of Sea-power—The Imperial Chancellor's Statement—Von Hindenburg's Appeal—Endurance the New *Mot d'ordre*—Concentration against Britain—The Economic View—Depression—The *Mitteleuropa* Doctrine—Opposition from the Navy School—Views of German Financiers—The High Command begins to look to the Sea—The Temper of the Ordinary Citizen—Disappointment at German Victories—The Dawn of Suspicion—Efficiency of the Censorship—German Attitude towards Atrocities—The German Catholics—The Letter of the Belgian Bishops.

In an earlier chapter we have discussed some of the fundamentals of that German psychology which precipitated the war, and which, so long as it endured, made peace unthinkable save by unconditional surrender. In the present chapter we propose to look at the more practical question of the temper of Germany after eighteen months of fighting. A protracted struggle is a great dissolvent of dreams. The touchstone of suffering rejects many grandiose theories. The second winter of such a war inevitably compelled reflection and a stock-taking on the part of all the belligerents. The first "careless rapture" gave place to prudential considerations, and Germany was forced to envisage the future in the light not of what she desired but of what she could compass.

Our task is complicated by the difficulty of assessing the temper of a hostile people, more especially when that people is beleaguered and blockaded. In the middle of December Germany, through the medium of an American journalist, made a plaintive appeal to the United States against the restrictions imposed upon her in communicating with the outer world. Only in code messages by wireless could she correspond with her Ambassador in America, and this code was open to the American Government. Hence Germany could not conduct her business without all the world hearing of it, and she could not, so she said, state her case before neutrals. She proposed a

kind of super-diplomacy, in the shape of an exchange between the two countries of Ambassadors vested with high and special powers. To the student of the war the information available on the German temper was contained in the speeches and messages of German statesmen, the German newspapers and journals, and in the reports of neutral travellers. Through Switzerland, Holland, and Scandinavia there filtered also a good deal of information, in the form of records of private conversations by neutrals with German leaders in politics and finance. But the evidence demanded cautious use, for public opinion in Germany was at the best incoherent and ill-organized. The voice of a disciplined nation is the voice of its masters, till the spell is suddenly broken and a babel of tongues is loosed. Hence in assessing the German temper it was not safe to dogmatize. Tendencies could be fairly recognized, but as yet they were tendencies only and not proven facts.

There had always been a good deal of peace talk. Proposals for a settlement were suggested to neutral Powers, especially America, but they were in the nature of "feelers" rather than considered terms. The Allies had made no secret of their irreducible minimum. Germany was clearly unable to do this, and she contented herself with stating her maximum, to see how the world received it. The first suggestion of terms was merely preposterous, and was probably intended for domestic effect rather than to create an impression of reasonableness abroad. But by the middle of the winter, when overtures for a separate peace had been scornfully rejected by Russia, and when the temper of France showed clearly enough what her answer was likely to be, it became the fashion among German journalists who had access to the neutral Press to lay the blame for the continuance of the war on Britain alone. Germany was represented as a magnanimous conqueror who was willing to use her victories with moderation. She asked only for security for her legitimate national developments, and Britain, in her insensate commercial jealousy, would hear of no terms except her ruin. The doctrine of the "Hymn of Hate" was repeated in more decorous language. There was one foe and one alone—England. In Austria, on the other hand, there was a tendency to a different view. In more than one inspired article it was urged that the world was large enough to allow both Britain and Germany room for commercial expansion, and that the time was ripe for an understanding. But such articles also laid it down as a condition precedent that Germany, as the victor, must be given substantial compensation for her sacrifices. This probably represented the broadest stratum of opinion in the Central Empires. "We have won, but circumstances forbid us to reap the just fruits of our victory. Let our success be acknowledged, and we will accept a very modest

reward, for if the war goes on much longer the whole of Europe will be ruined."

It was futile to discuss these *ballons d'essai*, for there was no clear or consistent national will behind them. The German mind was in confusion. The great initial plan, elaborated with such care and precision, had failed. Germany had not yet adjusted her point of view to the changed conditions, and she hesitated between the old bluster and a rather clumsy diplomacy. The problem had so many sides that it may be worth while to examine it in more detail under some of its chief aspects.

The military question, on which all others depended, was not discussed with any great freedom. The German censorship forbade it. The experts wrote from a brief, and there was none of that informed and candid criticism of operations which was found in France, and, to a small extent, in Britain. But it was possible to detect a change in the strategic reviews which appeared from time to time in the German Press. In the first place, they began to reveal some perplexity of mind. So long as the great initial plan was feasible, so long even as von Falkenhayn's revised version promised success, they spoke with one undivided voice. But early in the winter they showed a certain wavering. General von Bernhardi, for example, was a distinguished soldier who wrote with real authority on military subjects. But he was allowed to contribute to the American Press articles which were sheer foolishness. He prophesied wildly from day to day, and all his prophecies failed. Now, von Bernhardi did not write nonsense without a cause, and his journalistic vagaries suggested a certain confusion in the minds of those behind him.

In the second place, the old contempt for their opponents had gone. It was succeeded by a genuine respect for Britain. It was very generally recognized that the lines in East and West had become rigid, and, whatever flamboyant writers might say to the contrary, that the German adventures in the Near East, though they might annoy the Allies, could not gain victory. The meaning of sea-power was tardily recognized. The war had reached a stalemate, and was rapidly becoming a trial of economic endurance. A grandiose offensive on the part of Germany would not better matters. The Imperial Chancellor, in an interview given about Christmas time to an American journalist, quoted a "high military authority" to this effect:—

> "Germany could take Paris. It would only be a question of how many men we were willing to sacrifice. But that would not bring England to terms, and therefore would not end the war. We could

take Petrograd. But suppose we drove the Tsar out of his capital—Britain would not care. We could drive the Italian army into the sea—it would make no difference to England. The more territory we occupy the thinner our front and the greater difficulty in supplying it. Going ahead on such lines would help England more than us."

These were candid words, very different from the official talk of a year before. It would appear that the High Command had come to the conclusion that no further offensive on the grand scale could profitably be taken. Endurance was the *mot d'ordre*, and they believed that they could endure. They were wholly convinced that no Allied attack could pierce the iron walls on East and West. So, at any rate, they said, and they had some reason for the belief in the events of the past autumn. How much the capacity of army and people for endurance filled the thoughts of the generals was shown by an interesting letter from von Hindenburg to the Imperial Chancellor, which was published in a Berlin paper.[1] The Field Marshal appealed to the statesman to do something to ameliorate the life of the lower and lower-middle classes, from whom his soldiers were chiefly drawn. Complaints of their sufferings, he said, came in every letter, and this weakened the spirit of his men. They could not fight with a free mind if they believed that their kinsfolk were in want.

Throughout the German military comments on the situation there was a curious note of exasperation. By all the text-books their enemies should long ere now have acknowledged defeat. Germany was entrenched on the soil of France and Russia; she had occupied all Belgium and Poland and Serbia; the Allies had failed to break her front in the main theatres, and they had met with costly checks in Gallipoli and Mesopotamia. The Germans have always regarded war as an enlarged form of Kriegspiel. Had this been a war game played at some Staff college, Germany would have scored most of the points, and would long ago have been adjudged victor. Her perverse foes did not recognize when they were soundly beaten. Following upon this exasperation, we could detect a dawning sense that the great German offensive had shot its bolt. She still claimed the initiative, but it was a barren initiative. More successes would get her no further forward towards victory, though she believed that in the field the Allies were equally debarred from the hope of winning a decision. Her General Staff would appear to have come very near to recognizing that military effort had done its most, and that the future lay in the economic sphere. The Army chiefs were being converted to von Tirpitz's creed. It was Britain's command of the sea which

barred the way to Germany's hegemony by land. But for that fatal Navy an early decision would have been won. It was that Navy, too, which threatened Germany's economic endurance. The "freedom of the seas" in Germany's sense of the phrase must be the first of Germany's winnings, even if to gain it she had to sacrifice for a little some of her cherished territorial dreams. She could not hope to dictate to the world on land if Britain ruled the water.

The economic situation was not less hard to assess than the military, both as regards the actual facts and the way in which the German people viewed them. Undoubtedly the land was very short of many necessaries, and had to use unpalatable substitutes. Travellers reported that a good meal could be had at a restaurant at a lower price than was possible in the Allied cities, but this was largely due to skilful stage management. As a matter of fact luxuries were more plentiful in Germany than many staples. Stage management extended to all the cities and towns which neutral visitors were likely to frequent, but it stopped short of the country districts. There beyond question there was great discomfort, as many captured letters proved—a discomfort which just stopped short of want. Von Hindenburg's appeal to the Imperial Chancellor put the matter fairly: "It is one of the results of German economic development that the small business man in particular is compelled, almost without exception, to have recourse to loans. In view of the conditions of payment and of the markets produced by the war, the wife and family have the utmost difficulty in keeping the trade or business of the husband or father going." Further, the shortage or stoppage of some of the most popular foodstuffs was a sore trial to a people who were inelastic in their dietary. The result, when these facts were taken in conjunction with the heavy death lists, was a very deep and widespread depression. This depression was easy to overestimate. It had not reached the point where life becomes intolerable to the ordinary man, and he agitates wildly for change. The discipline and the very real courage of the German nation still postponed that day. Its coming might have been assured had the blockade of the Allies been more strictly drawn. Many foodstuffs still entered the country through neutral channels, and vital necessaries of war such as fats and lubricating oils. In another chapter the blockade will be considered as part of the Allied strategy; here it is sufficient to note that, though its results had been striking, they fell considerably short of that "strangle-hold" which had been the Allied aim.

Economic distress, however slight, is usually intolerable unless there is hope of a speedy relief. The ordinary man was buoyed up in the last resort by the confidence that victory would come with a feast of fat things. The economist, perturbed by the present, and aware that the dream of a lucrative

victory had gone, looked farther into the future. He saw at the best an impoverished country, with an immense debt, shut off from many of the chief markets of the world. For exports America was his main hope, and this explained the activity of German agents in the United States, and the general desire among German statesmen to avoid a breach with Washington. In domestic policy he encouraged his soul with the vision of a Central European Empire exploited and administered by a single industrial policy. In the late summer of 1915 a remarkable book was published at Berlin, under the title of *Mitteleuropa*. Its author, Friedrich Naumann, had been a Radical deputy and a Free Trader, and he sought to build out of the wreckage a new economic state. A period of war, he wrote, is always a period of intellectual receptivity; and as Bismarck laid the foundation of the German Empire amid the roar of the guns of 1870, so, during the stress of this greater conflict, the seed of a new order might be sown. His plan was to make of the Central Powers—Germany and Austro-Hungary—an economic unit. After the war, he argued, the nations would group themselves into large economic units, and it was the business of Germany to look near home and use the means which lay ready to her hand. The new Mid-Europe would include a tenth of the globe and 200 millions of people, to set against the 95 millions of France, the 107 millions of America, the 170 millions of Russia, and the 425 millions of Britain. His scheme was not a mere customs union, but an industrial unity. Austria was backward and half exploited. Her labour conditions were bad, and the lack of opportunity at home drove great numbers of her people to emigrate. Hungary, the granary of Europe, produced only half the yield per acre of agricultural Prussia. In the difficult period after the war it would be necessary for the Central Powers to pool their resources, and for Austria to submit to organization and exploitation on German lines. He dreamed of a great system of syndicates, which, while meeting the just claims of labour, should, with the help of the State, bring the joint production to a maximum. The war had compelled a wholesale State organization of internal production. Let that system continue after peace, for economic victory was to the biggest economic battalions.

This attractive theory found many supporters. It was blessed by the Austrian Prime Minister and by the German Minister of Finance. But it was looked at askance by Hungary and by many Austrian men of business; and it was vehemently assailed by the "Overseas" school, of which we may take Count zu Reventlow and Herr Ballin as representatives. The latter continued to implore Germany not "to turn her eyes away from the sea," and the former argued with some force that the Central Empire school based their views upon a "freedom of the seas," to be obtained from Britain not by

coercion but by agreement. By all means, he said, organize Central Europe as an economic unit; but before that can be done the British supremacy on the ocean must cease. In this plea he was supported not only by the Naval school of von Tirpitz, but by the Army chiefs, who recognized that the most resounding successes of German arms on land were nullified by the Allied strength at sea.

The views of the great German financiers on the situation were in many ways the most instructive of all. It seems probable that, when history has found its true perspective, a very large share of the responsibility for war will be laid upon their shoulders. They had welcomed hostilities for two reasons: first, because they believed that the war would be short and glorious, and would lead to a world-wide prestige and an unprecedented commercial expansion; secondly, because the burden of armaments had begun to press heavily upon German industries, and a successful war would permit of a reduction. When the first dream vanished, the great captains of industry and the financiers, such as Herren Rathenau, Gwinner, and Ballin, had played a large part in that domestic concentration and reorganization with which Germany had replied to the Allied blockade. But as the months passed their hearts grew heavy. They saw Germany creating internal credits which could only be redeemed in the event of a crushing victory. As this victory receded they were compelled to face the grim fact that even a draw would involve something very like bankruptcy. They had gambled high, and had lost; it only remained to secure the little that remained from the colossal *débâcle*.

Accordingly, during the early winter months many strange overtures, for which Herr Gwinner seems to have been chiefly responsible, emanated from the German circles of high finance. French and British men of business were adjured to interfere while there was yet time. It was pointed out that, whatever the sufferings of Germany if the war were prolonged, the sufferings of the Allies in industry and commerce would be little less. Was Europe, it was asked, to make a gift of her trade to America? Such jeremiads were accompanied by suggestions for peace. The terms proposed varied, but their tone was moderation itself compared with the schemes which had filled neutral journals during the summer and autumn. But two essential conditions were common to all. Germany would pay no indemnity, and she demanded the “freedom of the seas.” This latter phrase was hard to interpret; but, as so used, it appeared to mean a revival and extension of the ill-fated Declaration of London, the idea being that Britain must be estopped from using her naval power in time of war so as to interfere, by blockade or otherwise, with the success of land operations. In this respect the views of

the financiers coincided with those of the General Staff. How such freedom could be won did not appear. The war had taught Britain lessons which she would not readily recant, and the more sober German opinion could not be blind to this obstacle. Nothing but the destruction of the British fleet would win the licence which they demanded. Hence it seemed probable that the interest of the German High Command was turning more and more to the sea. Germany had had time since the beginning of the war to build ships of a new pattern. It was conceivable that her scientific ingenuity had provided her with a novel weapon. Careful watchers of the omens were inclined to think that the first half of 1916 would see some great naval effort—that campaign, at which the Imperial Chancellor had hinted, "which would strike a vital blow at England."

When we turned to the question of the temper of the ordinary German citizen we were faced with a complete lack of real data for judgment. There was no public opinion in Germany, self-conscious and vocal, such as could be found in France and Britain. A rigid censorship had smoothed out the Press, and the foreign observer was left to deduce German feeling from the kind of public arguments which were used to placate and strengthen it. The German people had groaned under the cost of armaments, and they had expected a rapid victory which would relieve this burden and give them substantial rewards for all their previous sacrifices. The war enthusiasm in Munich in the beginning of August 1914 was explained, not by a sudden conversion of the easy-going South German to the Prussian ideal, but by the delight of Bavaria at the chance of getting speedily rid of oppressive imposts.

The censorship, the roseate reports from Headquarters, the robust optimism of statesmen, prevented the ordinary man from realizing the true situation. He knew that Germany had paid a high price, for he saw the circle of his family and his friends shrinking, and he felt in his daily life the rigour of war, but he could not but believe that the reward was assured. Germany had achieved a complete victory, and only the blind folly of her enemies prevented them from yielding. A little more endurance, a little more effort, and their surrender would be compelled. But there were not wanting voices to declare some dissatisfaction. Germany had overrun Poland, Belgium, and part of France. She had won a long series of great battles, in honour of which the cities had been be-flagged and the schools given holiday. She had conquered the road to the East, and brought under her influence the leaders of Islam. The end was near, but why were her enemies so blind to its imminence? It was generally believed that the Imperial Chancellor's speech of 9th December would bring the Allies crowding upon each other's heels to

sue for forgiveness. But the stiff-necked generation had shown no signs of grace. Britain had replied by introducing compulsory service, and what this meant in the way of revolution many Germans could guess. Russia had replied with a new offensive in the Bukovina, and France with an advance in the Vosges. Without doubt God had made these nations mad as a preparation for their complete destruction. But a number of sober-minded people began to lean to the other explanation. Since the Allies did not yield, was it impossible that the German successes were not so resounding as their leaders claimed? The Allies might be mad, but on the other hand they might really be unbroken. In the latter case it was an ill lookout for Germany, for she had staked almost everything on the efforts of the past year.

Suspicion of the Government was growing, but as yet it was only in its early stages. The nation still cherished most of its dreams, and the suppression of news was so drastic that there was small material for wavering. The German people were officially presented with a design in snow and ink, in which all virtue and chivalry were on their own side and all the scowling barbarities on the other. Rumours of atrocities in Belgium or on the high seas either did not reach them, or were so presented as to appear the most reasonable acts of war. If a man of ordinary wholesome instincts was told tales of the torture of German soldiers by Belgian irregulars, of desperate sufferings in prison camps, of the persecution of harmless German civilians, of a long-cherished plot on the part of the Allies to root the German race out of Europe, he would not be greatly concerned by the news of the sinking of Allied liners and the bombardment from the air of Allied cities, the less when he was informed officially that the lost liners were heavily armed and carried munitions of war, and that London and Hull were fortresses like Koenigsberg and Cuxhaven. He learned with amazement that the Allies had brought charges of inhumanity against his countrymen, and he set them down to the craft of a foe who had been beaten in the field. His papers were filled with the German version of the *Baralong* case; but if he heard of the *Ancona* or the *Persia* at all, he believed those who told him that they were legitimate acts of war.

Nov. 28.

This complete ignorance may explain the apathy of the German Catholics[2] towards the sufferings of their co-religionists in France and Belgium. The German clergy played a curious part in the war. The Lutheran pastors, grateful for the fervid Protestantism of the Imperial family, delivered weekly homilies in which Old Testament precedents were cited on behalf of a war of extermination. Their furious blasphemies far exceeded the wildest efforts of the Ranters or Fifth Monarchy men in our own Civil War. The Catholic hierarchy was

obedient to the Government, and, with the example of the Vatican to guide them, declined to take action on the appeal of their French and Belgian colleagues. On 28th November the Belgian bishops addressed a letter to the German clergy, which was in the main the work of Cardinal Mercier.[3] It was a request for an inquiry into German atrocities based upon a very strong *prima facie* case. No reply was vouchsafed; indeed no reply was possible. But under normal circumstances charges on which three-fourths of the world were agreed must have produced some justification, or at any rate must have caused some uneasiness even among the docile flock of German Catholicism. But the charges failed of effect, for the German people either did not hear them, or, hearing, were fortified by official assurances in a robust incredulity. There were many awakenings in store for Germany. One would arrive when she realized that the victory she had dreamed of was impossible; but the most bitter would come when she understood that in the eyes of the world she was morally outcast.

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[1] *Deutsche Tageszeitung* of January 23, 1916.

[2] The statement applies to the majority. There were some honourable exceptions.

[3] See Appendix II.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

THE SECOND WINTER IN THE WEST.

General Stagnation in the West—The December Fighting in the Vosges—Hartmannsweilerkopf—The Weather—Comfort of the Troops—Improvement of Trench Armoury—Mining—The New Fashion of Raids—No Christmas Truce—The Abortive Attack on the Ypres Salient—Changes in British Dispositions—Departure of the Indian Corps—The King-Emperor's Message—Better Munitionment of Allies—Mr. Lloyd George's Speech—The King's Christmas Message—British Casualties—Length of Previous Wars—Parallel with the American Civil War—Resignation of Sir John French—Sir Douglas Haig appointed as his Successor—Sir William Robertson Chief of the General Staff—Sir John French's Farewell to the Troops—His Quality and Achievement.

The great action which began on 25th September had wholly ceased by the beginning of November. Both sides had settled down to the modern equivalent for winter quarters—trench warfare unrelieved by any concerted attack on a large scale. About the middle of December, indeed, there were rumours from Holland and Belgium of a movement of troops westward by night from Liége, Luxemburg, and Metz, and of supply trains running ceaselessly in the same direction. These stories were assumed to be a German ruse to mislead the Allies, for it was believed that the German High Command at the time had their eyes fixed upon Bessarabia and Turkey. But the rumours were true. Heavy artillery was being brought from the Russian front, and a number of new railway lines were being constructed with a view to the great February attack. Of a different type was the rumour that von Mackensen had arrived in Alsace. Von Mackensen was in the Bukovina in the hope of so encircling Rumania that she would be compelled to join the Central Powers—a hope which, as we shall see, Ivanov's timely counterstroke effectively frustrated.

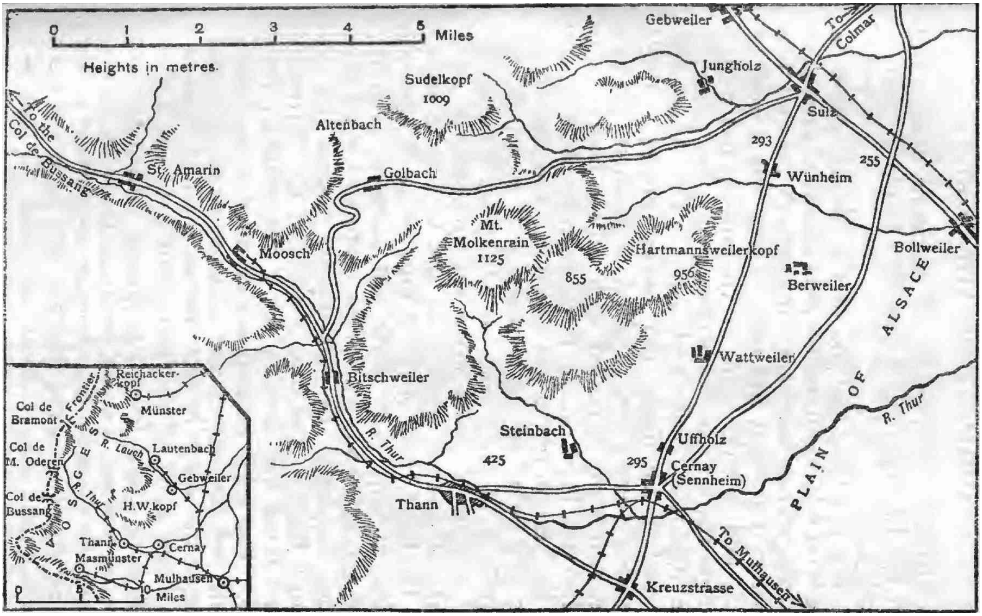
The one episode in the last two months of the year which can be dignified by the name of a field action was the fighting in the Vosges at the end of December. It will be remembered that on 16th October the French retook the summit trenches on the Hartmannsweilerkopf, and held them with

the enemy a dozen yards off among the pines of the eastern slope. On 21st December, under General Serret, the Chasseurs Alpins pushed their lines farther down the hill, and took over 1,000 prisoners from six different regiments. Next day the counter-attack succeeded in retaking part of the trench line in a heavy snowstorm. On the 23rd the French right advanced a little, and maintained the ground won on a front of a mile and a quarter, but the left was forced back to its original position. On the 29th the French took a series of German works on the Rehfelsen and the Hirzstein, two ridges to the south of the main summit, a gain which they partially lost a week later. This Christmas fighting was costly to both sides, and the French had to mourn the loss of General Serret, a commander whose genius for mountain warfare had led the incomparable Chasseurs Alpins to many a victory.

Dec. 21.

Dec. 23.

Dec. 29.



The Fighting in the Vosges—Region of the Hartmannsweilerkopf.

For the rest, the tale of the second winter in the West was one of endless local attacks and counter-attacks, and an incessant struggle with nature. The weather was open and wet. There was a week of frost and a little snow in November, and in the Vosges there were frequent snowfalls, but generally the days were mild and damp. The Allies had learned much from the winter before. Their trenches were better drained and better placed; the men were furnished with rubber boots; and there was little of the long, heart-breaking

spells in one section of the line which had been inevitable the year before owing to shortage of men. But no ingenuity in alignment, no pumping, no flooring or revetments could make the trenches in most parts other than desperately wet and comfortless. In the loose chalk of the Artois, where the ground dried rapidly, rain made the parapets crumble, and the battalions had to be continuously at work repairing them. In water-logged regions like the Ypres Salient and the Festubert and Givenchy areas there was nothing for it but endless pumping. The solid earth dissolved after a few hours' rain, and the deeper the trenches were made the deeper the water in their bottoms. The Germans on large parts of the front still held the higher and more easily-drained positions. When our line was on a slope, a drain could be made by cutting a tunnel through the parapet or parados; but when we were on the flats the men were wet from the moment they entered the place till they got back to billets. The last two months of 1915 were wonderfully mild for the time of year, and the sun shone more often than in the gloomy preceding winter; but the damp remained, and damp is a greater enemy to armies than the most hyperborean cold.

It was the business of the Allies to keep the German strength stretched taut, and few days were without their incidents. Upon the Belgian coast the British monitors punctually shelled the German flank, and from Nieuport to Belfort there were daily artillery bombardments. The men in the trenches were not idle, for, apart from local offensives, they had the heavy task of keeping their section in good order. Everything depended upon the battalion commander. When he was energetic and businesslike, the trenches were reasonably safe and comfortable; but when he was slack they often became mere ruinous ditches. To keep even a peaceful bit of line in good condition needed constant care. In some cases, where much-depleted battalions held a line properly allotted to a battalion at full strength, there were simply not enough men for the work, and the relieving troops fell heir to a dilapidated dwelling-place.[1] When it is remembered that, in addition to this artisan's labour, the men were required to keep up various forms of aggression, and to repel the enemy's efforts in the same direction, it will be seen that the winter trench life was no sinecure.

We had immensely improved our fighting machinery since the preceding winter. Our trench mortars were no longer improvised affairs like mediæval cannon, as dangerous to the users as to the enemy. We had standardized and perfected our system of bombs. Our artillery was far more numerous and better supplied. We had so many men engaged on expert duties that distracted battalion commanders complained that the ordinary infantryman was becoming rare. Two special activities deserve a word. In some parts of

the front, notably in that held by the British Third Army, our sniping had been brought to high perfection with the assistance of various officers who were experienced big-game hunters. In each battalion several men were taught how to locate the enemy sniper, and how to use stalking-glasses and telescopic sights. The result was that we began to have a body of sharpshooters quite equal to the forest rangers of South Germany. We picked off many enemy marksmen, and thereby not only saved each time the lives of a score or two of our own men, but gave the battalions a genuine sporting interest to relieve the routine of digging and manning the parapets. Again, our work in mining and counter-mining had reached the level of a science. We had recruited a special detachment from expert mining and tunnelling engineers—men from all the great mining areas of the world—and with their help we blew up mines at Ypres and Givenchy, and turned the centre of the Hohenzollern Redoubt into one vast crater. The Germans retaliated in kind, but less successfully. Their chief performance was at the Hairpin Trench, at the Quarries west of Cité St. Eloi, where for a moment they put the 15th Division in an awkward predicament. The enemy was driven off by the help of some bluejackets from the Grand Fleet, who were making a tour of the British front, and, to their great joy, happened upon a fight. The sailors took rifles and worked machine guns, and two won the Distinguished Conduct Medal. They had hitherto been suspicious about the alleged hardships of the Army as compared to their own; but on their return they reported that the worst North Sea weather was a picnic compared to an ordinary "quiet" day in France or Flanders.

The most interesting feature of the winter warfare, as showing the spirit of the offensive in our troops, was the new fashion of raids on the enemy's trenches. The Canadian Corps seem to have begun it. A small detachment selected a piece of line where the barbed wire entanglements could be most easily cut. Under cover of darkness they raced across the intervening ground, took a section of the German front lines with bombs and the bayonet, and held it till the Germans began to push in from both ends. Then they retired, usually taking with them some prisoners. The first of these raids was on the night of 18th November, when the Canadians surprised a German trench south-west of Messines, bayoneted thirty of the enemy, and brought back twelve prisoners. Their casualties were one man killed and one slightly wounded. There was another near Neuve Chapelle on 12th December, when a German machine gun was destroyed by bombs and a number of Germans killed. Our casualties were one officer and four men wounded. Four days later there were two raids in the

Nov. 18.

Dec. 12.

Armentières region; and the Canadians were busy again on the 28th. These affairs were always represented in the German reports as serious British offensives which broke down before the strength of the defence. On the contrary, they were isolated exploits of battalions intended to annoy the enemy and keep him in a state of suspense, an object which they completely achieved. The raiding parties were always small, and they stayed in the enemy's lines no longer time than permitted of a safe return. Their adroit management was proved by their inconsiderable losses. Such bold guerilla exploits kept up the spirits of our own men, and drove the enemy into a state of nervous watchfulness. At no hour in the night could he safely relax. At any moment he might see British bayonets backed by fierce British faces coming over his parapets.

Dec. 16.

Dec. 28.

In such circumstances there could be no Christmas truce. Orders were stringent against it on both sides, though in certain parts of the front the Germans seem to have made a half-hearted effort to proclaim a holiday. But the Christmas season saw a curious and abortive German offensive. Early on the morning of Sunday, 19th December, the division which was holding the north-east side of the Ypres Salient observed a dense cloud of gas rolling from the enemy's trenches. There had been a heavy bombardment for the past twenty-four hours, which warned us that mischief was afoot. The wind was exactly right, steady and not too strong, and a mist lay on the ground which prevented the gas dispersing too rapidly. The men in our trenches were ready with their helmets, and the gas passed over them with little hurt, but the conditions for its use were so perfect that it rolled unbroken over our hinterland, and affected dwellers four or five miles behind the lines.

Dec. 19.

We manned the firing trenches in readiness for the infantry attack. But none came. For the gas had not reached our lines before the British guns began. It was no longer the ineffectual salute of a few ill-supplied pieces which had marked the earlier battles in the Salient. A mighty bombardment broke on the German front, and pinned their troops to the trenches. A few came over the parapets half-heartedly, but they never reached their goal. A deluge of shrapnel fell upon them, and blotted them out in the open, or drove them pell-mell back to shelter. In less than five minutes the attack was broken. The men in our fire trenches, peering through their goggles at the misty ground between the lines, saw no sign of life on the German front.

It had been designed as a serious and concerted attack, for all that Sunday and far into the night the German big guns at Zandvoorde and

Passchendaele and Gheluvelt and Hollebeke were feeling for the roads which led up to the Salient and to the St. Eloi and Messines sections. They were making a barrage, which should have cut off our supplies and reserves, while their infantry were consolidating their position in our first line. But there had been no infantry attack and no loss of trenches, so the barrage was futile. It was the spear-shaft lacking the spear-point. The Christmas offensive had grotesquely failed.

During these months wholesale changes had been made in the British dispositions. New divisions were arriving from home, and three new corps were formed, destined to compose the Fourth Army. One corps went east to Salonika, and all the old corps were altered in their constituents. There were many promotions of brigadiers, who had won their spurs in the field, to divisional commands. The cavalry brigades were broken up temporarily into dismounted battalions, who took their places with the infantry in the trenches. The most notable change was the disappearance of the Indian Corps, both the Meerut and Lahore divisions departing for the East, taking with them their white regular battalions. No more were the French roads filled with the turbans of the Sikhs and the cowboy hats of the Gurkhas, and the French fields with their bivouac fires and the babel of strange tongues. The country folk, to whom the Indians were figures of sheer romance, watched with a certain sadness the going of their Eastern allies. The great experiment had succeeded. In some of the hardest-fought battles of the campaign—at Givenchy and Neuve Chapelle in the last months of 1914, at Neuve Chapelle again in March 1915, at Fromelles in May, and in the holding battles of September—the Indian soldiers had shown surpassing loyalty and courage. They had faced the brunt of the white man's war, and endured the miseries of the northern winter, and had at all times and under all terrors been true to their salt. Before they left in December the corps was paraded, and the Prince of Wales read a message from the King-Emperor:—

> "Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and men of the Indian Army Corps,—
>
> "More than a year ago I summoned you from India to fight for the safety of My Empire and the honour of My pledged word on the battlefields of Belgium and France. The confidence which I then expressed in your sense of duty, your courage and your chivalry, you have since then nobly justified.
>
> "I now require your services in another field of action; and before you leave France I send my dear and gallant son, the Prince

of Wales, who has shared with My Armies the dangers and hardships of the campaign, to thank you in My name for your services and to express to you My satisfaction.

"British and Indian comrades-in-arms, yours has been a fellowship in toils and hardships, in courage and endurance often against great odds, in deeds nobly done in days of ever-memorable conflict. In a warfare waged under new conditions and in peculiarly trying circumstances, you have worthily upheld the honour of the Empire and the great traditions of My Army in India.

"I have followed your fortunes with the deepest interest and watched your gallant actions with pride and satisfaction. I mourn with you the loss of many gallant officers and men. Let it be your consolation, as it was their pride, that they freely gave their lives in a just cause for the honour of their Sovereign and the safety of My Empire. They died as gallant soldiers, and I shall ever hold their sacrifice in grateful remembrance.

"You leave France with a just pride in honourable deeds already achieved and with My assured confidence that your proved valour and experience will contribute to further victories in the new fields of action to which you go.

"I pray God to bless and guard you and bring you back safely, when the final victory is won, each to his own home—there to be welcomed with honour among his own people."

Dec. 20.

If a soldier who had fought in the trenches during the winters of 1914 and 1915 had been asked as to the chief difference between the two years, he would probably have pointed to the better supply of guns and shells. We have seen that the Christmas attack at Ypres was checked by our artillery alone. No longer were the guns limited to an inconsiderable number of rounds a day. From hour to hour the men in the trenches were cheered by that most welcome of sounds, the busy talk of the great ordnance behind the front. We had not yet reached the ideal in munitions that we were striving for; we had not yet reached the French standard, a standard which the French themselves regarded as too low. But we were immeasurably better off than we had been in the summer, and our supplies were daily increasing. In a speech in the House of Commons on 20th December Mr. Lloyd George gave an account of his stewardship. He recalled the black days of the previous May, when we

turned out each day 2,500 high explosive and 13,000 shrapnel shells, as compared with the German 250,000, mostly high explosive. He dealt in detail with the different types of arms—heavy guns, field guns, machine guns, small arms, trench mortars. On the whole his report was cheering; but with a passionate eloquence he repudiated the suggestion that we were overdoing production, that we could possibly overdo production. “The most fatuous way of economizing is to produce an inadequate supply. A good margin is a sensible insurance. Less than enough is a foolish piece of extravagance. It is not merely that. What you spare in money you spill in blood.” And he concluded with an earnest appeal to employers and workmen to make certain that over the portals of their workshops they should not have to inscribe “Too late.”[2]

A sense of the gravity of the situation, but not less a recognition of its good hope, were the notes of Mr. Lloyd George’s speech, and they were also the notes of the national temper. That temper found adequate expression in the King’s Christmas message to his Navy and Army:—

> “Another Christmas finds all the resources of the Empire still engaged in war, and I desire to convey on my own behalf, and on behalf of the Queen, a heartfelt Christmas greeting, and our good wishes for the New Year to all who on sea and land are upholding the honour of the British name.
>
> “In the officers and men of my Navy on whom the security of the Empire depends I repose, in common with all my subjects, a trust that is absolute.
>
> “On the officers and men of my Armies, whether now in France, in the East, or in other fields, I rely with an equal faith, confident that their devotion, their valour, and their self-sacrifice will, under God’s guidance, lead to victory and an honourable peace.
>
> “There are many of their comrades now, alas, in hospital, and to these brave men also I desire with the Queen to express our deep gratitude, and our earnest prayers for their recovery.
>
> “Officers and men of the Navy and of the Army, another year is drawing to a close as it began, in toil, bloodshed, and suffering, and I rejoice to know that the goal to which you are striving draws nearer into sight.
>
> “May God bless you and all your undertakings.”

The nation had by now realized the meaning of a world war. The British losses up to January 9, 1916, were 549,467, of whom 128,138 were dead. It was a scale of casualties far beyond anything in our history. Again, even the most thoughtless were becoming aware of the economic strain which must be met. At the outset many had deluded themselves with the hopes of a short war. It was generally believed that the stress of combat under modern conditions was too great to be long endured by mortal men. All the wars of the nineteenth century had been short. The Austro-Prussian War of 1866 had lasted only six weeks, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 six months, the recent Balkan wars only a few weeks, so far as the actual struggle went. Even the Crimean War had endured for little more than a year, the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 for less than eighteen months. But now we were approaching the eighteenth month of a war which in intensity of sacrifice had no equal, and, though the goal was nearer, it was not yet in sight. None of the easy protracted campaigns of Britain in the past, from the Hundred Years' War to the South African War, afforded any parallel. But there was one nineteenth-century struggle which was felt to give some kind of precedent, the desperate four years of the American Civil War. In that war as in this there could be no indecisive peace. The North had to win a complete victory or lose everything. In that war the greater potential strength in men and wealth was with the North, as it was now with the Allies. The problem of the North, as it was the problem of the Allies, was how to use that strength—how to mobilize and train its man-power, to blockade and weaken its enemy, and finally to force his lines and defeat him in a field battle. The North, like the Allies, had fumbled at the beginning. It had to learn its lesson, and the learning was costly. But when it had truly mobilized its strength, and used it with undivided purpose to crush the main enemy forces, the North had won a complete and final victory. That was a precedent both to cheer and to solemnize. It demanded the concentration of every atom of our natural assets, but it promised for such effort and sacrifice a noble reward.[3]

Jan. 9, 1916.

On the 15th of December it was announced that Sir John French had resigned the command of the British forces in the West, and that Sir Douglas Haig had been appointed as his successor. The Field Marshal had borne the strain of a year and a half of war, and at his own request he was transferred to the command of the forces at home. Sir Douglas Haig stood in the very first rank of British soldiers. He

Dec. 15.

had played a chief part in the most hotly contested battles of the campaign—at the First Ypres, at Neuve Chapelle, at Festubert, at Loos. He was at once a scientific soldier after the most modern plan, and a true leader of men. Chary of speech, bold in design, resolute in execution, he had raised the First Army under his command to a foremost place among the British forces. He had the confidence of his men, and had earned the admiration of all who worked with him. Among his many merits not the least was that he had been a brilliant Staff officer, and had a proper understanding of the functions of a Staff. He was a young man, too, as modern generals go—only fifty-five; the youngest, except Gouraud, of all the great Army chiefs in the West.

Sir Douglas Haig was succeeded in the command of the First Army by Sir Charles Monro, who now returned from the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and who in turn was succeeded by Sir Archibald Murray, who had acted for three months as Chief of Staff at home and had done much to reconstitute the necessary General Staff in London. Major-General Kiggell became Chief of Staff on the Western front, and Sir William Robertson took Sir Archibald Murray's place at Whitehall. This last appointment was beyond doubt the most important made since the beginning of the war. We have seen in an earlier chapter that the most urgent need was a consistent strategic policy among all the Allies, and that for this purpose the Government of Britain must have as their adviser the ablest Chief of Staff that the Army could show. Of Sir William Robertson's qualifications for the post there was no question. A most learned and brilliant soldier, and an administrator of the first rank, he had done marvels as Quartermaster-General in the early months of the Western campaign. As Chief of Staff to Sir John French he had done good service, but his new post called for exceptional powers of character and mind. He became the supreme military adviser to the Cabinet on the conduct of the war. He was no military pedant, and might be trusted to take a broad view of what constituted armed strength. But he was also a professional soldier, and would not suffer vital military necessities to be forgotten in the intricacies of civil politics. The nation breathed more freely when it learned of his appointment, for it realized that the Government had now that expert guidance without which the national effort must be dissipated and weakened.

Dec. 18.

On the 18th of December Sir John French issued a farewell address to his troops. Such leave-takings are not easy, and in the Field Marshal's words there was a note of honest emotion and affection.

"In relinquishing the Command of the British Army in France, I wish to express to the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, with whom I have been so closely associated during the last sixteen months, my heartfelt sorrow in parting with them before the campaign, in which we have been so long engaged together, has been brought to a victorious conclusion.

"I have, however, the firmest conviction that such a glorious ending to their splendid and heroic efforts is not far distant, and I shall watch their progress towards this final goal with intense interest, but in the most confident hope.

"The success so far attained has been due to the indomitable spirit, dogged tenacity which knows no defeat, and the heroic courage so abundantly displayed by the rank and file of the splendid Army which it will ever remain the pride and glory of my life to have commanded during over sixteen months of incessant fighting.

"Regulars and Territorials, Old Army and New Army, have ever shown these magnificent qualities in equal degree.

"From my heart I thank them all.

"At this sad moment of parting, my heart goes out to those who have received life-long injury from wounds, and I think with sorrow of that great and glorious host of my beloved comrades who have made the greatest sacrifice of all by laying down their lives for their country.

"In saying good-bye to the British Army in France, I ask them once again to accept this expression of my deepest gratitude and heartfelt devotion towards them, and my earnest good wishes for the glorious future which I feel to be assured."

The Commander-in-Chief had deserved well of his country. He had led his troops in storm and sunshine, and had never failed in his duty towards them and their cause. Future historians may find points to criticize in his conduct of the campaign, but they will not deny him the title of a great public servant and a most gallant and capable leader. He had that indefinable quality which the British soldier honours and loves as "stout-heartedness," and his vigorous optimism rose highest in the darkest days, and did much to nerve and stiffen his armies. When he spoke to troops after action there was a curious simplicity and human kindliness in his words which made the

humblest private feel that the Commander-in-Chief was a man and a brother-in-arms. He received a Viscounty and took his title from Ypres, that shell of a city before which he had fought his greatest battle. It was a fitting choice, for his name will be eternally associated in history with the most miraculous achievement in the tale of British campaigning.

Note on the Parallels of the American Civil War.

1. The North had the greater man-power, but it had to learn how to use it. It began with the voluntary system, but by March 3, 1863, it was compelled to adopt compulsion (see page 162).

2. The North drew by far the greater part of its armies from men engaged in civil life, and it had to learn how to train them. Discipline was at first rated too low. Eventually, however, Grant succeeded in combining the corporate discipline of the regular with the initiative and self-reliance of the volunteer. As is the case with all new levies on a large scale, there was a tendency to create new units rather than to keep old units up to strength, a tendency from which Britain has not been exempt.

3. The North was not a military power, and the men at its head had no experience of war. Since it was the struggle of a nation for existence, it was not enough to find a good general and give him a free hand. The whole national strength, military, naval, and economic, had to be used, and therefore the supreme direction of the campaign was in the hands of the civilian Cabinet. This Cabinet was not united within itself, and Congress behind it was an encumbrance rather than a help. The Press, too, wasted much time in futile criticism. Finally, there was no General Staff at Washington to give expert advice. Hence, until the rise of Grant, there was no continuity of policy, and no cohesion in the strategic plan.

4. As always happens with improvised armies, the Staff work was bad. There were not sufficient good Staff officers to go round, and consequently there was an inclination to neglect the thinking side of the army. Almost every battle of the Civil War provides examples of faulty Staff work.

5. The strategic scheme of the North was very much that of the Allies in the present war—to use its superior strength in men, wealth, and position to crush its opponent. It had completely to invest the Confederacy and then press in the sides of the quadrilateral so as to leave the armies of the South with less and less ground to manœuvre in and draw their supplies from. The naval part was well done from the first. The South was rigorously

blockaded, and in the blockade the North broke away from many of the accepted practices of International Law and created new precedents. The result was that the South was pinched from the first, and very soon began to starve. Prices went up to a crazy level. Before the end of the war coffee sold at £8 per pound and tea at £6. A dinner at a hotel cost £4, a pair of boots £40, and a newspaper 4s. Moreover, practically all materials of war came from abroad, and if it had not been that the arsenals of the South were well supplied at the start, and that great quantities of munitions were captured from the North in the first victories, Lee must soon have come to a standstill from sheer lack of materials.

6. The North was always clear about its strategical objective, but far from clear about its strategical plan. The Northern generals, M'Clellan and the rest, began with a too ingenious strategy, with the result that they dissipated their strength. Five times great armies crossed the Potomac, and five times they were driven back by half their numbers. In 1862 four armies invaded Virginia and converged on Richmond. In three months Lee had routed them all. On two occasions at least the North was very nearly giving up the war in despair. The South was operating upon interior lines, and so could terribly punish divergence. For example, take Longstreet's dash to the west before Chickamauga. In the earlier part of the war, no doubt, the dissipation of force arose largely from the North not yet having got its transport and supply service into good shape.

7. Grant simplified the plan of the North and held to it resolutely. While Sherman cut the Confederacy in two, Grant led the Army of the Potomac against Richmond. He was brought face to face with Lee behind the lines of Petersburg, and after a long struggle forced him to evacuate them. Lee broke loose, but the net had closed round him and there followed the surrender at Appomattox. Grant ended the war in the only way by which the Union could be safeguarded—a complete and final field victory.

8. The Allied war of entrenchments may be paralleled by the trench fighting in the Wilderness campaign. Being unable to turn Lee's flank, Grant was driven to frontal attacks, and he failed, as the Allies failed repeatedly, from lack of reserves. Take the series of engagements known as the Battle of Spottsylvania. On May 10, 1864, Grant attacked with three divisions after a long artillery preparation. The twelve battalions in the centre, like the Highland Brigade at Loos, swept everything before them. They carried the first position, took twenty guns and 1,200 prisoners, and then swept on and carried the second position. But Lee delivered his counterstroke, caught the Federals when their impetus was exhausted, and drove them back to their

original line. Two days later, early on the morning of 12th May, Grant made another desperate attack on a salient in the enemy's front. Once again the first position was carried; once again the Northerners were brought up against the second position and routed by Lee's counterstroke. The same thing happened in other battles of the Civil War—at Gettysburg, for example, where the superb charge of Pickett's Virginians failed for lack of support. Where a frontal attack succeeded, as at Chickamauga and Chattanooga, it was because behind the spear-head there was a spear-shaft.

9. The American cavalry were the forerunners of the British mounted infantrymen. Like our own cavalry they could fight on foot or on horseback as occasion demanded. Had von Lauenstein's 40,000 horsemen, who swung round the Russian right wing at Vilna in September 1914, been better trained on the mounted infantry plan, von Hindenburg's stroke might have succeeded.

10. There are many points of tactical interest. The attack by successive lines in open order and by successive rushes was perfected, if it was not invented, by the Americans, and the whole of their minor tactics are worth studying as an example of devices adopted owing to the novel necessities of the case, like so many of the minor tactics in the present war. It was also a highly scientific war. Breech-loaders and repeating rifles were first employed in it. It was, like the present war, very largely one of engineering, for the existing communications had all to be remodelled. Finally, transport and supply questions bulked large, and on the side of the North these departments became towards the end amazingly efficient. Grant in the last two years of the war could make the highest demands on his auxiliary services with the certainty that they would be fulfilled.

11. To sum up, the problem of the North was in most respects the problem of the Allies. Given greater wealth and more men, how could these best be used to crush the enemy? The North had to levy armies beyond its wildest dreams. It had to summon the whole of its available man-power, and for this purpose it had to use the legal imperative. It had to learn how to train them, so that the self-reliance of the volunteer should be preserved under the discipline of the corporate unit. It had to use its navy to hem in the enemy, and to starve and cripple that enemy. It had to find men to lead its armies who could get the full value out of its greater numbers and better equipment. It had to find the right strategical plan and stick to it, discarding all divergent operations and brilliant side-shows. And when all this had been done, it had to fight hard for success, to deliver hammer-blow after hammer-blow till the armed might of the South crumbled to pieces in the field. Potential strength

was not enough; it had to be made real. Real strength was not enough; it had to be correctly used. Nothing less than a complete and whole-hearted national effort availed. But when that effort was made, there was victory.

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[1] Some of the Territorial battalions, which, owing to the foolish system of second-line units, had great difficulties in getting their drafts, were now reduced to a third and even a quarter of their original strength, but were still treated as complete battalions. The same thing happened in the American Civil War, when the North, instead of recruiting the seasoned battalions, allowed the formation of new regiments. Only Wisconsin created no new units, but kept her original regiments up to full strength, so that, as Sherman said, a Wisconsin regiment was equal to an ordinary brigade.

[2] See Appendix III.

[3] The parallel between the North and the Allies is worked out more fully in the note at the end of this chapter.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

THE SECOND WINTER ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT.

The Fronts in November—The Dvina—The Styr and Strypa—German Winter Preparations—The Fight for the Coast Road to Riga—Russians take Kemmern—Bersemunde Farm—The Russian Offensive at Dvinsk—Fight for the Sventen Heights and the Platonovka Isthmus—Russians enter Illukst—Situation on the Pripet—November Fighting on the Styr and Strypa—The "Double Bluff"—German Dispositions in December—Position of Rumania—New Russian Army—Ivanov's Plan—Czernowitz and its Importance—Ivanov's Attack—Success on the Styr—Russians approach Uscieszko—Ivanov fails to take Czernowitz—Russian Losses—Partial Success of the Offensive—Speeches of the Tsar and General Polivanov.

If we take the first day of November as the opening of the winter campaign, we shall find both fronts in the East in a fluid condition. The great German offensive, which began on 28th April, had clearly failed, and the armies of Russia were no more defeated than when, a year before, they had pushed von Hindenburg to the Posen frontier and menaced Cracow. But a great movement in modern war has no sharp and final end. It dwindles away in a score of little actions, the dregs of the old plan. By 1st November the serious menace to Riga and Dvinsk had gone; but these fronts were still uneasy. On the Styr and the Strypa there were offensives and counter-offensives, since neither side had found an impregnable fort.

But by the beginning of November the general features of the winter position were tolerably clear. Broadly speaking, both sides stood on the defensive. The Austro-Germans had reached a line which, though highly uncomfortable, was not unsafe. The character of the Dvina front made it fairly easy for von Hindenburg to maintain himself, since the river, with its few well-defined crossings, was a bad base for a Russian attack. The assailant was strictly limited in his choice of routes, and the problem of the defence was thereby lightened. It was one of the cases where the very strength of a river line made it difficult to organize an attack from behind it. It was open to the defence to entrench themselves on the few possible lines of advance, and thus hold their front with the smallest expenditure of force.

It was less like the holding of an ordinary river line than of a mountain wall, where the only gaps are the infrequent passes. Southward, in the Pripet Marshes, no Russian move was possible except on a broad front, and this the weather forbade. Farther south the German lines lay along the Styr, which flows into the Pripet, and the Strypa, which joins the Dniester. On that two hundred miles the position of both armies was restless and ill-defined. The open country of the Podolian plateau gave opportunity even in winter for military movements, and there, if anywhere, lay the *terrain* for a winter campaign.

The Germans, after their fashion, made the best of their position. They dug formidable entrenchments, strengthened where possible with concrete and steel. Automatic rifles were served out to the troops, and they doubled their total of machine guns, making a nest of them in each section. Their heavy guns were mounted on concrete platforms on every knuckle of solid ground. Behind their front they improved their communications by building branch lines and doubling some of the existing railways, using for their new constructions the causeways which threaded the marshes. Much of the material so used seems to have been brought from Belgium, which, since before the war it had the greatest railway development to the square mile of any country in Europe, could spare material without missing it. Roads were improved for motor transport, and a great deal of bridge building was done all over the occupied area of Poland. So secure did the Germans feel in their possession, that engineering works on a big scale were begun, including a canal from the Vistula to the Warta, for which the Reichstag voted large appropriations. The unfortunate country was bled white by the conquerors. Its starving artisans were refused food so long as they remained in their native land, but were offered free transport to, and employment in, the industrial areas of Germany, since every Pole who became a munition worker released a German for the army. Further, conscript regiments were levied in Russian Poland, and an attempt was made to combine Poles from German, Austrian, and Russian territory into separate units.

The tale of the November fighting is one of spurts of activity, chiefly in the northern sector, which presently died down to the complete stagnation which preceded the Christmas battles in the south. We left von Hindenburg's army before Riga, with its centre from Kish to Olai, in the angle between the Misse and the Aa, its left wing on the coast railway between Kemmern and the west end of Lake Babit, and its right along the Dvina, from the south shore opposite Dahlen Island towards Borkovitz and Linden. It had failed to cross the river, Olai was the farthest point it could reach on the Mitau-Riga line, and the coast route had so far resisted all attempts to force a passage.

Von Hindenburg's next effort was made in this last quarter. On the 31st of October he attacked on the front between Kemmern and Lake Babit, and forced the Russians back for some distance. He had three army corps for that assault, and heavy guns had been brought by sea to Libau, and thence by motor traction. On Saturday, 6th November, the Russians turned the tide, and the appearance of their warships on the sea compelled the Germans to extend their left till it had reached Ragassem, at the northern end of Lake Kanger. They seem to have feared a landing which would take them in rear. Next day the Russians pushed forward between Shlock and Lake Babit, and on Monday, the 8th, held all the ground up to Kemmern.

Oct. 31.

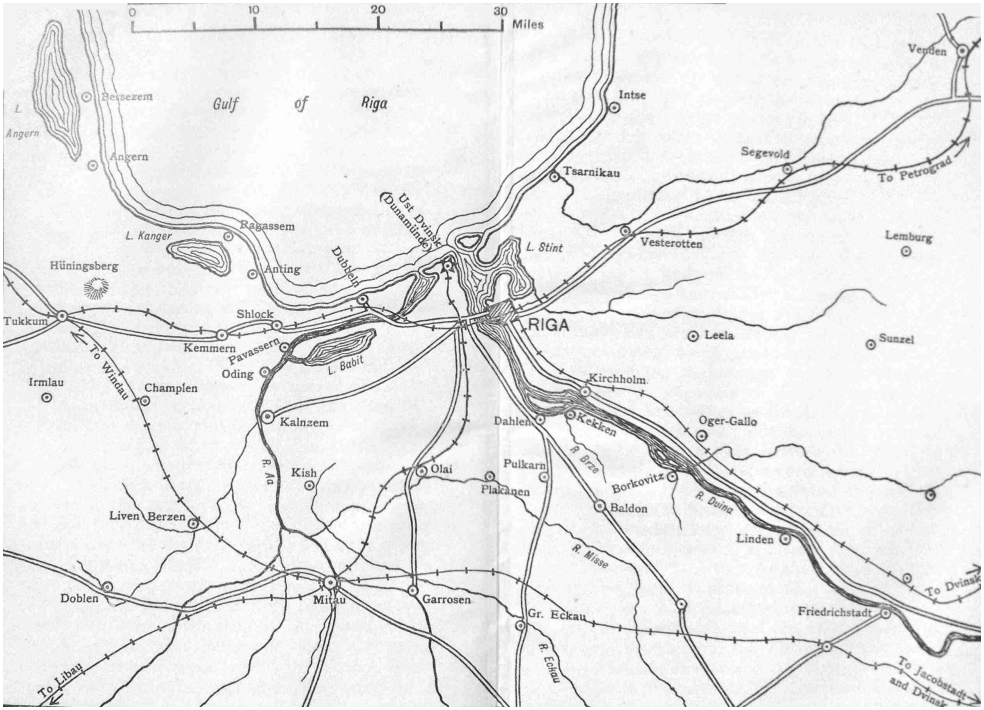
Nov. 6.

Nov. 7.

On the 10th this series of actions culminated in a considerable battle. On the 7th the Russians had carried Olai, on the Mitau railway, and on the 10th they forced back the Germans from Kish, and, among the swampy woods south of Lake Babit, joined hands with their own forces which were defending the coast route. Early in the morning they had begun a great artillery preparation, and a Russian detachment managed to work round on the right flank of the enemy. After a heavy day's fighting amid the snowy swamps the Germans were forced west of Kemmern, and the ships on the sea scattered their left wing like sheep. Next day, the 11th, Kemmern and Anting were occupied by the Russians, and the whole German left fell back well to the west of Kemmern, while the centre was forced in towards Mitau. The Russian right was free of the defile between Babit and the sea, and, with its rear protected by the lake, was in a favourable position for a blow at the important junction of Tukkum. But the weather forbade, and the path of prudence was followed. The enemy was now pushed more than twenty miles from Riga, and the city from this quarter was secure. The Russians entrenched themselves on the line Ragassem-Kemmern and waited. They held the debouchment of the pass between Babit and the sea, and had safeguarded their flanks against the day when the frozen Baltic would no longer give them the support of their ships of war.

Nov. 10.

Nov. 11.



The Approach to Riga. (A great part of the country south of Riga along the Dvina is swampy woodland.)

Von Hindenburg's final effort for the season was made at the point on the Dvina opposite Dahlen Island, where the German lines came nearest to the city. We have seen that in the last days of October the Germans effected a lodgment on the island, but could not maintain themselves. The farm of Bersemunde lies on the river bank exactly facing the upper end of Dahlen, at the mouth of a little stream called the Berse or Brze. If the angle between this stream and the Dvina could be occupied, then a flat space could be found for massing troops under cover of guns on the high ground to the east, and pontoons could be floated down the Berse to make a bridge to Dahlen.

Nov. 11.

On 11th November, while the fight at Lake Babit was going ill for the Germans, von Hindenburg, after his custom, began to attack in another area, that of Bersemunde. A second attack was made on 16th November; and on Monday, the 22nd, the Germans advanced with a division, captured the farm, and occupied the angle of the stream, taking several hundred prisoners. Next day the Russians retook the place, and on the 24th they were again turned out. The Germans remained in the angle, but it did them little good, for the Russian artillery on

Nov. 16-22.

Nov. 24.

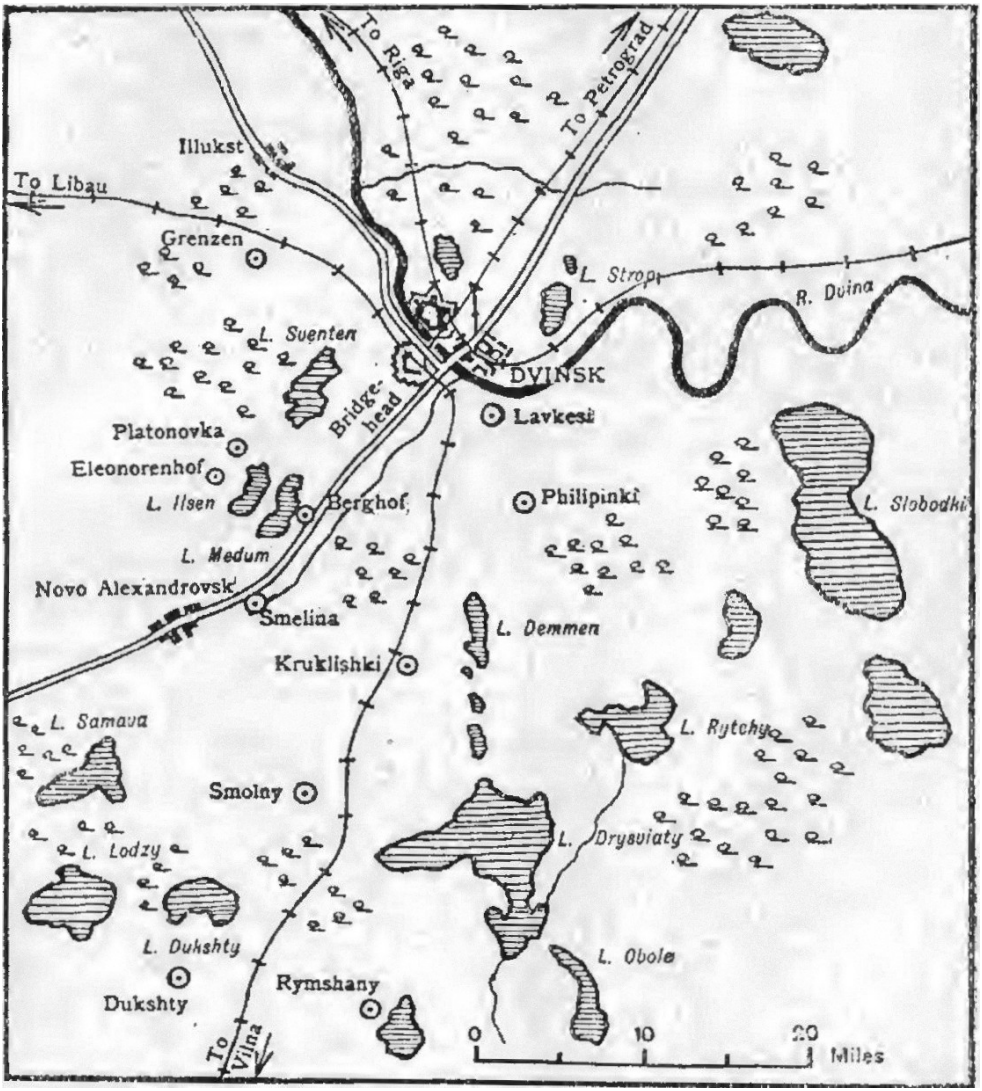
the left bank of the Berse dominated the position, and made any attempt at bridging the Dahlen channel impossible. The struggle for Riga had closed with the German control of the left shores of the Dvina to a point ten miles from their goal; but thence the front fell back to the west in a wide circle which contained as wild a tangle of lake and swamp as any defence could seek. On the two vital avenues of approach, the Mitau and the coast railways, they were held by the Russians at a long range from the city.

The November fighting at Dvinsk saw a vigorous Russian counter-offensive. At the end of October the Germans held Illukst on the northern road, Medum on the Novo Alexandrovsk road, and ran thence to a point south of Lake Drysviaty. The main danger came from the district of meres and sandhills between Illukst and Medum. They held the low hills on the western shore of Lake Sventen, and in the isthmus between Lakes Sventen and Ilsen they had fortified all the chief ridges. The peril lay in the fact that the Russian forces in the isthmus were out of touch with their neighbours. The length of the lakes lay between them, and in case of a vigorous German push they might be driven in before they could get reinforcements. It was necessary, for the safety of Dvinsk, that they should push their lines farther to the west, so as to have the lakes in their rear.

Oct. 31.

The offensive was undertaken by two separate forces, one attacking the heights west of Lake Sventen, and the other the hills of the isthmus around Platonovka. The former movement began on 31st October. An advanced guard crossed the shallow lake by night in boats and rafts, and seized a promontory called the Dog's Tail. Then began a great artillery duel between the Russian batteries east of Sventen and Medum and the Germans to the west of Lake Ilsen. On 3rd November the infantry advanced and carried the two main heights, Bald Hill and Red Hill. The Germans retook some of the ground by a counter-attack, and diverted to the place a division which had been destined for Illukst. But the Russians clung to their gains, and the fact that they now held the crest of these heights freed their division which was advancing on Platonovka from a flanking fire. By the middle of the month the western shores of Lake Sventen were securely in Russian hands, as well as the heights of the isthmus, and the German front had been forced back at these points nearly three miles. The Russian casualties were a little over 7,000, and the enemy losses were not less than 20,000.

Nov. 3.



The Approaches to Dvinsk.

Promptly on this success followed an attack on the German salient at Illukst. On the 24th the Russians seized the farm of Yanopol, twenty miles below Dvinsk and a little north of Illukst, which had been the crossing-place of the enemy in his attempt at envelopment. Early on the 29th the Germans replied by a counter-attack from Illukst, which failed, and was succeeded by a fresh Russian advance. They took the farm of Kazimirichki, and forced their way into the outskirts of Illukst itself. These

Nov. 24.

Nov. 29.

gains of ground were not large, but they greatly increased the safety of Dvinsk. The two cities of the Dvina were now secured for the winter against anything but a concentrated German assault, and in the then condition of the Eastern campaign there was small chance of such a concentration.

In the centre, where Prince Leopold faced Ewarts, there was little to record during November. The advanced German position in the Pripet Marshes was found to be untenable, and a gradual drawing westward was apparent. Ewarts's raids produced no answer from the enemy, who were too busy looking for a foothold to think of fighting. These raids increased in boldness, resembling the flying visits inaugurated by the Canadians on the Western front. One, on the 29th of November, surprised the headquarters of a German corps west of Pinsk. Two generals and a number of officers were taken prisoners, and the losses of the Russian guerillas were only two killed and nine wounded.

Farther south, in Ivanov's section, the November fighting was chiefly on his right wing, where Brussilov struggled for the crossings of the Styr between Kolki and Rafalovka. The Russians had taken the town of Chartorysk on 18th October, and by the end of the month held Komarov and Budka. On 15th November von Linsingen counter-attacked, drove Brussilov across the Styr, and retook Chartorysk. On 19th November the Russians were again in that town, and once again they had to leave it. These battles of the late autumn were nicknamed the "Poliesian Quadrille," and, judged by results, had the indeterminate movements of a formal dance.

Nov. 15.

Nov. 19.

Ivanov's centre and left were meantime engaged on the rivers which flow south in parallel lines from the Podolian plateau to the Dniester. His success of the autumn had rolled back von Bothmer and von Pflanzer from the Sereth to west of the Strypa. These streams rise in a high, treeless tableland, and their early courses are through shallow troughs studded with ponds and marshes. Lower down they have cut cañons through the sandstone, which deepen as they flow southward till the walls are often 400 feet high before they join the Dniester. The November fighting was chiefly at the point where the one type of river valley ceases and the other begins, and where, since neither swamps nor defiles impede, a crossing was easiest. On the Strypa this area lay between Siemikovitse and Sokolov, and there, at the beginning of November, the Russians won some success, fording the river and taking many prisoners. Slowly they were pushed off the western bank, and at the end of November the enemy crossed, but after a bloody fight failed to secure a position on the eastern shore. In all these

engagements there was no great strategic purpose. It was the kind of encounter which is inevitable when two armies face each other, neither of which has found a strong defensive line.


MARSHES
OF THE PRIPET
To Pinsk
Nobel
Pogost
Serniki
R. Pripet
Notoselki
Dombrovitza
R. Turia
R. Stochod
R. Visliukha
Rafalovka
Sarny
Khriask
Polanne
Hulevitze
Chartorysk
(Czartorysk)
Kamarov
R. Goryn
Kovel
Janovka
R. Styr
Kolki
Stepan
Golobi
Sokul
Trostsianetz
Holovin
Kostopol
Rozishchy
Krasno
Zydychin
Kivertse
Lutsk
Olyka
Lavrov
Rovno
Torgovitza
Zdolbitna
R. Horyn
Boremi
Mylnov
Voinitza
Osheni
Dubno
Berestchek
Kozin
Frontier
Chatojov
Radzivilov
Toporov
Brody
To Lemberg
As it approaches the Marsh region the Styr runs between low swampy banks—crossings are few and difficult. South of the Marsh region the country is well wooded.
0
10
20
30
40
60
Miles

The Line of the Styr.

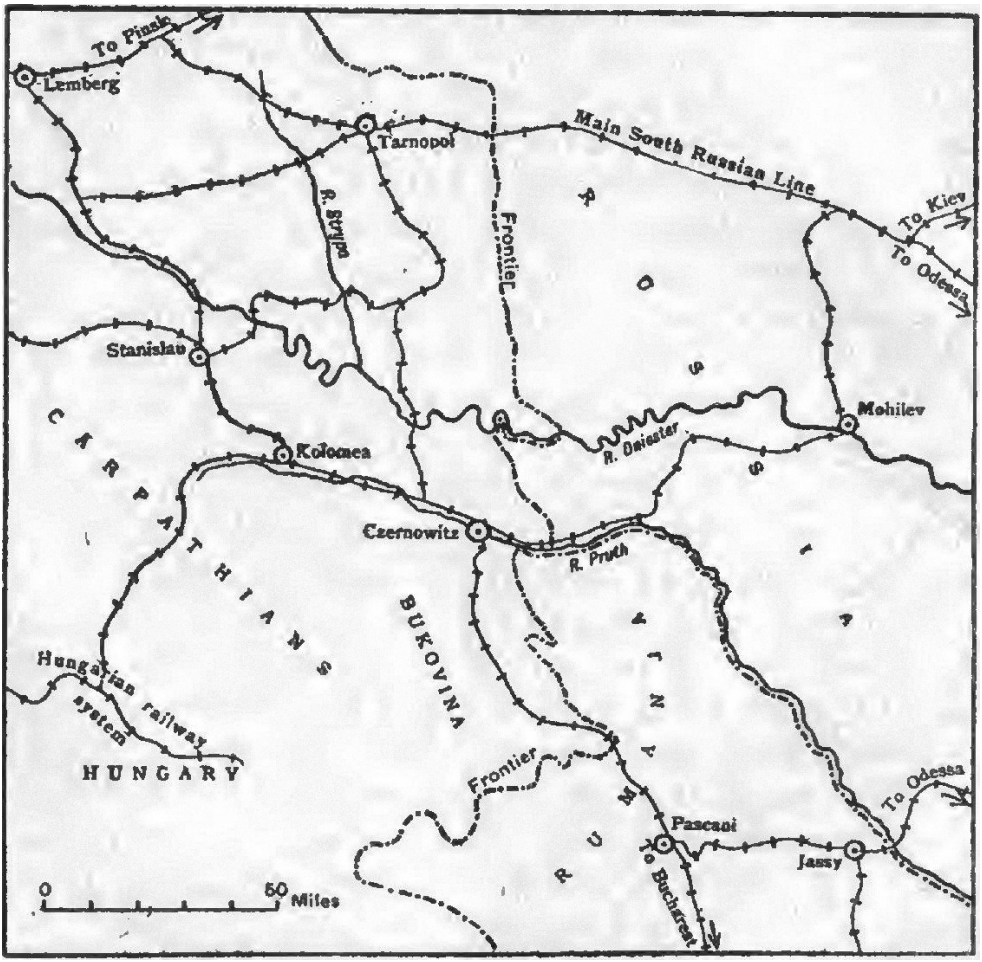
By the beginning of December the situation in the Balkans was such that it seemed to call for some great effort on the part of Russia if bad was not to become worse. The Allied forces at Salonika were shut in, awaiting attack. Before them was a Bulgarian army nearly twice their size, while on the Lower Danube, watching Rumania, were von Mackensen's divisions. If the main Austro-German right chose to make a great effort it might force its way into Bessarabia, with the result that Rumania would be caught as between pincers. In that event she would be forced, willy-nilly, to enter the campaign on the side of the Teutonic League. Germany had succeeded admirably in her game of bluff. Of this engaging device we may detect two principal forms. The first is to announce your intentions, convince your adversary of your sincerity, and then refrain from carrying them out. That is the single bluff. The second and subtler is to announce your intentions, convince your adversary that you are lying, and then do precisely as you have announced. That is the double bluff. Germany had used it in her invasion of France through Belgium, which her Staff had talked about for years. She had lately declared that she would take Salonika, drive the Allies into the sea, and invade Egypt. We suspected the double bluff, and sent armies to these theatres. In reality it was a most successful use of the single bluff. Germany was neither able nor willing to do one or the other, but she obtained what she wanted without crossing the Bosphorus or sending a single brigade to the Vardar. She was now free to use von Mackensen to manœuvre Rumania into her fold.

Early in December there was a strong reinforcement of the Austro-German right wing. This seemed to point to a Bessarabia offensive, designed partly to checkmate any advance of Ivanov, for there had long been rumours of new armies in Southern Russia, and partly to drive Rumania to a decision. The total Teutonic force on the Eastern front was now reckoned at 120 divisions of infantry and twenty-three of cavalry. The group commands remained much as before: the north under von Hindenburg; the centre under Prince Leopold, which had now dwindled to one army, the 9th; the right centre—the real centre—under von Linsingen; and the right under the Archduke Frederick. It is the right which must now engage our attention. On the Styr was the 4th Austrian Army under the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, with Puhallo and the 1st Austrian Army on his right. Farther south, in Central Galicia, was the 2nd Austrian Army under Boehm-Ermolli. On the Strypa lay von Bothmer, with an army largely German in composition; and on the Dniester and in the Bukovina was the 6th Austrian Army, under von

Pflanzer. The right wing from the Styr southwards included at least 800,000 men, of whom nearly a third were German troops.

From the late autumn Russia had been organizing a new army—the 7th—at her Black Sea bases. Never in the course of the campaign, however hardly pressed she might be on her main front, did she shrink from any special effort which her Allies required. This army was put under the command of General Shcherbachev, formerly at the head of the 11th Army, and its first intention was a movement across the Danube against the Bulgarian rear. It was to anticipate this strategy that, after the Serbian *débâcle*, von Mackensen's German divisions sat down to watch the river lines. It was hoped that, with this force to back her, Rumania would join the Allies. But Rumania, not without reason, declined. She preferred to follow the Fabian strategy which had served her so well in the Balkan War. Besides, her northern frontier was far from safe. Without Rumania's consent an attack on Bulgaria was impossible, and Russia had to look to another sphere of action. The Bukovina, the gap between the Dniester and the Pruth, was the best alternative. If she attacked strongly in that quarter she would anticipate the Austro-German advance into Bessarabia, and she would most certainly attract some of the German divisions from the Balkans. If her advance succeeded, she would do much to calm Rumania's fears and ensure her future support. Further, any such move would explain to the enemy the meaning of the South Russian concentration, and attract his attention from her designs, which were now maturing, for a great offensive in Transcaucasia.

By the middle of December Ivanov had prepared his new dispositions. As before, Brussilov, with the 8th Army, faced the Archduke Joseph and Puhallo on the Styr. The 11th Army, under General Sakharov, opposed Boehm-Ermolli in Central Galicia. Shcherbachev's new 7th Army was on the Middle and Lower Styr against von Bothmer, and Lechitsky's 9th Army faced von Pflanzer in the Bukovina.



The Railway Communications of Czernowitz.

We must briefly examine the communications and the *terrain* of the battle-ground which Ivanov had chosen. His sector was better supplied with railway communications than any other part of the Russian front. From Sarny a line ran north through the Pripet Marshes, connecting him with Ewarts. The Kiev-Sarny and the Kiev-Rovno line supplied his right, the Odessa-Tarnopol line his centre, and his left was served by the railway following the north bank of the Pruth from Czernowitz to Mohilev, where it linked up with the South Russian system. Czernowitz itself was the railway centre of a wide region. The great Austrian line came from Kolomea, sending off lateral branches towards the Rostoki Pass, and north to Buczacz. The two main railways of Northern Rumania—those from Galatz and Bucharest—met at a junction fifty miles south-east of the town, and were

continued to join the Kolomea line and that which followed the north bank of the Pruth towards South Russia. The place had been in Austrian hands since the beginning of the previous March, and had been elaborately fortified. It lies in a hollow, and the heights round it had been covered with circles of trenches and redoubts.

The reasons are obvious why Czernowitz was selected as the Russian objective. Its capture would be the best protection of Rumania's northern frontier against the Austro-German menace. South lay the wild heights of the Eastern Carpathians, and by Czernowitz alone could a modern army sweep down on the plains of Moldavia, or work along the Pruth in an encircling movement. From Ivanov's point of view the ground between the Pruth and the Dniester offered an advance safeguarded on the flanks by formidable rivers, and free from any insuperable natural barrier. Not that the space was a gap in the geographical sense. The Russian front in mid-December may be taken as running just west of the Bessarabia frontier. It lay between ten and fifteen miles from the city, and the ground between, save for the flats along the river, was filled with a range of oak-clad hills. On the eastern fringe of these uplands lay a chain of villages—Dobronoutz, Toporoutz, Rarantcha, Bojan—which were held by the enemy.

Dec 24-27.

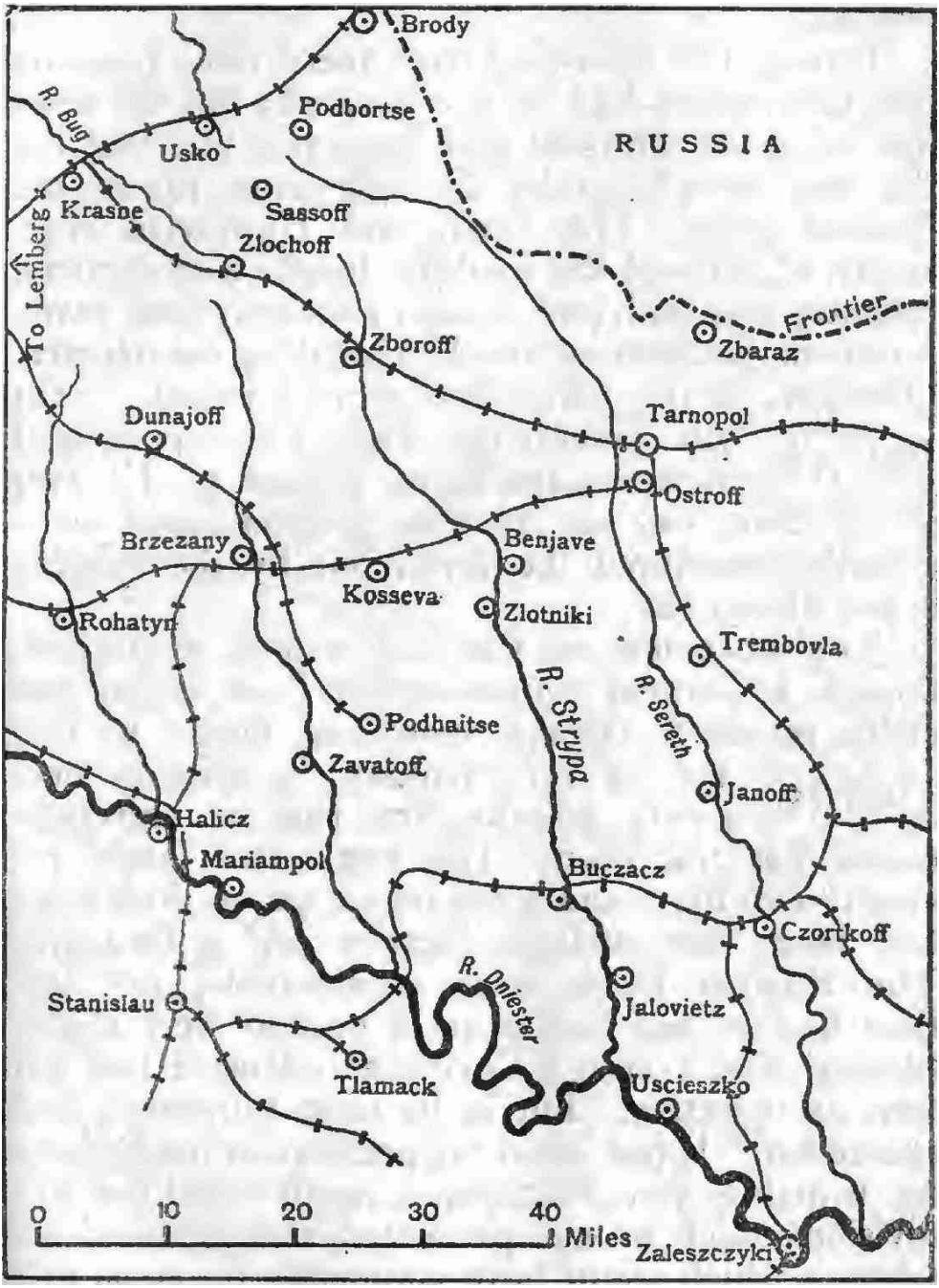
Ivanov's plan was to fight holding battles on his right wing and centre, to strike heavily against Czernowitz with Lechitsky's army, and attempt an enveloping movement with Shcherbachev's new 7th Army on the Lower Strypa. The first shots were fired on 24th December, and by the 27th the engagement was general along the front. The threat had brought five German divisions back from the Balkans, and von Mackensen himself had returned to his old group command, replacing the Archduke Frederick in the direction of the Austro-German right.

Dec. 28.

The main attack was on the ridge between the villages of Toporoutz and Rarantcha. After a heavy artillery bombardment, Lechitsky carried this on the evening of the 28th. Next day the holding battle developed on the Styr at the old angle of Chartorysk. On Saturday, January 1, 1916, this attack was pressed on the bend of the river between the railway bridge of the Sarny-Kovel railway and Chartorysk, where the eastward curve of the Styr enabled the Russian guns to keep up a cross fire on a front of seven miles. Brussilov managed to cross and take Khriask, while farther south he cleared the east bank and took the village of Kolki. That same day Shcherbachev's 7th Army was in action on the Strypa. They

Jan. 1, 1916.

were held at the bridgeheads of Buczacz, but their left wing managed to approach but not to take Uscieszko, on the Dniester, thereby cutting the branch line from Czernowitz to Buczacz.



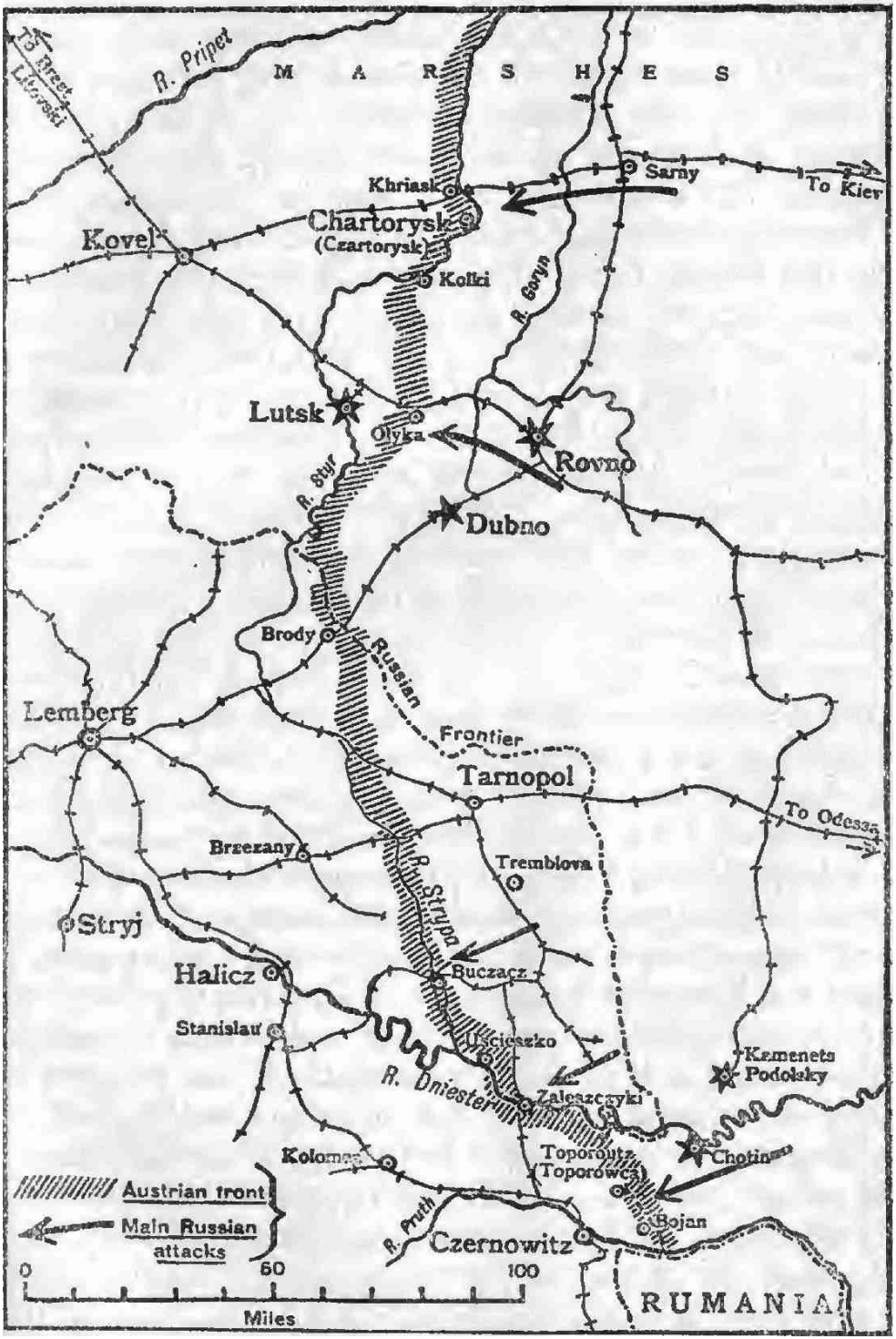
The Line of the Strypa.

During the following days there were rumours that Czernowitz had been evacuated; but the news was false, for the most that happened was that the city was brought under the long-range fire of the Russian guns. The Croat and Hungarian regiments, which held the foothills, fought with extreme gallantry and skill, and though Lechitsky took many prisoners, he never approached breaking the defence. Brussilov, in the north, was more fortunate. On 7th January he took Chartorysk, and occupied the rising ground to the west of it. Next day an Austrian counter-attack temporarily recaptured the town, but by the evening it was driven out.

Jan. 7, 8.

The movement on Czernowitz now languished, though a German counter-attack from Bojan was easily repulsed. Heavy snow had begun to fall, and by 15th January, in spite of desperate assaults, the ring of entrenchments was unbroken. The battle had lasted for twenty-two days, and some regiments on both sides had been continuously engaged for a fortnight. The Russian losses were considerable, not less than 60,000, and the gains of ground were slight. Strategically, Ivanov's Christmas offensive had not won its objective. But in its main purpose it had succeeded. It had eased the pressure in the Balkans by bringing von Mackensen north with his five divisions, and it had prevented that Bessarabian advance which might have compelled Rumania to a disastrous decision.

Jan. 15.


To Brest Litovsk
R. Pripet
M A R S H E S
Khriask
Sarny
To Kiev
Kovel
Chartorysk
(Czartorysk)
Kolki
R. Goryn
Lutsk
Olyka
Rovno
R. Stur
Dubno
Brody
Russian
Frontier
Lemberg
Tarnopol
To Odessa
Brzezany
Tremblova
R. Strypa
Stryj
Halicz
Buczacz
Stanislau
Ustieszko
Kamenets
Podolsky
R. Dniester
Zaleszczyki
Kolomea
Toporoutz
(Toporowce)
Chotin
Austrian front
Main Russian attacks
R. Pruth
Bojan
Czernowitz
0
60
100
Miles
RUMANIA

Ivanov's Offensive against the Austrian Right, Dec. 1915-Jan. 1916.

The mere fact that so soon after the great retreat so vigorous a counterstroke should have been possible was a proof of the strong recuperative power of the Russian armies. In spite of the losses and trials of the year 1915, the situation was better at the end of it than at the beginning. Observers who had spent the preceding Christmas on the Rawka noted that, whereas then the Russians were reduced to one shell per gun per day, now they had a munitionment the equal of the enemy. Ivanov's attack was a local trial of strength, a sudden emergency measure, and no concerted offensive. Its cessation left the army and the nation without any sense of failure. The Minister of War, General Polivanov, while the battle was drawing to a close, spoke in a strain of high confidence. "Thanks to the mobilization of the great mass of men ordered some months ago, and the doubling of the number at our depôts, we have now a permanent reserve of a million and a half young recruits, which will allow us to feed the various units without sending to the front men with insufficient military training. Behind the four Allies are the natural resources of the whole universe. Behind the armies of the Central Powers are only weakness and exhaustion." And the Emperor's Christmas address to the Knights of St. George once more advertised Russia's resolution to the world. "I will conclude no peace till we have chased the last foe from our soil. And I will make no peace save in unison with our Allies, to whom we are bound, not by paper treaties, but by affection and our common sacrifice."

CHAPTER XC.

THE BREAKING-POINT IN WAR.

The Question of *Moral*—Working Rules—Different Question in Defence and Offence—No Breaking-Point in Defence—Instances—The Attack of Civilized Troops—The Eighteenth Century—The Nineteenth Century—No Percentage of much Meaning—Effect of Modern War Conditions on Soldiers' Nerves—The Breaking-Point not lowered—Prophylactics against Fear—Discipline—Movement—Custom—The New *Kismet*—An Army a Delicate Thing—"Joy of Battle"—Captain Julian Grenfell's Verses.

It may be of interest to devote a short chapter to an inquiry into the effect of the latest battle conditions upon that *moral* of the fighting man which is the main factor in victory. In the last resort all wars depend upon the resisting power of between five and six feet of shrinking human flesh. The men who fought at Marathon were not different in average physique and average temperament from those who fought in Champagne and Poland. A pressure too great will overpower body and spirit. We have no scale by which to measure that pressure; but, whether it be produced by clouds of arrows, by the swords of the legionaries, or by the shells of great guns, it must at all times in history have been approximately the same in quantity. There is always a breaking-point for the mortal soldier.

The psychology of the fighting man in war has never as yet been made the subject of a professorial treatise. It is a work which might have been expected from the Teutonic genius, but it may be that the difficulty of making laboratory experiments stood in the way. Consequently the task has been left to the novelists, who often argue without data. But, since mankind will always speculate upon a matter which so vitally concerns it, we have a variety of working rules which every soldier knows, but which he rarely formulates. The chief concerns the difficulty of sitting still under heavy fire. That is why the men in the support trenches which the enemy is shelling have a more difficult task than the attack. The chance of movement is a great relief, and the fact that a definite job is before a man gives him something better to think about than expectations of a speedy decease. That is why, too, the officer, who has the problem of keeping his men together and getting

them somewhere, is less likely to be troubled with nerves than the man whose business is merely to follow. To keep the mind engrossed is the great prophylactic against fear.

The practical question which has been often discussed among soldiers is when the breaking-point is reached—after what proportion of losses the defensive or the offensive will crumble. The question is really twofold, for the problem in defence is different in kind from the problem in attack. In the latter, to carry on requires a certain modicum of hope and mental energy; in the former there need be no hope, but only a passive and fatalistic resistance. It is useless to speculate about the breaking-point in a defence. Against savage enemies, when there is no hope of quarter, even ordinary troops will resist desperately. Again, if men from pride of honour or from any other cause are wholly resolved not to surrender, they will perish to the last man. There was no man left of the Spartans at Thermopylæ, or Roland's paladins at Roncesvalles, or the steel circle of the Scots at Flodden. Yakub and the defenders of the Black Flag were utterly destroyed at Omdurman. There were no survivors of that portion of the 3rd Canadian Brigade at the Second Battle of Ypres which held St. Julien. None returned from that company of the 2nd Scots Guards who were cut off at Festubert on 16th May. They remained on the field of honour with a ring of the enemy's dead around them. The men, too, who find themselves in the last extremity, and are supported by a shining faith, will wait on death as on a bridal. Gordon in his last days could write: "I would that all could look on death as a cheerful friend, who takes us from a world of trial to our true home." Or in another mood, with the exultation of the mystic on the threshold of immortality: "Look at me now, with small armies to command and no cities to govern. I hope that death will set me free from pain, and that great armies will be given me, and that I shall have vast cities under my command."

But in attack the question of the breaking-point is pertinent. After what losses will a unit lose its coherence and dissolve? The question, of course, only applies to corporate things like a company, a squadron, or a battalion, which depend for their military effect on training and discipline. A surge of individuals vowed to death will perish to the last man.[1] A rush of Ghazis, determined to enter Paradise, will not cease so long as any are alive. Take the charge of Ali-Wad-Helu's horsemen against the left of Macdonald's Brigade at Omdurman. Mr. Churchill has described it. "Many carrying no weapon in their hand, and all urging their horses to their utmost speed, they rode unflinchingly to certain death. All were killed and fell as they entered the zone of fire—three, twenty, fifty, two hundred, sixty, thirty, five, and one out beyond them all—a brown smear across the sandy plain. A few riderless

horses alone broke through the ranks of the infantry." There is no rule for such Berserker courage. The question is, how far discipline will carry men who have no hankering for Paradise.

In the eighteenth century it carried them very far. Those were the days of rigid and elaborate drill, and a discipline observed with the punctiliousness of a ritual. It may have been inelastic and preposterous, and destined to go down before a less mechanical battle order, but it achieved miracles all the same. Military records from Blenheim to Jena are starred with examples of the most conspicuous fortitude. Napoleon and the armies of the Revolution largely upset the old *régime*, but they, too, could achieve the impossible, and the last charge of the French Guard at Waterloo is among the classic feats of history.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, when human life began to be more highly valued, and philosophers looked forward to the decline of war, there was a tendency to underestimate the power of human endurance. People took to fixing a maximum loss in attack beyond which civilized troops could not keep cohesion. The favourite figure was twenty-five per cent.; but as a matter of fact this was exceeded in many contemporary instances, such as the charge of Pickett's Virginians at Gettysburg and von Bredow's famous *Todtenritt* at Mars-la-Tour, when of the 7th Magdeburg Cuirassiers only 104 returned, and of the 16th Lancers only 90. This maximum, whatever justification it may have once possessed, ceased to have much meaning as the conditions of fighting changed, and it was altogether exploded by the performance of the Japanese at Port Arthur. The truth is that no such figures mean much, for the power of a unit to advance after losses will depend entirely upon circumstances. For one thing, a cavalry charge is different from an infantry attack. The swift, head-long movement of the former deadens consciousness and the faculty of introspection, and a mounted remnant may go on where foot soldiers would slacken. Again, much depends upon the casualties among the officers. Normally, if a high proportion of officers fall, the unit will go to pieces, even though its total losses may not be extravagant. But even this rule has striking exceptions, such as the performance of the 7th Gloucesters at Gallipoli, who fought from midday till sunset on 8th August without any officer, and the 19th London at Loos, who, with their commissioned ranks practically out of action, carried out their part in the advance without a hitch. Again, the sense of winning, of being the spear-head of a successful thrust, may add to corporate discipline the complete fearlessness of the fanatic. The human spirit may be keyed up to such a point that each man acquires a separate purpose distinct from the purpose of his unit, and will go on, however badly

his unit is mauled. The 9th Black Watch at Loos, and more than one regiment in Champagne, provided instances where a battalion continued to advance successfully when it was little more than a company strong. Or pride in a glorious record may in exceptional cases inspire the wildest heroism, even when there is no hope of victory, as was proved by the performance of Irmanov's 3rd Caucasians in their great fight at Jaslo, in the retreat from the Donajetz.

At first sight it would seem safe to say that the most modern conditions of war must weaken the nerve power for an attack. The shattering percussion of the great shells, the curtain of shrapnel, the malign chatter of the machine guns, the heavy fumes of high explosives, the deadly effect of trench mortars, and such extra tortures as gas, asphyxiating shells, and lachrymatory bombs, would seem to make up an inferno too awful for man to endure. Besides, there is the maddening slowness of it all. In the old days battles were over in a few hours, or, at the most, a day. An attack succeeded or failed, but did not stretch into endless stages, each involving a new effort, and, in the intervals, the grimmest discomfort. Much can be done if there is good hope that it will soon be over. But if the gain of one position only paves the way for an attack upon a second, the nervous tension will not be relieved by any such expectation. A man cannot tell himself, "If I live through the next half-hour I will be safe," for he knows that even if he lives through the next half-hour there is every chance that he will fall five minutes later. A modern attack is of necessity lengthy, dogged, and sullen.

Yet it may be questioned if this increase in the terror of war has lowered the breaking-point. To meet it modern armies seem to have attained an increase in nerve power. The explanation, perhaps, is that the carnival of violence carries with it its own cure. After a little experience of it the senses and imagination are deadened. The soldier revises his outlook, and the new terror becomes part of the background, and so is half forgotten. If the tension at any one time lasts too long, the deadening may stop, and the tortured nerves be exposed again. But if the senses are once blunted, and no opportunity is given for that awakening when the wheel comes full circle, the human soul will adapt itself to the strangest conditions. That seems to be one moral of the campaign.

Let us glance briefly at the main prophylactics against fear. The bellicosity of the natural man stops short at the modern apparatus of combat. No sane man is born with a love of shell fire, and few sane men ever acquire a complete impassivity in face of it. Certainly not the best soldiers. The first fact to recognize is that the ordinary man, however stout his patriotism, will

want to run away. The confession of the New York private in the American Civil War is true of all wars and of the raw material of all armies. “We heard all through the war that the army was eager to be led against the enemy. It must have been so, for truthful correspondents said so, and editors confirmed it; but when you came to hunt for this particular itch it was always the next regiment that had it. The truth is, when bullets are whacking against tree trunks, and solid shot are cracking skulls like eggshells, the consuming passion in the heart of the average man is to get out of the way. Between the physical fear of going forward, and the moral fear of turning back, there is a predicament of exceptional awkwardness, from which a hidden hole in the ground would be a wonderfully welcome outlet.”[2]

The first safeguard against fear is the sense of community. That is the meaning of discipline, that the individual loses himself in the unit, that he has acquired the instinct to act in a certain way, even when a fluttering heart and a shrinking body bid him refrain. The man who with tight lips and a pale face advances and holds his ground under fire may be acting from a sense of duty or honour, but most commonly he is simply following an acquired instinct. But to give this instinct full play there must be the sense of companionship, and this is apt to be lost if the individual is too isolated. That is why the Germans, who used open order in 1870, had so many stragglers, and consequently in late years have tended to adopt mass formations, having to incorporate in their ranks many partially trained and unwilling elements. That is why a thin skirmishing line always demands a fairly high degree of training. In any case, whatever the experience of the troops, to preserve the sense of community it is necessary that they should have the consciousness that supports are not far off. They should be aware that behind them are other troops to reinforce them, and to profit by their efforts. This precept was recognized in the disposition of the Roman legions, and it was one of Napoleon’s chief maxims. We find it in the French regulations of 1875, which provided for *renforts*, to fill up the gaps in the firing line, and *soutiens*, who were meant to remain in the rear and produce a moral effect on the striking force. An officer of the 1870 war, quoted by Colonel Colin, wrote: “Every man should be able to see a little way behind him a body of troops which is following him and backing up his movements. He gets great confidence in that way, and will be brave far more readily. In several critical situations I have heard the following reflection in the mouth of the men: ‘There is no one behind us!’ The words circulated from one to another, anxious heads were turned back, almost inevitably dash faded away.”[3]

A second safeguard is action. “Immobility, physical, moral, and intellectual stagnation, surrender a man unreservedly to his emotions; whereas movement, work of any kind, tends to deliver him from them.” Movement is not always possible, but whenever it can be permitted it is a great security against fear. The Japanese knew this, and in the Manchurian war their speed of advance was amazing. The latter part of the 1870 war was fought by the French mainly with untrained troops, and whenever they did well it was because they were taken forward at a brisk pace. If movement is out of the question, shooting is a relief even when it is ineffective. A famous student of the psychology of war has called it “the safety-valve of fear.”

But the greatest of all safeguards is simply custom. It is the end to which the other safeguards are ancillary. Human nature becomes case-hardened under the sternest trials. If troops are “entered” skilfully to the terrors of war, it is amazing what a protective sheath forms over the soldier’s nerves. A new battalion during its first day in the trenches may be restless and “jumpy;” in a week it is at ease, and most probably too callous to the risk of the business. All men employed in dangerous trades—fishermen, sailors, miners, railwaymen—have this happy faculty. It is a Western form of *kismet*, a belief that till their hour comes they are safe. If death at any moment may appear out of the void it is useless to fuss about it, for nothing that they do can prevent it. Once this stoicism is attained the men are seasoned. War, instead of being a series of horrid tremors, becomes a routine, even a dull routine. It seems strange to use the word “dull” in connection with so hazardous a game, but such is the case. Seasoned troops adjust themselves to their novel environment, and for one man who finds it too nerve-racking ten will find it monotonous.

With due preparation and careful treatment, it seems certain that even in modern war we can postpone the breaking-point very far. The callous sheath, once it has formed, is hardy enough. But it is important to make sure that it is given a chance of forming. To use raw troops in a serious movement before they have been broken to war is to court disaster, and to be cruelly unfair to the troops themselves. And even with seasoned men it is well to remember that there is always a breaking-point. Armies are delicate things, and the finer their temper the more readily will they be ruined by clumsy handling. The best force in the world can be tried too high. A battalion which is left too long in, or returned too often to, a bad section of trench line will be apt to lose heart. So with the use of troops in action. It is a mistake to send in a unit too often and at too short intervals, more especially if it is seriously depleted in strength. The vigour of the offensive will go, and at the best be replaced by the fatalism of the defensive.

The matter had a special urgency in relation to the future offensive which occupied the minds of the Allies during the winter of 1915-16. It was becoming clear that every artillery preparation must be limited in range, and that troops which advanced too far under its cover would, sooner or later, be brought up against unbroken defences. The natural conclusion was that any advance must be by way of stages—the capture of one position by infantry, and then an artillery concentration against the next position, followed by a second infantry attack. But it was certain that troops which were checked in their first impetus, and compelled to consolidate the ground won and beat off counter-attacks, would be tried too high if, some days later, they were given the task of assaulting the next position. In such tactics we might at any moment stumble upon the breaking-point. The remedy was, obviously, the use of fresh troops for each stage of the advance, a constant chain of reserves passing up for each movement. By such a method every stage would have the advantage of a fresh impetus, and the supreme trial of modern war—recurrent efforts in which the spirit of the offensive must flag from sheer exhaustion—be avoided save in the last necessity.

This chapter would be incomplete without a reference to that high and sublimated battle spirit which is rare at the best of times, but which in all armies is possessed by the fortunate few. “Joy of battle” is a phrase too lightly used, and may well seem to most men a grim misnomer. Yet it is a reality, and without it war would be but a soulless and mercantile adventure. It comes not from the deadening of feeling, but from its quickening and transmutation. It belongs especially to youth, which finds in the colossal hazards of war an enlarged vitality. It is not pugnacity, for there is no rancour in it; the Happy Warrior fights not because he has much to hate, but because he has much to love. The true type is the minstrel Volker of Alsace, in the “Lay of the Nibelungs,” whose weapon was a sword-fiddlebow; every blow he struck went home, but every blow was also a note of music. Such souls have won not relief only, but joy; not merely serenity, but exultation. The glory of life is never felt more keenly than when the next moment may see it quenched, for the greatest of its glories is to be armed and mailed for the fray. In the ascending scale of battle tempers we may place first acquiescence, then peace, and last this positive glow and welcome. Captain Julian Grenfell, who was, like Lord Herbert of Cherbury, renowned in many sports and studies, fell at the Second Battle of Ypres, and in the days before the action, when spring was flushing the Flanders meadows, he wrote what may come to be regarded, alike for its occasion and its intrinsic value, as the chief of the war’s bequests to poetry:—

The naked earth is warm with Spring,
And with green grass and bursting trees
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,
And quivers in the sunny breeze;
And Life is Colour and Warmth and Light,
And a striving evermore for these;
And he is dead who will not fight,
And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
And with the trees to newer birth;
And find, when fighting shall be done,
Great rest, and fullness after dearth.

All the bright company of Heaven
Hold him in their high comradeship,
The Dog-Star and the Sisters Seven,
Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together,
They stand to him each one a friend;
They gently speak in the windy weather;
They guide to valley and ridges' end.

The kestrel hovering by day,
And the little owls that call by night,
Bid him be swift and keen as they,
As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him, "Brother, brother,
If this be the last song you shall sing,
Sing well, for you may not sing another;
Brother, sing."

In dreary doubtful waiting hours,
Before the brazen frenzy starts,
The horses show him nobler powers;
O patient eyes, courageous hearts!

And when the burning moment breaks,
And all things else are out of mind,

And only Joy-of-Battle takes
Him by the throat, and makes him blind,

Through joy and blindness he shall know,
Not caring much to know, that still
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,
And in the air Death moans and sings;
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

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[1] Even in the case of corporate things a code of honour held with the passion of a religion, as in the case of the Japanese, will lead to marvels of devotion. The argument which follows is concerned rather with European troops.

[2] *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Vol. II., p. 662.

[3] *The Transformations of War*, p. 80.

CHAPTER XCI.

THE DERBY REPORT.

The National Register—The Rate of Voluntary Enlistment declines—The Derby Scheme—Its Details—Misunderstandings—Position of Married Men made Clear—The Scheme closes—Lord Derby's Report—Results—Large Number of Bachelors Unattested—The First Groups called up—The Military Service Bill introduced—Opinion in the Country—Difficulties of Mr. M'Kenna and Mr. Runciman—The Debate in the House of Commons—Sir John Simon's Attitude—The Bill passed by Large Majorities—The Attitude of Labour—Importance of the Derby Scheme—Conscription a Return to the Traditional British Practice—The Parallel with the North in the American Civil War—Lincoln's Difficulties—He raises the Draft—Result.

During the summer of 1915 the problem of munitions occupied the attention of Britain to the exclusion of the problem of men. It was commonly assumed that we had more troops than we could fully equip, and though it was admitted that our levies must be increased, it was felt that till some security was given for the supply of *matériel* it was idle to insist on greater numbers. In August, as we have seen, the National Register was compiled. It provided essential data, but the wholesale "starring" of occupations detracted much from its value. Industries which were regarded as vital to the country were excluded, whereas the more scientific plan would have been to exclude individuals without regard to their occupation, for, however necessary to the country certain industries may have been, it did not follow that all the men they nominally employed were equally necessary to those industries. The ill effects of this mode of reservation were acutely felt when the intensive canvass began under Lord Derby's scheme.

Early in October it became clear that the rate of voluntary recruiting had fallen dangerously low. To keep our existing units at strength, a steady flow of at least 35,000 recruits per week was required, and the actual weekly average was far short of this figure. There were in the country over two million single men of military age unenlisted, and there were great numbers of married men who were willing to join the army, but who not unnaturally objected to taking the step while the unmarried hung back. Lord Derby's

appeal was directed to both classes. By enlisting men in groups, which should not come up till called on, the path was made easier for those who had special and terminable difficulties in their way. Once a man enlisted he could appeal to a local tribunal to consider his case, and either exempt him or transfer him to a later group; but he must first enlist. If he liked, he could join a regiment immediately; if he preferred to be relegated to a group, he was attested, and returned to his civilian occupation till he was called up. Groups were to be called up strictly in order, the younger unmarried men before the older, and all the single before the married.

The first limit of enlistment was fixed as 30th November. The work began with great impetus and enthusiasm, and the Trade Union and political leaders flung themselves heartily into it. Enlistment among the married men was especially large; but they naturally wished for some enlightenment as to what would be their status if the scheme failed. If, for example, few single men attested, would the married groups be called up at once? The Prime Minister in the House of Commons on 2nd November attempted to answer this question. "So far as I am concerned," he said, "I should certainly say that the obligation of the married man to enlist ought not to be enforced or binding upon him unless and until—I hope by voluntary effort, and if not, by some other means—the unmarried men are dealt with first." This seemed too much like an expression of personal opinion to be satisfactory, so on 11th November Lord Derby officially announced that he had been authorized by the Prime Minister to say that he had pledged his Government as well as himself. In a further statement, published on 20th November, after a reply by the Prime Minister in Parliament had once more clouded the subject with uncertainty, the matter was put clearly and finally. Lord Derby addressed the following letter to the Prime Minister, which Mr. Asquith accepted as expressing the intentions of the Government:—

Nov. 2.

Nov. 11.

Nov. 20.

> "As some uncertainty exists as to the effect of the various statements recently made in Parliament and the Press on the subject of recruiting, may I endeavour to put the position in a few words?
>
> "Married men are not to be called up until young unmarried men have been. If these young men do not come forward voluntarily you will either release the married men from their pledge or introduce a Bill into Parliament to compel the young

men to serve, which, if passed, would mean that the married men would be held to their enlistment. If, on the other hand, Parliament did not pass such a Bill, the married men would be automatically released from their engagement to serve.

"By the expression 'young men coming forward to serve' I think it should be taken to mean that the vast majority of young men not engaged in munition work, or work necessary for the country, should offer themselves for service, and men indispensable for civil employment, and men who have personal reasons which are considered satisfactory by the local tribunals for relegation to a later class, can have their claims examined for such relegation in the way that has already been laid down.

"If, after all these claims have been investigated and all the exemptions made mentioned above, there remains a considerable number of young men not engaged in these pursuits who could perfectly be spared for military service, they should be compelled to serve.

"On the other hand, if the number should prove to be, as I hope it will, a really negligible minority, there would be no question of legislation."

Dec. 12.

During the last week of November recruiting activities reached their height. Every effort was made to increase the gross total. Men from "starred" industries enlisted; civil servants were invited to attest; the eyesight test for recruits was postponed till their group should be called up. The date for the conclusion of the canvass was extended to 11th December, and then to 12th December, after which day the group system should cease. The rush to the recruiting offices during the few days before 12th December resembled the stress in the first months of war. All comers were accepted, and since it was found impossible to attest all who applied before midnight on 12th December, the names of those still unattested were taken, and the group system was kept open for them three days longer. The great effort had now been made, and it remained to await its results. That the Government meant to get the men, whatever the Derby figures, was proved by the proclamation issued on 18th December calling up for service, as from January 20, 1916, the second, third, fourth, and fifth groups.[1]

Jan. 4, 1916.

The next fortnight was filled with rumours. It was known that the gross attestation had been large, but that owing to the

indiscriminating character of the recruiting a great number must be subsequently rejected, and it was also believed that a very substantial proportion of the unmarried had refused to enlist. Speculation was set at rest on January 4, 1916, by the publication of Lord Derby's report.

The grand total of men of military age, excluding those who joined the Army between August 15 and October 23, 1915, was 5,011,441. Of these 2,829,263 men had enlisted, attested, or had been rejected. These large figures, however, would require to be cut down, as they included many "starred" men, and nearly a million who had not been medically examined. It was certain that the local tribunals would make further reductions, as many who had attested would be regarded as "indispensable." Further analysis was necessarily speculative. It was estimated that of the 840,000 single men attested, not more than 343,386 would be available; of the 1,344,979 married men, not more than 487,676. This gave a total yield from the canvass of a little over 830,000. Again, according to the Prime Minister's pledge, the men in the married groups could only be called up if no more than a negligible quantity of single men remained unaccounted for. But out of the 2,179,231 single men available, only 1,150,000 were accounted for under the Derby canvass. If from these figures the number of "starred" single men unattested—378,071—was deducted, it left a total of 651,160 unstarred single men who had not come forward. "This," wrote Lord Derby, "is far from being a negligible quantity, and, under the circumstances, I am very distinctly of opinion that in order to redeem the pledge mentioned above it will not be possible to hold married men to their attestation unless and until the services of single men have been obtained by other means, the present system having failed to bring them to the colours."

Lord Derby pointed out some of the difficulties under which he had laboured. The enormous list of "reserved" occupations had had a most detrimental effect on recruiting. The previous "starring," too, had led to many obvious abuses. Nevertheless, including those rejected on medical grounds, a total of nearly 3,000,000 men had placed themselves at the disposal of their country. Men had offered themselves from foreign towns wherever there was a British community, and from the remotest parts of the British possessions. "The canvass," Lord Derby concluded, "shows very distinctly that it is not want of courage that is keeping men back, nor is there the slightest sign but that the country as a whole is as determined to support the Prime Minister in his pledge made at the Guildhall on November 9, 1914, as it was when the pledge was made. There is abundant evidence of a determination to see the war through to a successful conclusion."[2]

The publication of the Derby Report cleared the air of rumours, and focussed national opinion. The situation had simplified itself. *Jan. 5.* The supreme military authorities had announced an imperative need for men. A campaign of voluntary enlistment, conducted with every conceivable device to stimulate enthusiasm and awaken the sense of duty, had yielded less than 900,000 men. Of these more than half would not be available, according to the Prime Minister's pledge, unless steps were taken to compel the enlistment of the large unattested balance of single men. The view of the overwhelming majority of the nation was never for a moment in doubt. The Prime Minister could not be false to an explicit undertaking, given after due consideration and many times repeated. On Wednesday, 5th January, Mr. Asquith introduced the Military Service Bill into Parliament.

So far as opinion went, the case may be briefly summarized. There was no considerable section of the people against the application of legal compulsion, except the official organization of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions. A handful of extreme Radicals, who were very generally repudiated by their constituencies, purported to oppose the measure on principle, and there were a number of small doctrinaire bodies, religious and secular, throughout the land which followed suit. Those who objected to all war and the few who specifically objected to the present war were naturally in opposition. Within the Cabinet itself it was understood that there were three doubting Ministers. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had scruples from the point of view of national finance in withdrawing any further large number of men from productive industry. The President of the Board of Trade, knowing the shortage of skilled labour, feared the effect of wholesale recruiting. The Home Secretary, who represented the straitest sect of old-fashioned Radicalism, was understood to have some kind of conscientious objection to any departure from voluntaryism, though he had assented to Acts which compelled time-expired marines and soldiers to remain under service. The difficulties of the first two Ministers were very real, and worthy of all respect. A nation in a struggle for life must fight with all its weapons, and for Britain her wealth and industries were not the least part of her armoury. The financial position was anxious, and if our financial strength weakened it would mean as much as the loss of armies to the Allied cause. We were short of labour for munitions and shipbuilding, for war services as well as for civilian life. Clearly a balance must be struck between rival interests, all equally vital to the conduct of the war. On the other hand, it was to be said that the wholesale "starring" and reservation of industries had met a large part of these Ministers' claims, and that, if priority could be given to

any one need, it should be to the demand for fighting men. An army may conquer, even if it is badly supplied and its pay in arrears, but it cannot conquer if it is too small.

The debate on the Military Service Bill was one of the few occasions during the war when the centre of interest was the House of Commons. Party management is a useless art in these days, but on this occasion it was needed, and for once the Prime Minister's adroitness and power of conciliation served a true national purpose. The Bill—which was not extended to Ireland—applied to all single men and widowers without children dependent on them between the ages of eighteen and forty-one on August 15, 1915. The Derby groups were revived, and men were given the opportunity of voluntarily joining them. If not, from a day five weeks after the passing of the Bill, unless in the interval they had been exempted, they would be held to have enlisted for the duration of the war. Exemption was granted to ministers of religion of all denominations, to men holding certificates of exemption, to those who had been medically rejected, to those required for indispensable industries and employments, to those who supported relations or dependants, to necessary civil servants, and to "conscientious objectors" to war in any form.

The Cabinet was now unanimous, with the exception of the Home Secretary, who resigned his office and led the meagre opposition against the Bill. His lengthy speech did more than that of any of the advocates of the measure to convince the country of its necessity. For the best case which so able a lawyer could make out against the policy was feeble and captious. In private life a man frequently wishes to be relieved from an onerous contract. He employs a lawyer who produces some kind of formal case for release, but the good sense of judge or jury dismisses it as trivial. Of the same type was Sir John Simon's argument before the High Court of Parliament. Had he declared simply that repugnance to compulsion which he honestly—if intermittently—felt, and announced that, with the best wishes for his country's cause, he could not approve of the use of such a method, he would have left public life with the respect of his opponents and the nation. But he chose to deliver an argument such as might have been used by an ingenious Chancery practitioner on some obscure point of real property law. His main point was that the Prime Minister was keeping the letter of his bond but not the spirit, since the conditions had not been fulfilled. He made an elaborate examination of Lord Derby's figures in an attempt to detect arithmetical inconsistencies. He argued that the canvass had not given voluntary enlistment a fair chance. But it was perfectly clear to his hearers that no further investigations would really content him, that he would find some

subtle objection to any other test of voluntaryism. He would have done better to base his case simply on the rooted objection to compulsion in any form and under any circumstances which lay behind all his dialectic. And even then he was open to the charge of inconsistency, for it might fairly be asked, if he entertained such views, why he remained in office when the Prime Minister gave a pledge which on a certain contingency involved conscription. He cannot have believed that so solemn an undertaking could be evaded by that parliamentary *finesse* which in recent years had done much to surfeit the nation with the whole political game.

Jan. 24.

The most striking speeches in support of the Bill were made by Mr. Balfour, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. John Ward, now colonel of the Navvies Battalion, and Brigadier-General Seely, who had returned that day from the front. The first reading was carried by 403 against 298—a majority of 105. The second reading was sanctioned by a majority of 392. On Monday, 24th January, the Bill passed the House of Commons, the minority vote being no more than 36. Many Radicals who began in opposition found themselves constrained by opinion in their constituencies to reconsider their attitude. But the change in the voting was mainly due to the abstention of the Irish Nationalists. Ireland—for reasons which seemed adequate to the Government—was not brought within the scope of the Bill. But the Irish leaders, fearing that this exemption might in future days be construed in Britain as a defect in Irish patriotism, were anxious that the measure should not be passed. They believed that the British minority would not be less than 150, and that the opposition of Labour would be unanimous and irreconcilable. The first division convinced them of the falsity of their forecast, and on the second reading they decided not to vote on what was after all a matter of domestic concern for Great Britain alone.

Jan. 6.

The attitude of the Labour Party and of organized labour throughout the country deserves some notice, for it was one of the most characteristically British performances in the campaign. The three Labour members of the Government, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Brace, and Mr. G. H. Roberts, were supporters of the Bill. On Thursday, 6th January, a Congress of Labour delegates met in London to consider the question. The Congress was composed of delegates from three Labour bodies—the Trade Union Congress, the General Federation of Trade Unions, and the Labour Party. It did not represent the bulk of the working-classes, nor did it represent all the unions, which themselves were a minority of wage-earners. But it was a conference of real importance, representing the management side of the various workers' organizations, and therefore the

more advanced leaders of working-class thought. The debate showed that the members were not convinced that compulsion was required by military needs and suspected a device of capitalism, and, above all, that they feared that the law might be so worked as to bring pressure to bear on the men in the workshops and to establish industrial slavery. By a majority of a million —according to the curious system of card votes—the delegates instructed the Labour Party in Parliament to oppose the measure. The three Labour members of the Government accordingly placed their resignations in the Prime Minister's hands, not because they objected to the Bill but because they approved of it.

Jan. 12.

On 12th January a conference took place between the Prime Minister and various delegates of Labour, when Mr. Asquith undertook to provide safeguards that the Bill should not have the effect of introducing industrial compulsion. The resignations of the three Ministers were withdrawn pending the annual Conference of the Labour Party, which was due at Bristol on 26th January. Meantime the South Wales Miners' Federation held a meeting at Cardiff and passed a "down tools" resolution to give effect to their opposition, a move which did not secure the assent of the other mining districts in the country. On 13th January the Miners' Federation of Great Britain met in London and decided by a majority of over half a million to oppose the Bill. Nottinghamshire, the only district where a plebiscite of the members had been taken, dissented, and Cleveland, North Wales, and South Derbyshire did not vote.

Jan. 13.

Jan. 26.

The British Labour Congress, in which the miners were represented, met on 26th January after the passing of the Bill through the House of Commons. By a majority of nearly a million they approved the war. By large majorities they repudiated conscription and disapproved of the Military Service Bill. By a small majority, the miners not voting, they decided not to agitate for repeal when the measure had become law; and by a very large majority they agreed that the three Labour members should retain their posts in the Government.

This curious result, which only the thoughtless would label inconsistency, was a typical product of our national temperament. We were loth to give up cherished dogmas even under the stress of a dire necessity. We were determined to make the omelette, but not less determined to smash no single egg in the process. But we were also a practical people, and the practical argument in the long run prevailed. The Merthyr election, where in a constituency formerly represented by an extreme socialist a whole-hearted

advocate of compulsion was elected by several thousands, and the plebiscite of the Notts miners showed the true temper of the average citizen. Had a General Election been forced over the Bill, there can be no question but that few, if any, of its opponents would have returned to Parliament. The Labour delegates were honest men in a singular quandary. They could not easily give up the vague political creed which they had preached for years on every platform. But they were practical men and Englishmen and they recognized compelling facts. If they could not formally repudiate their dogmas, they could neglect them. That has been the way of Britain for a thousand years. Her theory may be belated, but it is too dear and ancient for sacrilegious hands; but in a crisis her practice will be guided by common sense.

The importance of the Derby Scheme did not lie in its numerical results. These were terribly whittled away by the chaotic methods of "starring" men and "reserving" industries. It lay in the fact that, after a fair trial, it had exposed to the nation the inadequacy of any voluntary system to meet our needs, and had brought the country to that great decision by which the whole of its manhood was placed at the disposal of the State. Once the sacrifice had been faced, proper methods of procedure would discover themselves. The effect upon our Allies was immediate and beneficent, and the impression produced on the enemy might be judged from the strenuous efforts of the German Press to belittle the event. Britain had at last slipped the foil from her weapon. She had given the most solemn proof that for her there was no turning back.

Opponents of the Military Service Bill cried Ichabod because we had departed from a cherished British tradition. "There are some," said Sir John Simon, "who regard the principle of voluntary enlistment as a real heritage of the English people." In reality we had returned to the custom of our forefathers. "Commissions of Array" had provided a large part of the armies which the Kings of England led to France. King Harry summoned his archers before Agincourt almost on the terms of the Bill.

"Recruit me Lancashire and Cheshire both,
And Derbyshire hills that are so free,
But no married man, nor no widow's son,
For no woman's curse shall go with me."

Cromwell's New Model Army was not a voluntary army. For eight years, from 1643 to 1651, more than half the infantry were pressed men, summoned by the county committees. It was only when the Army ruled the land that its power and prestige brought forth sufficient voluntary recruits. The principle of compulsion for land service was accepted in the Napoleonic

wars, and the Navy which fought at Trafalgar was not voluntarily enlisted. The truth was that in recent years Britain had tended to have a short historical memory. The doctrines of the mid-nineteenth century—by no means the most fruitful epoch of our political history—with their insistence upon an intense individualism in economics and social duty, were accepted as an integral part of the constitution and the national temper. They were in reality abnormal and *parvenu* growths, the mules of political theory "without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity."

The most interesting parallel to the step now taken by Britain was the course followed by Lincoln in the second year of the American Civil War. At the beginning of the struggle he had about 18,000 regulars, most of them serving on the western frontier, and he had four-fifths of the regular officers. He showed how little he appreciated the magnitude of the coming conflict by asking for only 75,000 volunteers, and these to serve for no more than three months. Then came the battle of Bull Run, which opened his eyes. He was empowered by Congress to raise 500,000 volunteers for three years' service, and presently that number was increased to 1,000,000. Recruits came in freely; and, if we remember the small population of the North, the effort must rank as one of the most remarkable ever made by a system of voluntary enlistment. Lincoln began by asking for 600,000, and he got 700,000. After Fredericksburg he asked for 300,000 men, and he got 430,000. Then he asked for another 300,000, of which each State should provide its quota. But he only got 87,000, a little more than a quarter of his requirements. The South, meanwhile, had for many months adopted conscription. It was now a year and a half since the first battle, and the campaign had entered upon that period of drag which was the time of blackest depression in the North.

Then Lincoln took the great step. Of all parts of the world at the moment the North was that in which the idea of individual liberty was most deeply implanted. It was a land which had always gloried in being unmilitary in contradistinction to the effete monarchies of Europe. The American Constitution had shown the most scrupulous regard for individual rights. The mode of political thought which we call democracy—for democracy is rather a mode of thought than a system of government—was universally accepted. The Press was unbridled and most powerful. The country, too, was full of philosophic idealists who preferred dogmas to facts and made their voices heard in the papers and on the platform. Moreover, there was a general election coming on, and, since the war had gone badly, there was a good chance that Lincoln might be defeated if he in any way impaired his popularity. There were not wanting crowds of men—some of them of great

ability and prestige—who declared that it was far better to lose the war than to win it by transgressing one article of the current political creed. There were others, Lincoln's friends and advisers, who warned him solemnly that no hint of compulsion would ever be tolerated by free-born Americans, and that if he dared to propose the thing he would have an internal revolution to add to his troubles. Again and again he was told, in language that has a familiar sound, that the true friends of the enemy were the compulsionists. Lincoln was in the fullest sense of the word a democratic statesman, believing that government must be not only for the people but by the people. When he was faced with the necessity of finding some other way of raising men than as volunteers, he was faced with the task of jettisoning—not the principles, for they are hardier things—but all the sentiments and traditions of his political life.

But Lincoln was a great man, and knew that it was the business of a statesman to lead the people, to act, to initiate a policy, and not to wait like a dumb lackey in the ante-chamber of his masters. He knew that policy should not be an abstract dogma but a working code based upon realities. He knew also that in a crisis it is wisest to grasp the nettle. He saw the magnitude of the crisis, that it was a question of life or death, whatever journalists and demagogues might say. The conclusion of that much-tried soul may be found best expressed in his unpublished memorandum on the subject.

"We already have and have had in the service, as appears, substantially all that can be obtained upon this voluntary weighing of motives. And yet somehow we must obtain more or relinquish the original object of the contest, together with all the blood and treasure already expended in the effort to secure it. To meet this necessity the law for the draft has been created. You who do not wish to be soldiers do not like this law. This is natural; nor does it imply want of patriotism. Nothing can be so just and necessary as to make us like it if it is disagreeable to us. We are prone, too, to find false arguments with which to excuse ourselves for opposing such disagreeable things. . . .

"The Republican institutions and the territorial integrity of our country cannot be maintained without the further raising and supporting of armies. There can be no Army without men. Men can be had only voluntarily or involuntarily. We have ceased to obtain them voluntarily, and to obtain them involuntarily is the draft—the conscription. If you dispute the fact, and declare that men can still be had voluntarily in sufficient numbers, prove your assertion by yourself volunteering in such numbers, and I shall gladly give up the draft, or, if not a sufficient number, but any one of you will

volunteer, he for his single self will escape all the horrors of the draft, and will thereby do only what each one of at least a million of his manly brethren has already done. Their toil and blood have been given as much for you as for themselves. Shall it all be lost rather than that you, too, will bear your part? . . .

"The principle of the draft, which simply is involuntary or forced service, is not new. It was well known to the framers of our Constitution. . . . It had been used just before in establishing our independence, and it was also used under the Constitution in 1812. Wherein is the peculiar hardship now? Shall we shrink from the necessary means to maintain our free government which our grandfathers employed to establish it, and our own fathers have already employed once to maintain it?"

So Lincoln took the plunge, and on March 3, 1863, a law was passed to raise armies by conscription. He did not hesitate to employ drastic measures against those who encouraged resistance. He met the "thin end of the wedge" argument in words which deserve to be remembered: that "he did not believe that a man could contract so strong a taste for emetics during a temporary illness as to insist upon feeding upon them during the remainder of a healthful life." There were violent mass meetings and much wild talk, and there were riots in New York and elsewhere in which a number of lives were lost. But in a very little the good sense of the country prevailed. It was one of the two greatest acts of Lincoln's life; the other was when he decided to fight for the integrity of the nation. And like all great acts of courage it had its reward. Four months later Gettysburg was won, Vicksburg surrendered to Grant, and the tide turned. The recruits came in—300,000 in October 1863, nearly 1,300,000 in 1864, and it is an interesting fact that 85 per cent. of these were volunteers. The effect of conscription was to revive voluntary enlistment. The total number of recruits in the North from first to last was 3,000,000, a remarkable figure out of a population of 20,000,000. The men had been found, the resources of the country had been fully mobilized, and two years after the passing of the Act came that April day when Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox.

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[1] Group I., which consisted of men between eighteen and nineteen, could not be called up at once, since no man was to be called up until he had attained the age of nineteen.

[2] See Appendix IV.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

THE EVACUATION OF GALLIPOLI.

Sir Charles Monro's Dispatch.

Headquarters, First Army, France,
March 6, 1916.

My Lord,—

I have the honour to submit herewith a brief account of the operations in the Eastern Mediterranean from the 28th October 1915, on which date I assumed command of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, until the 9th January 1916, when, in compliance with your directions, I handed over charge at Cairo to Lieut.-General Sir Archibald Murray, K.C.B., C.V.O., D.S.O.

On the 20th October, in London, I received your Lordship's instructions to proceed as soon as possible to the Near East and take over the command of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

My duty on arrival was in broad outline:—

(*a*) To report on the military situation on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

(*b*) To express an opinion whether on purely military grounds the Peninsula should be evacuated, or another attempt made to carry it.

(*c*) The number of troops that would be required,

(1) to carry the Peninsula, (2) to keep the Straits open, and (3) to take Constantinople.

Two days after my arrival at Imbros, where the headquarters of the M.E.F. was established, I proceeded to the Peninsula to investigate the military situation. The impressions I gathered are summarized very shortly as follows:—

The positions occupied by our troops presented a military situation unique in history. The mere fringe of the coast line had been secured. The beaches and piers upon which they depended for all requirements in *personnel* and material were exposed to registered and observed Artillery fire. Our entrenchments were dominated almost throughout by the Turks. The possible Artillery positions were insufficient and defective. The Force, in short, held a line possessing every possible military defect. The position

was without depth, the communications were insecure and dependent on the weather. No means existed for the concealment and deployment of fresh troops destined for the offensive—whilst the Turks enjoyed full powers of observation, abundant Artillery positions, and they had been given the time to supplement the natural advantages which the position presented by all the devices at the disposal of the Field Engineer.

Another material factor came prominently before me. The troops on the Peninsula had suffered much from various causes.

(*a*) It was not in the first place possible to withdraw them from the shell-swept area as is done when necessary in France, for every corner on the Peninsula is exposed to hostile fire.

(*b*) They were much enervated from the diseases which are endemic in that part of Europe in the summer.

(*c*) In consequence of the losses which they had suffered in earlier battles there was a very grave dearth of officers competent to take command of men.

(*d*) In order to maintain the numbers needed to hold the front, the Territorial Divisions had been augmented by the attachment of Yeomanry and Mounted Brigades. Makeshifts of this nature very obviously did not tend to create efficiency. Other arguments, irrefutable in their conclusions, convinced me that a complete evacuation was the only wise course to pursue.

(*a*) It was obvious that the Turks could hold us in front with a small force and prosecute their designs on Baghdad or Egypt, or both.

(*b*) An advance from the positions we held could not be regarded as a reasonable military operation to expect.

(*c*) Even had we been able to make an advance in the Peninsula, our position would not have been ameliorated to any marked degree, and an advance on Constantinople was quite out of the question.

(*d*) Since we could not hope to achieve any purpose by remaining on the Peninsula, the appalling cost to the nation involved in consequence of embarking on an Overseas Expedition with no base available for the rapid transit of stores, supplies, and

personnel made it urgent that we should divert the troops locked up on the Peninsula to a more useful theatre.

Since, therefore, I could see no military advantage in our continued occupation of positions on the Peninsula, I telegraphed to your Lordship that in my opinion the evacuation of the Peninsula should be taken in hand.

Subsequently I proceeded to Egypt to confer with Colonel Sir H. McMahon, the High Commissioner, and Lieut.-General Sir J. Maxwell, Commanding the Forces in Egypt, over the situation which might be created in Egypt and the Arab world by the evacuation of the Peninsula.

Whilst in Egypt I was ordered by a telegram from the War Office to take command of the troops at Salonika. The purport of this telegram was subsequently cancelled by your Lordship on your arrival at Mudros, and I was then ordered to assume Command of the Forces in the Mediterranean, east of Malta, and exclusive of Egypt.

Consequent on these instructions, I received approval that the two Forces in the Mediterranean should be designated as follows:—

(*a*) The original Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, which comprised the Forces operating on the Gallipoli Peninsula and those employed at Mudros and Imbros as the "Dardanelles Army," under Lieut.-General Sir W. Birdwood, K.C.B., etc., with headquarters at Imbros.

(*b*) The troops destined for Salonika as the "Salonika Army," under Lieut.-General Sir B. Mahon, K.C.B., with headquarters at Salonika.

The Staff of the original M.E.F. was left in part to form the Dardanelles Army, and the remainder were taken to make a General Headquarter Staff for the increased responsibilities now assumed. Other officers doing duty in this theatre with the necessary qualifications were selected, and, with no difficulty or demands on home resources, a thoroughly efficient and adequate Staff was created.

Mudros was selected as being the most suitable site for the establishment of headquarters, as affording an opportunity, in addition to other advantages, of daily consultation with the Inspector-General, Line of Communications. The working of the services of the Line of Communications presented difficulties of an unique character, mainly owing to

(*a*) the absence of pier and wharfage accommodation at Mudros and the necessity of transferring all Ordnance and Engineer Stores from one ship to another;

(*b*) the submarine danger;

(*c*) the delay caused by rough weather.

Close association with General Altham was therefore most imperative, and by this means many important changes were made which conduced to greater efficiency and more prompt response to the demands of fighting units.

A narrative of the events which occurred in each of the two Armies is now recorded separately for facility of perusal and reference.

SALONIKA.

Early in October the 10th Division, under Lieut.-General Sir B. Mahon, K.C.B., was transferred from Suvla to Salonika, and fully concentrated there. The dislocation of units caused by the landing on the Peninsula and the subsequent heavy fighting which occurred prevented this Division being dispatched intact. The organization of the Infantry and the Royal Engineers was not disturbed, but the other services had to be improvised from other Divisions as found most accessible.

The arrival of the 10th Division had been preceded by two French Divisions under General Sarrail, whose Force was subsequently augmented by another Division. These three Divisions were then moved into Serbia under the understanding arranged between the Allies' Governments, which was to the effect that the French Forces were to protect the railway between Krivolak and Veles, and to ensure communication with the Serbian Army, whilst the British were to maintain the position from Salonika to Krivolak, and to support the French Right. If communication with the Serbian Army could not be opened and maintained, the Allied Forces were to be withdrawn.

With this object, two Battalions of the 10th Division were moved from Salonika on 27th October, and took over the French front from Kosturino to Lake Doiran. The remainder of the Division was sent to Serbia on 12th November and following days, and took over the French front eastwards from Kosturino.

The task of moving troops into Serbia and maintaining them there presented many difficulties. No road exists from Salonika to Doiran, a few

miles of road then obtains, which is followed within a few miles by a track only suitable for pack transport. Sir B. Mahon had therefore to readjust his transport to a pack scale, and was dependent on a railway of uncertain carrying power to convey back his guns and all wheeled traffic in case of a withdrawal, and to supply his troops whilst in Serbia.

Very soon afterwards reinforcements commenced to arrive. The disembarkation of these new divisions was an operation which taxed the powers of organization and resources of the Staff at Salonika to the highest degree possible, and it speaks highly for their capacity that they were able to shelter and feed the troops as they arrived.

During November and the early part of December the 10th Division was holding its position in Serbia, and the disembarkation of other divisions was proceeding with difficulty.

In order to gain time for the landing of the troops, and their deployment on the positions selected, I represented to General Sarrail and Sir B. Mahon the urgent need of the divisions withdrawing from Serbia being utilized as a covering force, and retaining their ground as such until the Forces disembarking were thoroughly in a position to hold their front.

DIFFICULTIES OF OPERATIONS.

It had been evident for some time that the power of resistance of the Serbian Armies was broken, and that the Allied Forces could afford them no material assistance. It was also clear from all information received that the position of our troops was becoming daily more precarious owing to a large German-Bulgarian concentration in the Strumnitza Valley. I, therefore, again pressed General Sarrail to proceed with his withdrawal from the positions he was holding. The British Division, operating, as it was, as the pivot upon which the withdrawal was effected, was compelled to hold its ground until the French Left was brought back.

Before our withdrawal was completed the 10th Division was heavily attacked on the 6th, 7th, and 8th December by superior Bulgarian Forces. The troops had suffered considerably from the cold in the Highlands of Macedonia, and in the circumstances conducted themselves very creditably in being able to extricate themselves from a difficult position with no great losses. The account of this action was reported by wire to you by General Mahon on the 11th December: no further reference is therefore necessary to this incident.

As soon as I was informed that the 10th Division was being heavily pressed, I directed Sir B. Mahon to send a Brigade up the railway line in support, and to hold another Brigade ready to proceed at short notice. The withdrawal was, however, conducted into Greek territory without further opposition from the Bulgarians.

Meanwhile, the operation of disembarkation at Salonika was being carried out with all possible speed, and the Greek Authorities through their representative from Athens, Colonel Pallis, were informed by me that we intended to proceed to the defensive line selected. This intimation was received in good part by the Greek Generals. They commenced to withdraw their troops further to the East where they did not hamper our plans, and they showed a disposition to meet our demands in a reasonable and friendly spirit.

Whilst dealing with the events above enumerated, I desire to give special prominence to the difficulties to which General Sir B. Mahon was exposed from the time of his landing at Salonika, and the ability which he displayed in overcoming them. The subjoined instances, selected from many which could be given, will illustrate my contention, and the high standard of administrative capacity displayed by the G.O.C. and his Staff:—

(*a*) From the date on which the 10th Division first proceeded into Serbia until the date of its withdrawal across the Greek frontier, *personnel*, guns, supplies, and material of all kinds had to be sent up by rail to Doiran, and onwards by march, motor lorries, limbered wagons, and pack animals. This railway, moreover, was merely a single track, and had to serve the demands of the local population as well as our needs. The evacuation of the wounded and sick had to be arranged on similar lines, yet the requirements of the troops were fully satisfied.

(*b*) The majority of the Divisions were sent without trains to Salonika, most units without first line transport; in spite of this, part of the Force was converted into a mobile condition with very little delay.

(*c*) The complications presented by the distribution and checking of stores, supplies, ammunition, etc., discharged from ships on to quays, with insufficient accommodation or storehouses, and with crude means of ingress and egress therefrom, and served by a single road which was divided between the French and ourselves, constituted a problem which could only

be solved by officers of high administrative powers. I trust, therefore, that full recognition may be given to my recommendation of the officers who rendered such fine service under such arduous conditions.

THE SITUATION AT GALLIPOLI.

On my arrival in the Mediterranean theatre a gratifying decline in the high rate of sickness which had prevailed in the Force during the summer months had become apparent The wastage due to this cause still, however, remained very high.

The Corps Commanders were urged to take all advantage of the improved weather conditions to strengthen their positions by all available means, and to reduce to the last degree possible all animals not actually required for the maintenance of the troops, in order to relieve the strain imposed on the Naval Transport Service.

During the month of November, beyond the execution of very clever and successful minor enterprises carried out by Corps Commanders with a view to maintaining an offensive spirit in their commands, there remains little to record, except that an increased activity of the Turkish artillery against our front became a noticeable factor.

On the 21st November[1] the Peninsula was visited by a storm said to be nearly unprecedented for the time of the year. The storm was accompanied by torrential rain, which lasted for 24 hours. This was followed by hard frost and a heavy blizzard. In the areas of the 8th Corps and the Anzac Corps the effects were not felt to a very marked degree owing to the protection offered by the surrounding hills. The 9th Corps was less favourably situated: the Water courses in this area became converted into surging rivers, which carried all before them. The water rose in many places to the height of the parapets, and all means of communications were prevented. The men, drenched as they were by the rain, suffered from the subsequent blizzard most severely. Large numbers collapsed from exposure and exhaustion, and in spite of untiring efforts that were made to mitigate the suffering, I regret to announce that there were 200 deaths from exposure and over 10,000 sick evacuated during the first few days of December.

From reports given by deserters, it is probable that the Turks suffered even to a greater degree.

In this period our flimsy piers, breakwaters, and light shipping became damaged by the storm to a degree which might have involved most serious

consequences, and was a very potent indication of the dangers attached to the maintenance and supply of an army operating on a coast line with no harbour, and devoid of all the accessories such as wharves, piers, cranes, and derricks for the discharge and distribution of stores, etc.

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[1] 27th(?).

SCHEME FOR EVACUATION.

Towards the latter end of the month, having in view the possibility of an evacuation of the Peninsula being ordered, I directed Lieutenant-General Sir W. Birdwood, Commanding the Dardanelles Army, to prepare a scheme to this end, in order that all details should be ready in case of sanction being given to this operation.

I had in broad outline contemplated soon after my arrival on the Peninsula that an evacuation could best be conducted by a subdivision into three stages.

The first, during which all troops, animals, and supplies not required for a long campaign should be withdrawn.

The second to comprise the evacuation of all men, guns, animals, and stores not required for defence during a period when the conditions of weather might retard the evacuation, or in fact seriously alter the programme contemplated.

The third or final stage, in which the troops on shore should be embarked with all possible speed, leaving behind such guns, animals, and stores needed for military reasons at this period.

This problem with which we were confronted was the withdrawal of an army of a considerable size from positions in no cases more than 300 yards from the enemy's trenches, and its embarkation on open beaches, every part of which were within effective range of Turkish guns, and from which, in winds from the south or south-west, the withdrawal of troops was not possible.

The attitude which we should adopt from a naval and military point of view in case of withdrawal from the Peninsula being ordered, had given me much anxious thought. According to text-book principles and the lessons to be gathered from history, it seemed essential that this operation of evacuation should be immediately preceded by a combined naval and

military feint in the vicinity of the Peninsula, with a view to distracting the attention of the Turks from our intention. When endeavouring to work out into concrete fact how such principles could be applied to the situation of our Forces, I came to the conclusion that our chances of success were infinitely more probable if we made no departure of any kind from the normal life which we were following both on sea and on land. A feint which did not fully fulfil its purpose would have been worse than useless, and there was the obvious danger that the suspicion of the Turks would be aroused by our adoption of a course the real purport of which could not have been long disguised.

EVACUATION ORDERED.

On the 8th December, consequent on your Lordship's orders, I directed the General Officer Commanding Dardanelles Army to proceed with the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac at once.

Rapidity of action was imperative, having in view the unsettled weather which might be expected in the Ægean. The success of our operations was entirely dependent on weather conditions. Even a mild wind from the south or south-west was found to raise such a ground swell as to greatly impede communication with the beaches, while anything in the nature of a gale from this direction could not fail to break up the piers, wreck the small craft, and thus definitely prevent any steps being taken towards withdrawal.

We had, moreover, during the gale of the 21st November, learnt how entirely we were at the mercy of the elements with the slender and inadequate means at our disposal by which we had endeavoured to improvise harbours and piers. On that day the harbour at Kephalos was completely wrecked, one of the ships which had been sunk to form a breakwater was broken up, and the whole of the small craft sheltered inside the breakwater were washed ashore. Similar damage was done to our piers, lighters, and small craft at Suvla and Anzac.

THE WITHDRAWAL FROM ANZAC AND SUVLA.

Lieutenant-General Birdwood proceeded on receipt of his orders with the skill and promptitude which is characteristic of all that he undertakes, and after consultation with Rear-Admiral Wemyss, it was decided, provided the weather was propitious, to complete the evacuation on the night of the 19th-20th December.

Throughout the period 10th to 18th December the withdrawal proceeded under the most auspicious conditions, and the morning of the 18th

December found the positions both at Anzac and Suvla reduced to the numbers determined, while the evacuation of guns, animals, stores, and supplies had continued most satisfactorily.

The arrangements for the final withdrawal made by Corps Commanders were as follows:—

It was imperative, of course, that the front-line trenches should be held, however lightly, until the very last moment, and that the withdrawal from these trenches should be simultaneous throughout the line. To ensure this being done, Lieutenant-General Sir W. Birdwood arranged that the withdrawal of the inner flanks of corps should be conducted to a common embarking area under the orders of the G.O.C., 9th Corps.

In the rear of the front-line trenches at Suvla the General Officer Commanding 9th Corps broke up his area into two sections divided roughly by the Salt Lake. In the Southern Section a defensive line had been prepared from the Salt Lake to the sea and Lala Baba had been prepared for defence; on the left the second line ran from Kara Kol Dagh through Hill 10 to the Salt Lake. These lines were only to be held in case of emergency—the principle governing the withdrawal being that the troops should proceed direct from the trenches to the distributing centres near the beach, and that no intermediate positions should be occupied except in case of necessity.

At Anzac, owing to the proximity of the trenches to the beach, no second position was prepared except at Anzac Cove, where a small keep was arranged to cover the withdrawal of the rearmost parties in case of necessity.

The good fortune which had attended the evacuation continued during the night of the 19th-20th. The night was perfectly calm with a slight haze over the moon, an additional stroke of good luck, as there was a full moon on that night.

Soon after dark the covering ships were all in position, and the final withdrawal began. At 1.30 a.m. the withdrawal of the rear parties commenced from the front trenches at Suvla and the left of Anzac. Those on the right of Anzac who were nearer the beach remained in position until 2 a.m. By 5.30 a.m. the last man had quitted the trenches.

At Anzac four 18-pounder guns, two 5-in. howitzers, one 4.7 Naval gun, one anti-aircraft, and two 3-pounder Hotchkiss guns were left, but they were destroyed before the troops finally embarked. In addition, 56 mules, a certain number of carts, mostly stripped of their wheels, and some supplies which were set on fire, were also abandoned.

At Suvla every gun, vehicle, and animal was embarked, and all that remained was a small stock of supplies, which were burnt.

THE POSITION AT CAPE HELLES.

Early in December orders had been issued for the withdrawal of the French troops on Helles, other than their artillery, and a portion of the line held by French Creoles had already been taken over by the Royal Naval Division on the 12th December. On the 21st December, having strengthened the 8th Corps with the 86th Brigade, the number of the French garrison doing duty on the Peninsula was reduced to 4,000 men. These it was hoped to relieve early in January, but before doing so it was necessary to give some respite from trench work to the 42nd Division, which was badly in need of a rest. My intention, therefore, was first to relieve the 42nd Division by the 88th Brigade, then to bring up the 13th Division, which was resting at Imbros since the evacuation of Suvla, in place of the 29th Division, and finally to bring up the 11th Division in relief of the French. Helles would then be held by the 52nd, 11th, and 13th Divisions, with the Royal Naval Division and the 42nd Division in reserve on adjacent islands.

On the 24th December, General Sir W. Birdwood was directed to make all preliminary preparations for immediate evacuation in the event of orders to this effect being received.

On 28th December your Lordship's telegram ordering the evacuation of Helles was received, whereupon, in view of the possibility of bad weather intervening, I instructed the General Officer Commanding Dardanelles Army to complete the operation as rapidly as possible. He was reminded that every effort conditional on not exposing the *personnel* to undue risk should be made to save all 60-pounder and 18-pounder guns, 6-inch and 4.5 howitzers, with their ammunition and other accessories, such as mules and A.T. carts, limbered wagons, etc. In addition, I expressed my wish that the final evacuation should be completed in one night, and that the troops should withdraw direct from the front trenches to the beaches, and not occupy any intermediate position unless seriously molested. At a meeting which was attended by the Vice-Admiral and the General Officer Commanding Dardanelles Army, I explained the course which I thought we should adopt to again deceive the Turks as to our intentions. The situation on the Peninsula had not materially changed owing to our withdrawal from Suvla and Anzac, except that there was a marked increased activity in aerial reconnaissance over our positions and the islands of Mudros and Imbros, and that hostile patrolling of our trenches was more frequent and daring. The

most apparent factor was that the number of heavy guns on the European and Asiatic shores had been considerably augmented, and that these guns were more liberally supplied with German ammunition, the result of which was that our beaches were continuously shelled, especially from the Asiatic shore.

I gave it as my opinion that in my judgment I did not regard a feint as an operation offering any prospect of success. Time, the uncertainty of weather conditions in the Ægean, the absence of a suitable locality, and the withdrawal of small craft from the main issue for such an operation were some of the reasons which influenced me in the decision at which I arrived. With the concurrence of the Vice-Admiral, therefore, it was decided the Navy should do their utmost to pursue a course of retaliation against the Turkish Batteries, but to refrain from any unusually aggressive attitude should the Turkish guns remain quiescent.

General Sir W. Birdwood had, in anticipation of being ordered to evacuate Helles, made such complete and far-seeing arrangements that he was able to proceed without delay to the issue of the comprehensive orders which the consummation of such a delicate operation in war requires.

He primarily arranged with General Brulard, who commanded the French Forces on the Peninsula, that in order to escape the disadvantages of divided command in the final stage, the French Infantry should be relieved as early as possible, but that their artillery should pass under the orders of the General Officer Commanding 8th Corps, and be withdrawn concurrently with the British guns at the opportune moment.

On the 30th December, in consequence of the instructions I had received from the Chief of the General Staff to hand over my command at Alexandria to Lieutenant-General Sir A. Murray, who, it was stated, was to leave England on the 28th December, I broke up my Headquarters at Mudros and proceeded with a small staff, comprising representatives of the General Staff, the Quartermaster-General, and Adjutant-General branches, on H.M.S. *Cornwallis* to Alexandria. The rest of the Staff were sent on in front so as to have offices in working order when my successor should arrive.

In the meantime the evacuation, following the same system as was practised at Suvla and Anzac, proceeded without delay. The French Infantry remaining on the Peninsula were relieved on the night of the 1st-2nd January, and were embarked by the French Navy on the following nights. Progress, however, was slower than had been hoped, owing to delays caused by accident and the weather. One of our largest horse ships was sunk by a

French battleship, whereby the withdrawal was considerably retarded, and at the same time strong winds sprang up which interfered materially with work on the beaches. The character of the weather now setting in offered so little hope of a calm period of any duration that General Sir W. Birdwood arranged with Admiral Sir J. de Robeck for the assistance of some Destroyers in order to accelerate the progress of re-embarkation. They then determined to fix the final stage of the evacuation for the 8th January, or for the first fine night after that date.

Meanwhile the 8th Corps had maintained the offensive spirit in bombing and minor operations with which they had established the moral superiority they enjoyed over the enemy. On the 29th December the 52nd Division completed the excellent work which they had been carrying out for so long by capturing a considerable portion of the Turkish trenches, and by successfully holding these in the face of repeated counter-attacks. The shelling of our trenches and beaches, however, increased in frequency and intensity, and the average daily casualties continued to increase.

The method of evacuation adopted by Lieutenant-General Sir F. J. Davies, K.C.B., Commanding 8th Corps, followed in general outline that which had proved successful in the Northern Zone. As the removal of the whole of the heavy guns capable of replying to the enemy's artillery would have indicated our intentions to the enemy, it was decided to retain, but eventually destroy, one 6-inch British gun and six French heavy guns of old pattern, which it would be impossible to remove on the last night. General Brulard himself suggested the destruction of these French guns.

The first step taken as regards the withdrawal of the troops was the formation of a strong Embarkation Staff and the preparation of positions covering the landings, in which small garrisons could maintain themselves against attack for a short time should the enemy become aware of our intention and follow up the movement.

Major-General the Hon. H. A. Lawrence, Commanding the 52nd Division, was selected to take charge of all embarkation operations. At the same time the services of various staff officers were placed at the disposal of the General Officer Commanding, 8th Corps, and they rendered very valuable assistance.

The General Officer Commanding, 13th Division, selected and prepared a position covering Gully Beach. Other lines were selected and entrenched, covering the remainder of the beaches from the sea north of Sedd-el-Bahr to "X" Beach inclusive. Garrisons were detailed for these defences, those at

Gully Beach being under the General Officer Commanding, 13th Division, and those covering the remainder of the beaches being placed under the command of a selected Officer, whose headquarters were established at an early date, together with those of the General Officer Commanding, Embarkation, at Corps Headquarters.

As the withdrawing troops passed within the line of these defences they came under the orders of the General Officer Commanding, Embarkation, which were conveyed to them by his staff officers at each beach.

In addition to these beach defences four lines of defence were arranged, three being already in existence and strongly wired. The fourth was a line of posts extending from De Tott's Battery on the east to the position covering Gully Beach on the west.

The time fixed for the last parties to leave the front trenches was 11.45 p.m., in order to permit the majority of the troops being already embarked before the front line was vacated. It was calculated that it would take between two and three hours for them to reach the beaches, at the conclusion of which time the craft to embark them would be ready.

The Naval arrangements for embarkation were placed in the hands of Captain C. M. Staveley, R.N., assisted by a staff of Naval officers at each place of embarkation.

On the 7th January, the enemy developed heavy artillery fire on the trenches held by the 13th Division, while the Asiatic guns shelled those occupied by the Royal Naval Division. The bombardment, which was reported to be the heaviest experienced since we landed in April, lasted from noon until 5 p.m., and was intensive between 3 p.m. and 3.30. Considerable damage was done to our parapets and communication trenches, and telephone communications were interrupted. At 3.30 p.m. two Turkish mines were sprung near Fusilier Bluff, and the Turkish trenches were seen to be full of men whom their officers appeared to be urging to the assault. No attack, however, was developed except against Fusilier Bluff, where a half-hearted assault was quickly repulsed. Our shortage of artillery at this time was amply compensated for by the support received from fire of the supporting squadron under Captain D. L. Dent, R.N. Our casualties amounted to 2 officers and 56 other ranks killed, and 4 officers and 102 other ranks wounded.

THE LAST DAYS ON GALLIPOLI.

The 8th January was a bright, calm day, with a light breeze from the south. There was every indication of the continuance of favourable conditions, and in the opinion of the Meteorological Officer, no important change was to be expected for at least 24 hours. The Turkish artillery were unusually inactive. All preparations for the execution of the final stage were complete.

The embarkation was fixed at such an hour that the troops detailed for the first trip might be able to leave their positions after dark. The second trip was timed so that at least a greater portion of the troops for this trip would, if all went well, be embarked before the final parties had left the front trenches. The numbers to be embarked at the first trip were fixed by the maximum that could be carried by the craft available, those of the second trip being reduced in order to provide for the possibility of casualties occurring amongst the craft required to carry them.

The numbers for the third trip consisted only of the parties left to hold front trenches to the last, together with the garrisons of the beach defences, the Naval and Military beach *personnel* and such R.E. *personnel* as might be required to effect the necessary repairs to any piers or harbour works that might be damaged.

About 7 p.m. the breeze freshened considerably from the south-west, the most unfavourable quarter, but the first trip, timed for 8 p.m., was dispatched without difficulty. The wind, however, continued to rise until, by 11 p.m., the connecting pier between the hulks and the shore at "W" Beach was washed away by heavy seas, and further embarkation into destroyers from these hulks became impracticable. In spite of these difficulties the second trips, which commenced at 11.30 p.m., were carried out well up to time, and the embarkation of guns continued uninterruptedly. Early in the evening reports had been received from the right flank that a hostile submarine was believed to be moving down the Straits, and about midnight H.M.S. *Prince George*, which had embarked 2,000 men, and was sailing for Mudros, reported she was struck by a torpedo which failed to explode. The indications of the presence of a submarine added considerably to the anxiety for the safety of the troop carriers, and made it necessary for the Vice-Admiral to modify the arrangements made for the subsequent bombardment of the evacuated positions.

At 1.50 a.m., Gully Beach reported that the embarkation at that beach was complete, and that the lighters were about to push off, but at 2.10 a.m. a telephone message was received that one of the lighters was aground and could not be refloated. The N.T.O. at once took all possible steps to have

another lighter sent in to Gully Beach, and this was, as a matter of fact, done within an hour, but in the meantime at 2.30 a.m. it was decided to move the 160 men, who had been relanded from the grounded lighter, to "W" Beach and embark them there.

From 2.40 a.m. the steadily increasing swell caused the N.T.O. the greatest anxiety as to the possibility of embarking the remainder of the troops if their arrival was much deferred.

At 3.30 a.m. the evacuation was complete, and abandoned heaps of stores and supplies were successfully set on fire by time fuses after the last man had embarked. Two magazines of ammunition and explosives were also successfully blown up at 4 a.m. These conflagrations were apparently the first intimation received by the Turks that we had withdrawn. Red lights were immediately discharged from the enemy's trenches, and heavy artillery fire opened on our trenches and beaches. This shelling was maintained until about 6.30 a.m.

Apart from four unserviceable 15-pounders, which had been destroyed earlier in the month, ten worn-out 15-pounders, one 6-in. Mark VII. gun, and six old heavy French guns, all of which were previously blown up, were left on the Peninsula. In addition to the above, 508 animals, most of which were destroyed, and a number of vehicles and considerable quantities of stores, material, and supplies, all of which were destroyed by burning, had to be abandoned.

It would have been possible, of course, by extending the period during which the process of evacuation proceeded to have reduced the quantity of stores and material that was left behind on the Peninsula, but not to the degree that may seem apparent at first sight. Our chances of enjoying a continuity of fine weather in the Ægean were very slender in the month of January; it was indeed a contingency that had to be reckoned with that we might very probably be visited by a spell of bad weather which would cut us off completely from the Peninsula for a fortnight or perhaps for even longer.

Supplies, ammunition, and material to a certain degree had therefore to be left to the last moment for fear of the isolation of the garrison at any moment when the evacuation might be in progress. I decided therefore that our aim should be primarily the withdrawal of the bulk of the *personnel*, artillery, and ammunition in the intermediate period; and that no risks should be taken in prolonging the withdrawal of *personnel* at the final stage with a view to reducing the quantity of stores left.

The entire evacuation of the Peninsula had now been completed. It demanded for its successful realization two important military essentials—viz., good luck and skilled disciplined organization—and they were both forthcoming to a marked degree at the hour needed. Our luck was in the ascendant by the marvellous spell of calm weather which prevailed. But we were able to turn to the fullest advantage these accidents of fortune.

Lieutenant-General Sir W. Birdwood and his Corps Commanders elaborated and prepared the orders in reference to the evacuation with a skill, competence, and courage which could not have been surpassed, and we had a further stroke of good fortune in being associated with Vice-Admiral Sir J. de Robeck, K.C.B., Vice-Admiral Wemyss, and a body of Naval Officers whose work remained throughout this anxious period at that standard of accuracy and professional ability which is beyond the power of criticism or cavil.

The Line of Communication Staff, both Naval and Military, represented respectively by Lieutenant-General E. A. Altham, C.B., C.M.G., Commodore M. S. FitzMaurice, R.N., principal Naval Transport Officer, and Captain H. V. Simpson, R.N., Superintending Transport Officer, contributed to the success of the operation by their untiring zeal and conspicuous ability.

The members of the Headquarters Staff showed themselves, without exception, to be officers with whom it was a privilege to be associated; their competence, zeal, and devotion to duty were uniform and unbroken. Amongst such a highly trained body of officers it is difficult to select and discriminate. I confine myself, therefore, to placing on record the fine services rendered by—

Colonel (temporary Major-General) Arthur Lynden Lynden-Bell, C.B., C.M.G., Chief of General Staff, G.H.Q.;

Colonel (temporary Major-General) Walter Campbell, C.B., D.S.O., Deputy Quartermaster-General, G.H.Q., M.E.F.;

Lieutenant-Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General) W. Gillman, C.M.G., D.S.O., Brigadier-General, General Staff;

Brevet Major (temporary Lieutenant-Colonel) G. P. Dawnay, D.S.O., M.V.O., General Staff;

and whilst bringing to notice the names of these officers to whom I am so much indebted, I trust I may be permitted to represent the loyal, cordial, and

unswerving assistance rendered by General J. M. J. A. Brulard, Commanding the French Troops in the Peninsula.

Before concluding this inadequate account of the events which happened during my tenure of command of the Forces in the Eastern Mediterranean, I desire to give a brief explanation of the work which was carried out on the Line of Communications, and to place on record my appreciation of the admirable work rendered by the officers responsible for this important service.

On the Dardanelles Peninsula it may be said that the whole of the machinery by which the text-books contemplate the maintenance and supply of an army was non-existent. The zone commanded by the enemy's guns extended not only to the landing-places on the Peninsula, but even over the sea in the vicinity.

The beaches were the advanced depôts and refilling points at which the services of supply had to be carried out under artillery fire. The landing of stores as well as of troops was only possible under cover of darkness.

The sea, the ships, lighters, and tugs took, in fact, the place of railways and roads, with their railway trains, mechanical transport, etc., but with this difference, that the use of the latter is subject only to the intervention of the enemy, while that of the former was dependent on the weather.

Between the beaches and the Base at Alexandria, 800 miles to the south, the Line of Communications had but two harbours, Kephalos Bay, on the Island of Imbros, 15 miles roughly from the beaches, and Mudros Bay, at a distance of 60 miles. In neither were there any piers, breakwaters, wharves, or store houses of any description before the advent of the troops. On the shores of these two bays there were no roads of any military value, or buildings fit for military usage. The water supply at these islands was, until developed, totally inadequate for our needs.

The Peninsula landing-places were open beaches. Kephalos Bay is without protection from the north, and swept by a high sea in northerly gales. In Mudros Harbour, trans-shipments and disembarkations were often seriously impeded with a wind from the north or south. These difficulties were accentuated by the advent of submarines in the Ægean Sea, on account of which the Vice-Admiral deemed it necessary to prohibit any transport or store ship exceeding 1,500 tons proceeding north of Mudros, and although this rule was relaxed in the case of supply ships proceeding within the netted area of Suvla, it necessitated the trans-shipment of practically all

reinforcements, stores, and supplies—other than those for Suvla—into small ships in Mudros Harbour.

At Suvla and Anzac, disembarkation could only be effected by lighters and tugs; thus for all *personnel* and material there was at least one trans-shipment, and for the greater portion of both two trans-shipments.

Yet notwithstanding the difficulties which have been set forth above, the Army was well maintained in equipment and ammunition. It was well fed, it received its full supply of winter clothing at the beginning of December. The evacuation of the sick and wounded was carried out with the minimum of inconvenience, and the provision of hospital accommodation for them on the Dardanelles Line of Communication and elsewhere in the Mediterranean met all requirements.

The above is a very brief exposition of the extreme difficulties with which the officers responsible were confronted in dealing with a problem of peculiar complexity. They Were fortunate in being associated in their onerous and anxious task with a most competent and highly trained Naval Staff. The members of the two Staffs worked throughout in perfect harmony and cordiality, and it was owing to their joint efforts that the requirements of the troops were so well responded to.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

In accordance with the instructions received from your Lordship by telegram on 10/1/16, I had the honour of telegraphing the names of the undermentioned officers who rendered most valuable and distinguished service in connection with the evacuation of Gallipoli, to be specially submitted for His Majesty's gracious consideration for promotion and reward, viz:—

Colonel (temporary Major-General) Arthur Lynden Lynden-Bell, C.B., C.M.G., Chief of General Staff, G.H.Q., M.E.F.

Colonel (temporary Major-General) Walter Campbell, C.B., D.S.O., Deputy Quartermaster-General, G.H.Q., M.E.F.

Lieutenant-General Sir William Riddell Birdwood, K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., Commander, Dardanelles Army.

Major-General (temporary Lieutenant-General) Edward Altham Altham, C.B., C.M.G., Inspector-General of Communications, M.E.F.

Major-General (temporary Lieutenant-General) Hon. Sir Julian Hedworth George Byng, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.V.O., Commander, 9th Army

Corps.

Major-General (temporary Lieutenant-General) Sir Alexander John Godley, K.C.M.G., C.B., Commander, A. and N.Z. Army Corps.

Major-General (temporary Lieutenant-General) Sir Francis John Davies, K.C.B., Commander, 8th Army Corps.

Brevet Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General) George Fletcher MacMunn, D.S.O., R.A., D.A. and Q.M.G., Dardanelles Army.

Lieutenant-Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General) Hamilton Lyster Reed, V.C., C.M.G., R.A., Brigadier-General, General Staff, 9th Army Corps.

Lieutenant-Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General) Cyril Brudenel Bingham White, R.A., D.S.O., Brigadier-General, General Staff, Anzac.

Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General) Robert John Tudway, C.B., D.S.O., D.A. and Q.M.G., 8th Army Corps.

Brevet Colonel (temporary Brigadier-General) Harold Edward Street, R.A., Brigadier-General, General Staff, 8th Army Corps.

Major (temporary Brigadier-General) Arthur George Preston McNalty, A.S.C., Acting D.A. and Q.M.G., 9th Army Corps.

Major (temporary Lieutenant-Colonel) Cecil Faber Aspinall, Royal Munster Fusiliers, Acting Brigadier-General, General Staff, Dardanelles Army.

ROYAL NAVY.

Captain F. H. Mitchell, D.S.O., R.N., Naval Adviser at G.H.Q., M.E.F.

Captain Edwin Unwin, R.N., V.C., attached to Headquarters, Dardanelles Army.

FRENCH ARMY.

J. M. J. A. Brulard, Général de Division, Grand Officier de la Legion d'Honneur.

In the course of a few days I propose to forward recommendations for gallant and distinguished conduct performed by officers and men in the period under reference.

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

C. C. MONRO, General.

APPENDIX II.

THE LETTER OF THE BELGIAN BISHOPS.

14th November 1915.

To their Eminences the Cardinals, and their Highnesses the Bishops of Germany, Bavaria, and Austro-Hungary.

Your Eminences,

We Catholic Bishops, you Bishops of Germany on the one side, we Bishops of Belgium, France, and England on the other, for a year have presented to the world a most disconcerting spectacle. Hardly had the German armies set foot on Belgian soil before rumours began to spread among you, that our civilians were taking part in military operations; that the women of Visé and Liége were putting out the eyes of your soldiers; that the mob in Antwerp and Brussels had sacked the properties of expelled Germans.

So early as the first days of August, Dom Ildefons Herwegen, Abbot of Maria-Laach, sent a telegram to the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines imploring him for the love of God to save the German soldiers from the tortures that our countrymen were supposed to be inflicting upon them. Now it was common knowledge that our Government had taken every possible precaution to instruct its citizens in the rules of War. In every parish any arms the inhabitants possessed had to be deposited in the Town Hall, posters warned the population that only men actually called to the colours had the right to bear arms, and the clergy, anxious to assist the State, had spread the Government's instructions by word of mouth, by parochial notices, and by posters on the Church doors. Having lived at peace with the world for, a century, we could not realize the idea that any one would, in good faith, attribute to us violent instincts. Strong in our sense of right and in the sincerity of our peaceful intentions, we only shrugged our shoulders at the calumnies about "snipers" and "blinded soldiers" being firmly persuaded that the truth would soon come to light.

The Belgian clergy and Episcopate had been in friendly relations with many priests, monks, and Bishops of Germany and Austria. The Eucharistic Congresses of Cologne in 1909 and of Vienna in 1912 had brought them together and produced mutual appreciation.

We felt, therefore, assured that the Catholics of the nations at war with ourselves would not judge us lightly, so, without troubling overmuch about Dom Ildefons's telegram, Cardinal Mercier only begged him to join with us in preaching gentleness; for, he added, we are informed that the German troops have shot innocent Belgian priests. In the earliest days of August crimes had been perpetrated at Battice, at Visé, at Berneau, at Herve, and elsewhere, but we still hoped that these would prove to be isolated cases. Knowing the very high connections of Dom Ildefons, we had great faith in the following declaration which on the 11th of August he kindly sent to us: —

> "I have been informed by the highest authority that the German soldiers have received stringent orders from the Military Command to spare all innocent people. As for the deplorable fact that even priests have lost their lives, will you permit me to call your Eminence's attention to the fact that lately the garments of priests and of monks have become objects of suspicion and scandal, since French spies have been using the ecclesiastical garb, and even nun's dress, to hide their hostile intent."

And meanwhile hostile acts towards an innocent population still continued.

On the 18th of August 1914 Mgr. the Bishop of Liége wrote as follows to Commandant Bayer, Governor of the town of Liége: "In rapid succession several villages have been destroyed, some of their notables, among whom were priests, have been shot, others have been arrested; and all have protested their innocence. I know the priests of my diocese. I cannot believe that one of them could be guilty of hostile acts towards the German soldiers. I have visited several ambulances, and I have seen that the German wounded are tended with the same care as the Belgians. They testify to it themselves."

This letter remained unanswered.

Early in September the German Emperor gave the weight of his authority to the calumnious accusations of which our innocent people were the object. He sent to the President of the United States, Mr. Wilson, the following telegram, which up to now has not to our knowledge been withdrawn: "The Belgian Government have publicly encouraged the civilian population to take part in this war which they had so long and carefully prepared. The cruelties committed during this campaign by women, and

even by priests, on doctors and on nurses have been such that my Generals have at last been obliged to adopt the most vigorous measures to punish the culprits and to prevent this sanguinary people from continuing their abominable and cruel acts. Several villages, and even the town of Louvain, have had to be destroyed (except the very fine Town Hall) in self-defence and for the protection of my soldiers. My heart bleeds when I realize that such measures are inevitable, and when I think of the innumerable innocent people that these criminal actions have deprived of home and belongings."

This telegram was posted on the 11th September all over Belgium by order of the German Government. The very next day, September 12th, Mgr. the Bishop of Namur begged for an audience of the Military Governor of Namur, and protested against the reputation that his Majesty the Emperor was attempting to give to the Belgian clergy. He affirmed the innocence of all the priests who had been shot or ill-used, and declared himself ready to publish any guilty acts that could be proven.

This offer of Mgr. the Bishop of Namur was not accepted, and no notice was taken of his protestation.

Calumny thus had a free field. The German Press fomented it. The *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, organ of the Catholic Centre, vied in Jingoism with the Lutheran papers, and on the day when thousands of our countrymen, ecclesiastics and laymen from Visé, Aerschot, Wesemael, Hérent, Louvain, and twenty other places, innocent as you or ourselves of any warlike or cruel acts, were taken away as prisoners and were passing through the stations of Aix-la-Chapelle and Cologne, where for weary hours they were the objects of the morbid curiosity of the Rhenish population, they saw with pain that their Catholic brethren hurled as many insults at them as did the Lutherans of Celle, Soltau, and Magdeburg.

Not a voice was raised in Germany in defence of these victims.

In this way the tale that transformed innocence into guilt and crime into an act of justice gained credence, and on the 10th May 1915 the official German White Book actually reproduced this version and circulated in neutral countries the following odious and cowardly falsehoods: "It is beyond doubt that German wounded have been stripped and killed, yes, and horribly mutilated by the Belgian population, and that even women and young girls have taken part in these abominations. German wounded have had their eyes put out, their ears, nose, fingers, and sexual organs cut off, and have been disembowelled; in other cases German soldiers have been poisoned, hung up on trees, drenched with boiling liquids, or slowly roasted,

so that they have expired in appalling agonies. Such bestial proceedings on the part of the population are not only a violation of the obligations expressly formulated by the Geneva Convention concerning the care and attention that are due to the wounded of the enemy army; they are also contrary to the international principles of the laws of War and of humanity."

Dear Brothers in Faith and in the Priesthood, put yourselves for an instant in our place.

We know that these impudent accusations of the Imperial Government are calumnies from beginning to end. We know it and we take our oath on it.

Your Government to justify itself relies on the statements of witnesses who have never been submitted to any cross-examination.

Is it not your duty, not merely in charity but in simple justice, to enlighten yourselves, to enlighten your congregations, and to enable us to establish our innocence judicially? You owed us this satisfaction in the name of Catholic charity, which is above national conflicts. But you owe it to us now in simple justice, because a Committee that you at least tacitly recognized and which was composed of all that is most eminent in German politics, science, or religion, has endorsed these official accusations, and has entrusted to the pen of a Catholic priest, Professor A. J. Rosenberg of Paderborn, the task of condensing them in a book entitled "The False Accusations the French Catholics against Germany." It has therefore laid on the shoulders of Catholic Germany the responsibility of the active and public propaganda of this calumny on the Belgian people.

When the French book appeared to which the German one is an answer, their Highnesses Cardinal von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne, and Cardinal von Bettinger, Archbishop of Munich, felt themselves impelled to address to their Emperor the following telegram: "Revolted by the aspersions on our German country and its glorious army contained in the work 'German War and Catholicism,' our hearts impel us to express to your Majesty our pained indignation in the name of the whole German Episcopate. We shall not fail to carry our complaints to the Supreme Head of the Church."

Well, very Reverend Highnesses and Venerable Colleagues of the German Episcopate, in our turn, we Archbishop and Bishops of Belgium, revolted by the calumnies against our Belgian country and its glorious army contained in the Imperial White Book and reproduced in the answer drawn up by the German Catholics to the book of the French Catholics, must needs

express our pained indignation, to our King, to our Government, to our Army, to our Country.

And as the clashing of our protests can serve no useful end, we ask for your help in the formation of a Committee of investigation. You shall nominate to represent your officials as many members as you care to elect. We will nominate the same number—say, for example, three on either side—and will invite by common consent the Episcopate of some neutral State, either Holland, Spain, Switzerland, or the United States, to choose an arbiter who will preside at the sittings of this Tribunal.

You have carried your complaints to the Supreme Head of the Church. It would not be fair if your voice were the only one he heard, and, in justice, you will lend us your aid so that ours may reach him too.

We have, you and ourselves, a common duty, and it is to lay before his Holiness proven documents on which he may base his judgment.

You cannot ignore the efforts we have made time after time to obtain the creation of an Investigation Committee from the Power that occupies Belgium.

The Cardinal of Malines, twice in writing, on the 24th January 1915 and 10th February 1915, and the Bishop of Namur in a letter addressed to the Military Governor of his Province, April 12, 1915, solicited the formation of a tribunal to be composed in equal numbers of German and Belgian arbiters, and presided over by the delegate of a neutral State.

Our demands met with an obstinate refusal. The German authorities were certainly ready to invite investigations, but as they were only to be unilateral, they were therefore valueless judicially.

After having refused the investigation asked for by the Cardinal of Malines, the German authorities visited certain localities where priests had been shot, peaceful citizens massacred or taken prisoners, and then on the depositions of a few witnesses, chosen anyhow, or selected with care, in the presence occasionally of some representative of the local authority, who knew no German, and was therefore obliged to accept and sign the reports on trust, they based conclusions that were afterwards presented to the public as the results of cross-examination.

The German investigation at Louvain in November 1914 was carried on under these conditions, and is therefore valueless.

Under these circumstances we naturally turn to you.

You will grant to us this Court of Arbitration that the occupying Power has refused, and you will obtain from your Government a public undertaking that the witnesses questioned by us and by you may tell everything they know without fear of reprisals. Before you, sheltered by your spiritual authority, they will feel safer and will find courage to tell all they have seen and heard. The world will have faith in our united Episcopates; our dual control will authenticate the statements and guarantee the trustworthiness of the report. An investigation on these lines will be above suspicion.

We ask for this investigation, your Highnesses and Venerable Colleagues, to avenge the honour of the Belgian people. Calumnies started by your people and its highest representatives have violated that honour. And you know, as we know, that precept of all, moral, human, Christian, and Catholic Theology: There can be no remission of sin without restitution —"*Non remittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum.*" Your nation has, by the mouth of its highest spiritual authorities and political powers, accused our fellow countrymen of perpetrating on wounded Germans the atrocities that the White Book and the Catholic Manifesto quoted above have repeated. We counter these accusations with an absolute denial, and we demand to be allowed to prove the grounds of our denial.

In addition, so as to justify the atrocities committed in Belgium by the German Army, the political authorities in the title of the White Book, "Die Völkerrechtswidrige Führung des Belgischen Volkskriegs" (the violation of common right by the warlike proceedings of the Belgian people), the hundred Catholic signatories to the work "The German War and Catholicism: a German Answer to French Attacks," all insist that the German Army found itself in Belgium in a case of legitimate self-defence, against a perfidious organization of sharpshooters.

We affirm that there has not been anywhere in Belgium an organization of sharpshooters, and we claim the right, for the clearing of our calumniated national honour, to prove the grounds of our assertion.

You shall summon whoever you please to appear before this Committee of investigation and cross-examination. We will summon all the priests of the parishes where any civilians, either priests, monks, or laymen, were massacred or threatened with death to the cry of "Man hat geschossen" (Some one has fired). We will ask all these priests, if you wish, to sign their evidence under oath, and then, unless you accuse the whole Belgian

priesthood of perjury, you must accept, and the civilized world cannot challenge, the conclusions of such a thorough and serious investigation.

And we also consider, your Highnesses and Venerable Colleagues, that the institution of this Court of Honour is as much in your interest as in ours, for we know from personal experience, we know and affirm, that the German Army in Belgium has been guilty in a hundred different places of looting, of incendiarism, of imprisonments, of massacres and sacrilege, contrary to all the laws of justice or humanity.

More particularly we affirm this in the case of the parishes whose names have appeared in our Pastoral Letters, and in the two Minutes submitted by the Bishops of Namur and Liége on the 31st October and 1st November respectively to his Holiness Pope Benedict XV., to his Excellency the Papal Nuncio in Brussels, and the Ministers or representatives of neutral countries in that city.

Fifty innocent priests, thousands of innocent co-religionists were put to death; hundreds of others, whose lives were saved by circumstances their persecutors could not control, narrowly escaped death; thousands of guiltless people were thrown into prison without form of trial; many were detained for months in prison and, when they were released, not the most exhaustive cross-examination has been able to prove any culpability.

These crimes cry to Heaven for vengeance.

If in formulating these charges we calumniate the German Army, or if the Military authorities had good reasons for ordering or permitting these actions, which we call criminal, for the sake of Germany's national honour and integrity, you should put us to shame. So long as German Justice evades us, we claim as a duty the right to denounce what we conscientiously consider to be grave infractions of justice and aspersions on our honour.

The Chancellor of the German Empire, at the sitting of the 4th of August 1914, declared that the invasion of Luxemburg and Belgium was an infringement of the law of nations. He acknowledged that by ignoring the justified protests of the Belgian and Luxemburg Governments he committed an injustice which he promised to repair.

His Sovereign Holiness the Pope, making a direct allusion to Belgium, as he deigned to inform our Minister, Mr. Van den Heuvel, through his Eminence Cardinal Gasparri, Secretary of State, pronounced in his Consistorial Address of the 22nd of January 1915 this irrevocable judgment:

"It appertains to the Roman Pontiff, established by God as sovereign interpreter and avenger of the Divine law, to proclaim before all, that none may violate justice for any reason whatsoever."

Since then, however, politicians and casuists have tried to evade or weaken these clear words.

In their answer to the French Catholics, the German Catholics indulge in the same mean subtleties and endeavour to prove their contentions. They have two witnesses. One, who is anonymous, "saw," he says, "on the 26th July some French officers on the Boulevard Anspach at Brussels in conversation with Belgian officers." The other, a certain Gustave Lochard of Rimogne, states that "two regiments of French dragoons, the 28th and the 30th, and a Battery of Artillery crossed the Belgian frontier on the evening of the 31st July 1914, and remained exclusively on Belgian territory during the whole of the following week."

Now the Belgian Government asserts that "before the Declaration of War no French troops whatsoever had penetrated into Belgium;" and they add, "No honest witness can be found to deny this assertion."

Therefore our King's Government impeaches the veracity of the German Catholics' assertion.

There is here a question of primary importance, politically and morally, on which the public conscience requires enlightenment.

If, however, you decline to examine this wide point, we would ask you at least to check the statements on which the German Catholics base their asseverations against us. The statement of this Gustave Lochard deals with facts which it is easy to prove. The German Catholics will decline to remain under the implication of falsehood, and their conscience will make it an imperative duty to retract their words if they find they have been misled to our detriment.

We realize that you are loath to believe that regiments whose discipline, honesty, and religious faith are, you say, so well known to you, should have been capable of the inhuman acts we reproach them with.

You wish to persuade yourselves that this thing is not possible because it *cannot* be possible.

And, constrained by the evidence, we reply—it *must* be possible, because it is a fact.

When confronted with a fact, presumptions fall to the ground.

For you, as for us, there can be but one object—the verification of the facts by a Committee whose impartiality must be above suspicion in the eyes of all. We can readily understand the state of your mind. We beg you to believe that we also have respected the spirit of discipline, of work, of faith, of which we had so often realized the evidence and seen the results among your fellow countrymen. The Belgians are many who to-day confess the bitterness of their deception. But they have lived through the sinister events of August and September 1914, and the truth has finally prevailed over their most cherished convictions.

Belgium has been martyred; this is an unquestionable fact.

When foreigners from neutral countries—Americans, Dutch, Swiss, Spaniards—have questioned us on the manner in which Germany has made war, and we relate to them certain scenes of which we have against our will seen the horror, we mitigate our description, so much do we feel that the bare truth exceeds the limit of belief.

However, when you have had the whole truth laid before you, and have analyzed the causes, some distant, some immediate, of what one of your Generals, looking on the ruins of Schaffen-les-Diest and its martyred parish priest, called "a tragic error"; when you have been informed of the influences brought to bear on your soldiers, when they entered Belgium intoxicated by their first successes, the incredibility of the truth will appear to you, as to us, less disconcerting.

And further, your Highnesses and Venerable Colleagues, do not let your action be delayed by the specious excuses that an investigation at this moment would be premature.

We might reasonably say that, because the investigation to-day would be conducted in circumstances most unfavourable to our cause. Our people have been so greatly terrorized, the dark shadow of possible reprisals hangs so heavily over them, that the witnesses we should call before a Tribunal, one-half German, will hardly dare to tell the whole of the truth. But the reasons are stringent against any delay.

The first, which will go straight to your heart, is that we are the weak while you are the strong. You will not wish to take such an advantage of our weakness.

Public opinion generally inclines to the one who first appeals to it.

Now, while you are free to inundate neutral countries with your publications, we are imprisoned and reduced to silence. Even in the shelter

of our own churches we can hardly venture to raise our voices; our sermons are censored, or rather travestied, by paid spies; conscientious protests are called revolts against the powers that be; our writings are stopped at the frontier as contraband. You alone, therefore, enjoy freedom of speech and of pen, and if you will, in the spirit of charity and equity, procure a particle of this freedom for the accused Belgians, and give them a chance of defending themselves, we look to you to come forward, and that quickly, to protect them.

The old juridical saying, "*Audiatur et altera pars*," is inscribed, we are told, over many German tribunals. In any case, with you as with us, that rule governs the judgments of the Episcopal authorities, and most likely with you as with us it has become a popular proverb, "Who listens to one bell hears only one sound."

Perhaps you will say, This is past; forget it. Instead of pouring oil on the fire, why not forgive the injuries and combine with the Powers that be, who desire nothing better than to bind up the wounds of the unfortunate Belgian people?

Oh! your Highnesses and dear Colleagues, do not add irony to injustice. Have we not suffered enough? Have we not been, and are we not still being cruelly tortured?

You call it the past! and say resign yourselves! forget!

The past! why, every wound still bleeds! There is no honest soul but burns with indignation! And while our Government cries to the world, "He is twice guilty who, having violated another's rights, has the insolent cynicism to try and justify himself by imputing to his victim crimes he has never committed," our countrymen's curses can hardly be constrained. It was but yesterday that a peasant of the suburbs of Malines learnt that his son had succumbed on the battlefield. A priest tried to comfort him, and the brave soul replied, "Oh! this one, I give him to my country! But my eldest those . . . took him from me, and the cowards shot him in a ditch!"

How can you expect us to obtain from these unfortunate people, who have endured every horror, one sincere word of forgiveness or resignation as long as no acknowledgment of guilt, no word of repentance or promise of reparation, comes from those who have tortured them?

Germany can never give back to us the blood she has spilt or the innocent lives her armies have cut off, but it is in her power to restore the

honour of Belgium which she has stained or allowed to be stained. This restitution we ask of you—you who are pre-eminently the representatives of Christian morality in the German Church.

There is one thing even sadder than political divisions and material disasters, and that is the hatred that injustice, whether real or imagined, accumulates in hearts made to love each other.

As Pastors of our people is it not incumbent on us to undertake the mission of eliminating these evil feelings, and to establish the union in charity of all the children of the great Catholic family on the solid foundation of justice now so sorely shaken?

The occupying Power has said and has written much of its intention to bind our wounds.

But one judges of the intention by deeds, not words.

And what we know, we poor Belgians, who have temporarily to endure the rule of your Empire, is, that the Power which was bound in honour to govern us according to International Law as laid down by the Hague Convention, has foresworn its engagements.

We do not speak of individual acts against certain people or certain parishes, acts the nature of which can only be established by an investigation after the War. We are now alluding only to those acts of the Government which appear from their own official notices posted by them on the walls of our towns, and for which they are, therefore, indisputably and directly responsible.

The infractions of the Hague Convention have been, from the date of the occupation of our Provinces, numerous and flagrant. We give them here under their various headings, and in an appendix we submit the proofs of our allegations.

Collective punishments administered for individual acts (contrary to Article 50 of the Hague Convention).

Forced labour (contrary to Article 52).

New taxes (a breach of Articles 48, 49, and 52).

Abuse of requisitions in kind (a breach of Article 52).

Supersession of the code of Law existing in the country (contrary to Article 43).

These violations of International Law, which aggravate our misfortune and engender hatred and revolt in hearts naturally pacific and charitable, would not be persisted in if those who commit them did not feel themselves supported by the consenting silence, if not by the outspoken approbation, of all those who lead public opinion in their own country.

We therefore repeat with confidence our appeal to your charity. We are the weak, you are the strong. Come and judge whether you have the right to leave us any longer without succour.

Furthermore, there are reasons of wider import for the creation of an Investigation Committee by members of the Catholic Episcopacy.

We have alluded to one point already. Our divisions are a disconcerting spectacle to the world. They are causes of scandal and give openings for blasphemous thoughts. Our people are unable to understand how you can ignore the double iniquity that has so flagrantly crushed Belgium—the violation of our neutrality and the inhuman conduct of your soldiers. Nor can they understand why, having knowledge of it, your voice is not raised in condemnation.

And on your side what must scandalize your people, Protestants and Catholics, is the attitude your Press has ascribed to the Belgian Clergy, and to a Nation whose Government has for thirty years been notoriously a Catholic one.

"Take care," said Mgr. the Bishop of Hildesheim to his Clergy so early as September 21, 1914, "take care! These accusations which the Press is spreading against the Priests, the Monks, and Nuns of a Catholic nation will raise a barrier between the Catholics and Protestants of Germany, and the religious future of the Empire will be imperilled."

The campaign of calumny against our Clergy and people has not diminished. One of the Deputies of the Centre, Erzberger, seems to have undertaken the task of keeping it alive. In Belgium itself, in the Cathedral of Antwerp on the sixteenth Sunday after Whitsunday, one of your Priests, Heinrich Mohr, addressing the Catholic soldiers of your Army from the pulpit of Divine Truth, dared to say, "Official documents have told us how the Belgians have hung German soldiers to trees, drenched them with boiling liquids, and have burnt them alive."

There is but one way to end these scandals. The truth must be brought into the light of day, and the real culprits be punished by the religious

authorities.

There is also for honest men, whether believers or unbelievers, another grievous scandal. It is the mania for putting forward the comparative advantages or disadvantages that might accrue to Catholic interests by the success of either the Triple Alliance or the Quadruple Entente. Professor Schrörs of Bonn University has been the first to our knowledge to consecrate his leisure to these obnoxious calculations.

What the religious result of the War will be is God's secret, and there is none among us in the Divine confidence.

There is one question of far greater importance, a question of morals, of right, of honour. "Seek ye first," says our Lord in His Holy Gospel, "the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and everything else shall be added unto you." Do the right, happen what may.

And so we have at the present time, we Bishops of the Church, a moral, and consequently a religious duty, which takes precedence of all others, and that is—to seek out and proclaim the truth.

Christ, who has bestowed on us the infinite honour of being His disciples and ministers, has said, "I came into the world to bear witness of the truth," "*Ego ad hoc veni in mundum, ut testimonium perhibeam veritati.*"

On the solemn day of our episcopal consecration we vowed to God and the Catholic Church never to forsake the truth, never to yield to ambition or fear when our love for Him was put to the test. "*Veritatem diligat, neque eam unquam deserat, aut laudibus aut timore superatus.*" By reason of our vocation we have therefore a common duty and a ground of mutual understanding.

Confusion reigns in people's minds; what some call light, others call darkness; what seems good to one is evil to another.

The Tribunal of Investigation to which we have the honour of inviting your delegates, will contribute, we hope, to the clearing up of many misunderstandings. "*Non ponat lucem tenebras, nec tenebras lucem; non dicat malum bonum, nec bonum malum.*"

Our Holy Father the Pope from the depth of his heart calls for peace. In the letter which he deigned to address to you at your last meeting at Fulda, he begged you, he begged us all, to join him in this aspiration. But he only wishes for a peace based on respect for the rights and dignity of nations. "*Dum votis omnibus pacem expetimus, atque eam quidem pacem, quae et justitiae sit opus et populorum congruat dignitati.*"

We shall therefore fulfil the wish of our Father in God by working together for the unveiling and the triumph of truth, for on truth alone depend justice, the honour of nations, and in the end peace.

We beg your Eminences and Venerable Colleagues to believe in our sentiments of respectful and fraternal devotion.

(Signed)

D.-J. Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines.
Antoine, Bishop of Ghent.
Gustave-J., Bishop of Bruges.
Thomas-Louis, Bishop of Namur.
Martin-Hubert, Bishop of Liège.
Amédée Crooy, Bishop designate of Tournai.

APPENDIX III.

THE WORK OF THE MUNITIONS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. Lloyd George's Speech in the House of Commons on December 20, 1915.[1]

It is now a little over six months since the Prime Minister invited me to take charge of the provision of munitions to the British Army in this war. Although the work is by no means complete, and some of the most important parts of it are still in course of development, I think the time has come to report progress to the House. Perhaps I had better preface my statement by a short survey of the relation of munitions to the problem of the war, so that the House should understand clearly why we have taken certain action in order to increase the supply. There has never been a war in which machinery played anything like the part which it is playing in this war. The place acquired by machinery in the arts of peace in the nineteenth century has been won by machinery in the grim art of war in the twentieth century. In no war ever fought in this world has the preponderance of machinery been so completely established. The German successes, such as they are, are entirely, or almost entirely, due to the mechanical preponderance which they achieved at the beginning of the war. Their advances in the East and West and South are due to this mechanical superiority; and our failure to drive them back in the West and to check their advance in the East is also attributable to the tardiness with which the Allies developed their mechanical resources. The problem of victory is one of seeing that this superiority of the Central Powers shall be temporary and shall be brought to an end at the earliest possible moment. There is one production in which the Allies had a complete mechanical superiority, and there they are supreme—that is in the Navy. Our command of the sea is attributable not merely to the excellence of our sailors, but to the overwhelming superiority of our machinery.

There is another aspect of this question which has become more and more evident as this war has developed and progressed. The machine spares the man. The machine is essential to defend positions of peril, and it saves life, because the more machinery you have for defence the more thinly you can hold the line. Therefore the fewer men are placed in positions of jeopardy to life and limb. We have discovered that some of the German advance lines were held by exceptionally few men. It is a pretty well-known

fact that one very strong position held by the Germans for days and even for weeks was defended against a very considerable French army by ninety men armed with about forty to fifty machine guns, the French losing heavily in making the attack. Machinery in that case spared the men who were defending. It is one portion of the function which has been entrusted to the Ministry of Munitions to increase the supply of machines in order to save the lives of our gallant men. On the other hand, it means fewer losses in attacking positions of peril, because it demolishes machine-gun emplacements, tears up barbed wire, destroys trenches, so that, therefore, the losses are much fewer when you are attacking strong positions held by the enemy. What we stint in materials we squander in life; that is the one great lesson of munitions.

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THE CONTROL OF SUPPLIES.

Those are the main elements of the problem which the Prime Minister invited me to help in solving. In the Ministry of Munitions we have taken the control of supplies gradually. We have only just secured the direction of design. Woolwich Arsenal passed into our hands about three months ago. Inventors came and then went. They came and went, and came back again. Design was entrusted to us by the Prime Minister about three weeks ago. I should first of all give the House the position when the Ministry of Munitions was first appointed. When I made my statement some time ago we were too uncomfortably near the day to give many particulars. It is quite impossible for us to give any sort of statement as to what is being done, unless I first indicate what headway we had to make. There was undoubtedly a shortage. That was known. Our troops knew it; so did the enemy. But neither of them knew how really short we were in some very essential particulars. Now I can with impunity give at least one or two figures. I would take gun ammunition. Gun ammunition is roughly divided into high explosive and shrapnel. There is no doubt that military opinion, at least in this country—I am not quite sure about France—was wedded to shrapnel for reasons which are not unconnected with the events of the South African War. It was supposed that the days of high explosives were numbered, except for siege guns, and that shrapnel was the only weapon for fighting in the field. The developments of this war—many of them unexpected, and many of them unexpected by the greatest soldiers—proved

that that expert opinion was not altogether correct in its anticipation of the demise of high explosives. We were late and reluctant converts, and, like all reluctant converts, we were very tardy in giving up the old shrapnel. We came to the conclusion that at any rate a very high proportion of high-explosive ammunition was essential to success in the kind of trench warfare to which we had settled down. I think we still have a higher opinion of shrapnel than either the French or the Germans. It is not for me to express an opinion on it. My business is to take orders on this point, and to supply whatever the military opinion concludes is best. There is a good deal to be said on both sides, at any rate our military experts concluded that a very considerable proportion of high explosives was necessary—quite one-half. But we came rather late to that conclusion, and that accounts for the shortage in the beginning of the year, and later on in April and May and further.

OUR DEFICIENCIES IN MAY.

Now I will give the House an indication of the leeway we had to make up. The Germans at that time—I have already given the figures to the House—were turning out about 250,000 shells per day, the vast majority of them being high explosives. That is a prodigious figure. The French have also been highly successful in the quantities which they have been turning out. But they have great armies, and their arsenals which were turning out the materials of war for their army were naturally on a larger scale than ours. Our large arsenals naturally took a naval turn, and the bulk of the engineers who were turning out munitions of war were engaged on naval work, so that in the month of May, when the Germans were turning out 250,000 shells a day, most of them high explosives, we were turning out 2,500 a day in high explosives and 13,000 in shrapnel. That was neither right in quantity nor in proportion. I have already given the House some of the reasons why the supply was so low. One was the lateness at which we came to the conclusion that high explosives were to play a great part in the war. The other was the fact that the Navy—this is a fact which is too often forgotten, not merely in this country, but, if I may say so, abroad—absorbed an enormous number of engineers and a very high proportion of our engineering resources. I have not the figures at the present moment, but unless I am mistaken something between two-thirds and three-quarters of the engineers occupied on munitions were occupied in turning out munitions for the Navy.

Proceeding, Mr. Lloyd George described in detail how the Ministry of Munitions was staffed and organized and how it set to work to make good the lack of shells. In May, he said, before the Department was created, the

deliveries of high-explosive shells were only 16 per cent. of the promises. The first duty of the Department was to see that contracts already entered into were executed, and the second was to seek fresh sources of supply by utilizing the untapped engineering reserves of the country. The trouble, they found, arose from lack of machinery, of labour, of the steady supply of material, and sometimes from transport difficulties. A census was made of all the machinery in the country, the whole of the machine tool trade was placed under Government control, and measures were taken (including the purchase of machinery in America) to provide adequate plant properly distributed to secure an increased output.

RAW MATERIAL.

The next step we took was in regard to raw material—metal. At the time of the formation of the Ministry one of the chief difficulties was the lack of a regular and sufficient supply of the necessary raw material. Under the system of competition in the open market the prices of material were rising to an extent wholly unwarranted by the situation. So we formed a separate metal department to deal with that situation, and steps were immediately taken to place the Ministry in control of the supply of metals of all classes, and arrangements were made for providing the contractors with all the raw materials they required and for making good any shortages by tapping fresh sources.

The result of these efforts has been to effect a considerable reduction in the prices of raw materials. There has been a saving in the aggregate of something like fifteen or twenty millions on the orders, due entirely to the action taken by the metal department in securing control of the whole metal market of this country. It enabled us to secure a supply adequate not only for the immediate future, but for many months to come, and to meet all the demands of the various contractors, and also to provide large supplies for our Allies. Indeed, it was only by these efforts that a crisis in the market was prevented and that manufacturers have been able to effect the substantial increase in the output that has actually taken place.

THE SUPPLY OF LABOUR.

Another step we took was in regard to labour. We took steps to endeavour to increase the supply. More especially of skilled workmen in the various trades. We also supplied technical advice by experts to help manufacturers to get over their difficulties. That was a very useful step, especially in the case of firms that had not been in the habit of turning out

this class of work. We appointed a number of hustlers to visit the works and find out what was wrong, and to press contracts forward. The effect in itself of calling upon the industries to supply weekly reports was to improve the output. Contractors often were not aware of their own difficulties until they were forced to face them and give an account of them. The net result has been to increase the deliveries on old orders from 16 per cent. on the promises as they were then to over 80 per cent., a very considerable increase on the promises as they are now.

That is in regard to high explosives. We also effected a very considerable improvement in the percentage of the deliveries of shrapnel. The deliveries of high explosives and shrapnel have gone up much more considerably than these figures indicate. The promises were increasing from month to month and week to week, and we have succeeded in increasing very considerably the deliveries in both.

Now I come to the component parts of shells, which have given us a great deal of trouble. This is the most troublesome part of our work, because you are always finding that some component or other is falling short. There was too much reliance placed on Woolwich and too little on seeking fresh sources of supply. We approached this problem in the same way as I have sketched out in regard to shell bodies. We sought out fresh firms with the faculty to undertake the manufacture of the various components, and the next step was to erect new buildings for the purpose of supplementing private firms, and to hurry up the erection of buildings in course of construction. Our census of machinery enabled us to discover rapidly and without loss of time the new sources of supply, and the local boards of management assisted very considerably. Sometimes we have had to adapt components to the kind of machinery that was available in order to increase the supply. There were two emergency factories erected for filling purposes and completed in six weeks. I think that was a very fine piece of hustling. The large filling factories have been put up in various parts of the country in order to cope with the rapidly increasing demand owing to the rapidly increased delivery of shells.

STATISTICAL RECORD OF OUTPUT.

Talking about components brings me to Woolwich, because Woolwich was primarily responsible for filling and assembling. The various shell bodies and components from different parts of the country were sent to Woolwich to be assembled and filled. That dual responsibility undoubtedly hindered and delayed this portion of our work. Without blaming anybody, I

may say that the mere fact of having dual responsibility in itself creates delay, and the War Office came to the conclusion at the end of August that it would be better to hand over that part of Woolwich to the Ministry of Munitions. I think I can give very striking figures of the effect which this had on the solution of some of our difficulties. Sir Frederick Donaldson, the distinguished engineer, who is at the head of Woolwich, has gone to America and Canada and helped us to organize new sources of supply there, and has rendered very great service. The engineer of the North-Eastern Railway Company was placed at our disposal, and he is in temporary control, and the services which he has rendered there have been conspicuous. I will give one illustration. The manufacture and filling output of various articles has increased since he took it in hand, in some cases by 60 per cent., in others by as much as 80 per cent., whereas the staff has only increased 23 per cent. One of the things he initiated was a statistical record of the output. These records were not compiled prior to his assumption of control. Now they are having, and will continue to have, a potent effect not only upon the output but upon the cost of the output. As an illustration of the use to which such figures can be put I will mention that when the output of a certain shop or section of a shop is noted, the following morning it is possible for the superintendent or the works manager immediately to put his finger upon the fact that perhaps the flow of raw material fails, or that owing to congestion of the arsenal railways the output cannot be got rid of, and the inefficiency can be checked. Such hitches in the daily work of a factory can only be avoided and minimized by a most complete system of statistical control, and that has been instituted at Woolwich.

THE NEW SOURCES OF SUPPLY.

Now I come to the question of new sources of supply. The House may perhaps recollect that soon after I was appointed Minister of Munitions I made a special appeal to private firms hitherto not engaged in the manufacture of munitions to place their works at the disposal of the Government to enable us to increase our supply, more especially of gun ammunition, and they readily responded. The country was divided into twelve areas—England and Wales, eight; Scotland, two; and Ireland, two. I acknowledge the very great assistance which my hon. friend the member for Waterford rendered to me in enabling us to raise supplies there which, I confess, I was not very hopeful of being able to do at first, more especially the things we stood most in need of, such as fuses, primings, and components. We set up forty local Munition Committees in the most important engineering centres, each with a small board of management

consisting of business men in that locality. The whole of Great Britain and Ireland except districts which were barren of any engineering resources is practically covered by the operation of these boards.

THE NATIONAL FACTORIES.

There were two alternative methods of production adopted under the scheme. One was to set up national shell factories run by the local boards of management on behalf of the Government. The machinery was supplied partly by the Government and partly by borrowing from local engineering works, and a good many engineering works very patriotically assisted us with lathes, etc., at some sacrifice to themselves. These national shell factories have answered two purposes. Many of them have been conspicuously successful. They have increased our supply threefold. They have minimized our labour difficulties, for there have not been the usual questions between Capital and Labour. They have enabled us to check prices, and I will show later the value of that when we come to consider the matter of finance. In addition to these national shell factories, of which we have thirty-three, we have a co-operative scheme by which we utilize the plant of private firms who up to that time had not been occupied in turning out any munitions of war.

The services of the boards of management are purely voluntary. They are generally great business men in the neighbourhood. In each area there is a superintending engineer and his assistant, a labour officer and his assistants, a representative of the Admiralty, and generally a trench mortar representative, and the result of this organization has been that, although those firms had never turned out any ammunition at all, and although they had been engaged only for two months, last week they turned out three times as much high-explosive shell bodies as had been turned out by all the arsenals and works in the United Kingdom in the month of May last. They did more than that—this is not a comparison with the 2,500 a day, because the shell bodies delivered then were more than that, the three times represents a very considerable quantity of shell bodies—they themselves, or through firms which they helped the Ministry of Munitions to discover, turned out prodigious quantities of components to enable us to complete not merely shell bodies which they delivered, but shell bodies on order before.

I should like just to say a word about American orders. Soon after the Ministry was appointed Mr. D. A. Thomas, an old member of this House, went over to America to report upon the position and to let us know exactly what was going on there, and to place fresh orders and, if possible,

accelerate orders already placed. He has come back speaking in the highest possible terms of the services rendered to this country by Messrs. J. P. Morgan and Co., not merely by the selection of firms for the supply of munitions and the orders they have placed, but because they have saved many millions of money to this country by the efforts they have made to reduce the rather inflated prices which were prevailing before they took the matter in hand. Mr. Thomas assisted in organizing the purchases and inspection of machinery both in the United States and in Canada. He has helped very considerably in speeding up, in effecting economies, and in placing absolutely essential orders for the supplying of necessary munitions for this country.

THE INCREASE IN THE SHELL SUPPLY.

Woolwich has been taken over and some progress has been made in the introduction of modern methods of factory manufacture. The problem of relieving congestion at Woolwich has been dealt with by an elaborate system of well-distributed storage, and the railway congestion there has been decreased. What is the net result of the steps we have taken to increase the output and delivery of gun ammunition? I have given the figures for May. I cannot give the figures for November as yet. The House will be entitled later on to get them. All I can say is that the quantity of shells fired in the recent operations in September was enormous. The battle lasted for days and almost ran into weeks, but there was no shortage. On the contrary, the Chief of the Staff assured me that they were perfectly satisfied with the quantity of shells. This was the result of four months' careful husbanding, but it will be reassuring for the House to know that the whole of it was replaced in a month, and we shall soon be in a position to replace it in a single week.

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST PUBLICITY.

Now I come to the question of guns. Large orders for field guns were placed in 1914. In June deliveries were fair, although not up to promise. Medium guns and howitzers were largely in arrear, but I am glad to say that there has been a considerable improvement in the last few months, and the machinery of the Department has rendered most valuable assistance in this respect. In regard to these guns the House may take it that the position is thoroughly satisfactory. Now I come to the more important problem of the heavy guns. I experienced some difficulty in speaking about it last time, because whatever you may say about it must to some extent advertise your resources to the enemy. Before I made any statement to the House, I consulted the Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister thought that it was

well to endeavour to let not only this country know but our Allies know that we were putting forward very great exertions in order to equip our Forces with the heaviest possible artillery. I am of opinion that the decision that the Prime Minister gave was the right one. There are certain things you cannot hide from the enemy. It is a great mistake to assume that they do not know them. After all, they know what shells you have, what size of shell you have, how much heavy and how much light, exactly as we know about theirs. These things are not produced merely for the delectation of our soldiers. They are produced in order to send them across to the enemy, and the enemy knows the moment you have got them they will be passed on; and if they are not passed on, the enemy comes to the conclusion, not at all unnaturally, that you have not got them. On the other hand, your Allies want to know that you are putting forward all your strength. It encourages them, and therefore the Prime Minister came to the conclusion that it was better that the facts should be divulged.

NECESSITY OF BIG GUNS.

Up to midsummer of this year big guns on a large scale had not been ordered. We came rather late to the conclusion that on that scale big guns were essential to the successful prosecution of the war. The kind of gun which was regarded as a prodigy in the Boer War was just a poor miserable medium gun. Now the soldiers are doubtful whether it counts in the least in trench warfare. The heavy siege gun which we had at the beginning of the war is now the lightest. Facts have forced the conclusion on us that it is only the very heaviest guns that will enable us to demolish trenches, which are getting deeper and deeper, with trench behind trench—trenches of every conceivable angle. There are labyrinths of trenches with concrete casemates, and nothing but the most powerful and shattering artillery will enable our men to advance against them except along a road which is a road to certain death. Therefore the War Office came to the conclusion that it was essential to success and victory, and to the protection of the lives of our soldiers, that we should have an adequate equipment of the heaviest possible artillery.

We are erecting great works in this country, which are mostly associated with the programme for the production of these guns and the supply of adequate projectiles. We are making rapid progress with these structures. We have placed at our disposal the services of one of the ablest contractors in this country—the manager to Sir William Arrol's firm—and the help which he has given us is one of very conspicuous character.

OUTPUT OF MACHINE GUNS.

I come now to the equally important question of machine guns. The dimensions of the machine-gun problem will be realized if the House will consider not only the increase of the size of the Army, but also that the number of guns per division has increased many-fold. When the war began our ideas were that each battalion should be supplied with two machine guns. The Germans supply each with sixteen machine guns. There is no doubt that a machine gun is by far the most destructive weapon in the whole of their Army; it has destroyed far more lives than their rifles. I am told that the machine guns and artillery between them are probably responsible for more than 90 per cent. of the casualties, rifles being responsible for not much more than 5 per cent. We were rather late in realizing the great part which the machine gun played in this war, and I think I am entitled to say that the first time that the importance of the problem was impressed upon me was by the Prime Minister in one of his visits to the front in June.

When my right hon. friend returned from the front he impressed upon me, in the gravest possible language, the importance of supplying on a very large scale machine guns: and one of the first steps was to make arrangements for multiplying many-fold and as quickly as possible our output of machine guns. We immediately placed large orders at home and abroad. We assisted firms with machinery, labour, and material, and completely equipped a new large factory for the manufacture of the Vickers gun. All the machine tools and equipment have been delivered, but production is delayed for want of skilled labour. In another part of the country an existing machine-gun factory has been extended in order to increase its output of machine guns. Two new factories have been erected elsewhere to turn out other types of machinery. At two other works extension of plant has been made for the production of machine guns, plants which are to increase the machine-gun production. The net result since we began these operations has been to increase the production fivefold; we turn out five times the number we were turning out at that date. In the new year there will be a production greater still, and, in short, our requirements are well in sight of being fulfilled.

PRODUCTION OF SMALL ARMS.

With regard to rifles, we have taken steps similar to those taken with regard to shells and machine guns. The plant has been extended at home, and new large important orders have been given to America. There is one feature which is worth mentioning here. We have peddled out a large amount of work to certain firms. They have not turned out rifles, but have made some component parts, while other firms turn out other parts of the

rifle; we peddle out these parts to a great many firms, and we propose to have them assembled under the supervision of some expert firm like Enfield, and by that means obtain a considerable increase in the possibilities of output.

I come now to the trench mortar. This is almost a new development, and yet although it is a new development there is no part of this war where the soldiers have resorted more to old methods—catapults, spring guns, and, of course, grenades and the helmet. All that I can say about this is that since we undertook this task the grenade output has increased by forty times. There has been a school established for instruction in connection with this work. The output of trench mortars has greatly increased. The present output in a fortnight is equal to the whole output in the first year of trench warfare. There are several branches which I might have dwelt upon—for instance, the output of optical work. We were so dependent on Germany for optical glass that when the war broke out there was an acute famine in this country. Orders have been placed wherever possible abroad. Steps have been taken to extend largely the operations of the few firms in this country. With regard to explosives, I have already told the House of the steps which we have taken, and of the important new works which have been constructed in different parts of the country, so that I feel confident that, while the output of shells and munitions becomes very considerable, the amount of high explosives and propellants to fill them will be quite adequate. Not only that, but I think we shall be able to supply, as we are supplying, very considerable quantities, especially of high explosives, to our Allies who are in need of them.

DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE.

During the last three weeks there has been an addition to the powers of the Ministry. Hitherto, whilst manufacture was in our hands, design was in the hands of the War Office. The fact that you separated design from manufacture necessarily caused delay, and there had been a good deal of unnecessary delay, for which I blame no one except the system, by which you separated the control and the direction of the two branches. In France the manufacture and the design were under the same control. My right hon. friend the Prime Minister was in charge at the War Office when I put the whole case before him; and he took the view that it was infinitely better in the interests of increasing output that the Minister of Munitions should be responsible for both. The effect of that has been that the Ordnance Board and the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich have been transferred to the Ministry of Munitions. We are able now to co-ordinate design with manufacture.

We have made very important changes in the Ordnance Board. We have placed at the head of this new department one of the most distinguished artillery officers in the British Army, and one who had experience for about fifteen months in directing artillery in France. He has had the assistance of two or three others, who also had experience at the front, and that in itself is a great advantage when you want to manufacture the right design.

ECONOMIES EFFECTED.

I come now to a consideration which perhaps some hon. members will think was the last consideration in my mind. I mean economy, and I should like to deal with that before I come to labour. I should like to tell my hon. friends below the gangway why I put economy first and labour second, and why I am putting them so near together. The Ministry took over from the War Office certain members of its financial staff, and during the first few weeks, and, I think, months, of our administration, we had the advantage of the services of Sir Charles Harris, who is one of the ablest men in the Civil Service. The work was too great for him, and we had to make other arrangements. Even before the Government examined the problem of supervision of the expenditure of the great spending departments, we had created a special organization for the purpose of revising prices and costs. There was a very able accountant, a member of one of the most important firms in this country, who placed his services gratuitously at our disposal. We set him to the task of scrutinizing contracts and examining prices, and generally seeking out methods of cutting down expenditure. He gathered around him a staff of experienced business men and accountants. He first of all devoted his attention to the question of gun ammunition, because that is incomparably the largest item of expenditure.

The prices were fixed for gun ammunition when the need was very urgent. There was no time to bargain, and that is true both of the War Office and of the Ministry of Munitions. New firms were also taken on, but at first the actual cost of production of unaccustomed and inexperienced firms was very considerably higher than that of experienced firms; so that for one reason or another prices were high. The Committee have examined very carefully the cost of production, and the national shell factories helped us in that matter, because we knew from our experience in the national shell factories what the actual cost of production was in every operation. This new Committee came to the conclusion that prices could be considerably reduced. A new scale has been devised, but, of course, it is only applicable to new contracts and to the renewal of old contracts. Therefore it has not yet come to full fruition; but I will just give the House an indication of the

saving which will be effected by this means. The cost of the ammunition for 18-pounders, which is a very considerable item, running into millions, has been reduced by 40 per cent., and the cost of the ammunition for 4.5 howitzers has been reduced by 30 per cent. since the report of this Committee. All the new contracts are based on those prices.

I am speaking of the gun ammunition, which is the most important item of expenditure. The gun is a comparatively small matter, compared with the ammunition, and there is no item of expenditure which compares with the expenditure on shells. Therefore the Committee devoted its energies to examining the cost of shells, and that Committee is still going on.

A PRODIGIOUS SAVING HOPED FOR.

They took, first of all, the lighter guns, and they are proceeding to examine the heavy ammunition, and are going on to examine the whole of the items of expenditure in the Ministry of Munitions. By this means we hope we will save, and save very considerably, save in millions, in tens of millions, in the expenditure which we are incurring. Here I should like to make an appeal to the local committees. Contracts are being placed very largely through these local munitions committees. At first it was necessary to let contracts at fairly high prices, because there were unaccustomed firms coming in, and they would not make much out of it, although the prices were high. But now the time is coming when the local boards of management should assist us in placing all the new contracts and all the renewals upon the new scale. As we have had a good deal of decentralization in the letting of our contracts, a good deal of responsibility necessarily falls upon those committees, and we must have their co-operation in achieving this very important result in the interests of national economy. When we regard the prodigious cost of the war, every million saved is of vital importance, not merely for the future, but actually in order to conserve our energies for the carrying on of the war itself.

HOME AND FOREIGN PRODUCTION.

I have already pointed out the economy which has been effected in taking control of the metal contracts. We have got to examine the prices in this country, compared with the prices of similar metals in America and elsewhere, to find how substantial those contracts are. We have saved in the course of a single year something which is equal to sixpence or sevenpence in the pound of income-tax in the metal market alone. There is another method of saving—here I am coming very near to labour—by altering the

proportion of home and foreign orders. When the Ministry was formed, the proportion of foreign orders in the most expensive items, like gun ammunition and rifles, was two foreign for one home. What does that mean? The more foreign orders you have the greater your exchange difficulty, and the prices are always higher, even in times of peace, in America than they are here. You have no control over the industries there, and therefore you cannot prevent inflation of prices, except by competition. But when every available firm is working hard to produce for you there is practically no competition; but the moment you reduce your orders there, you are in a position to dictate terms with regard to prices.

The next consideration is the desirability of leaving to the American market as much as you possibly can the equipping of those Allies who have not the same industrial and engineering resources as we have. Therefore, from every point of view, it is vital that you should do everything to increase the proportion which we manufacture here in comparison with that which we order from abroad. There are other reasons. Our aim ought to be to develop home resources, and we have already effected a very substantial change in the proportion of the orders, especially in the more expensive articles, but the success of this essential object depends entirely upon labour.

We want labour to man all the old factories. There are machines now standing idle—beautiful machines of the most modern type for the manufacture of machine guns which our armies and the armies of our Allies are clamouring for, which are essential for offence and for defence. We cannot put them out because we have not got the necessary skilled labour. There are some things you must get the skilled man for. There are other operations that you really do not need the skilled man for. That is the whole problem. If you can get the skilled man from the place where an unskilled man or a woman could do the work just as well, and put him in those factories where you must get your skilled man, the problem of the war will be solved. So much for the old factories.

What about the new factories? We require 80,000 skilled men for these new factories, and 200,000 to 300,000 unskilled. Upon our getting that depends—well, I will not say our success in the war; but take the lowest view of it—upon that depends entirely whether we are going to alter the proportions substantially of orders in favour of this country, and consequently reduce the cost of the war by scores of millions of pounds in the course of a single year. It depends upon that whether we can furnish our troops with guns—plenty of the right sort of guns—rifles, machine guns, and projectiles to enable them to make next year’s campaign a success.

TALK OF OVER-PRODUCTION.

I have heard rumours that we were overdoing it—over-ordering, over-building, over-producing. Nothing could be more malevolent; nothing could be more mischievous. You can talk about over-ordering when we have got as much as the Germans have; and even then I should not like to argue how far we should go. So mischievous is that kind of talk that I cannot help thinking it must have been originated by men of pro-German sympathies, who know how important it is that our troops should at the critical moment not be short of that overwhelming mass of material which alone can break down the resistance of a highly-entrenched foe. We have never yet, in spite of great efforts, approached the German or the French production. We have got to reach that first, but not last. France is of opinion that even her colossal efforts are inadequate. I have consulted generals and officers of experience in the British and French armies. Conferences which I have had with the Ministry of Munitions in France have given me the fullest opportunity of obtaining the views of the most highly-placed and distinguished officers in the French Army. Before I quote their opinion let me point out that all these generals up to the present have underestimated the quantity of material that was necessary. I am not surprised—it is so prodigious. I remember a great French general, one of the greatest, telling me it was the surprise of the war.

THE LESSON OF LOOS.

Every battle that has been fought has demonstrated one thing—that even now it is underestimated. Take the last great battle. It is no secret that you had a prodigious accumulation of ammunition; yet there is not a general who was in the battle and who comes with his report who does not tell you that with three times the quantity of ammunition, especially in the higher natures, they would have achieved twenty times the result. It is too early to talk about over-production. The most fatuous way of economizing is to produce an inadequate supply. A good margin is a sensible insurance. Less than enough is a foolish piece of extravagance. £200,000,000 will produce an enormous quantity of ammunition. It is 40 days' cost of the war. If you have it at the crucial moment your war might be won with your 40 days. If you have not got it it might run to 400 days. What sort of economy is that?

It is not merely that. What you spare in money you spill in blood. I have a very remarkable photograph—I don't think I ought to say where I got it from—of the battlefield of Loos, taken immediately after. There was barbed wire which had not been destroyed. There was one machine-gun emplacement which was intact—only one; the others had been destroyed.

There, in front of the barbed wire, lay hundreds of gallant men. One machine gun! These are the accidents that you can obviate if you have enough. How? Every soldier tells me there is but one way of doing it. Have enough ammunition to crush every trench where an enemy lurks, to destroy every concrete emplacement, to shatter every machine gun, to rend and tear every yard of barbed wire, so that if the enemy wants to resist he will have to do it in the open, face to face with better men than himself. That is the secret—plenty of ammunition. I do hope that all this idea that we are turning out too much will not enter into the minds of workmen, capitalists, taxpayers, or anybody, until we have enough to crash our way through. For Heaven's sake, if there are risks to be taken let them be risks for the pockets of the taxpayer and not the lives of the soldiers.

WHERE LABOUR CAN HELP.

The right part of economy is not to reduce the output, but to reduce the cost; and labour alone can help us here. There are only eight per cent. of the machines for turning out lathes in this country working on night shifts. We have appealed to the employers. They say "We have not got the labour," and it is true. They have not got skilled labour. But there are many of these operations which could be discharged effectively enough by unskilled men and by women. We have done everything to supply skilled labour. We have done our best to increase the efficiency of labour. Questions of Sunday labour and fatigue and questions of canteens have been gone into. We have done our best by the system of munition volunteers to fill up gaps. We have tried to get men from the Colours—and it was a great rearguard action. Every corporal fought against parting with good intelligent skilled men, and the men themselves did not like it. But at last we are beginning to get over this difficulty, and we have got a very considerable number of men back. But we have got nothing like what we want. It all depends upon organized labour. Unless they allow us to place unskilled men and women at work which hitherto perhaps has been the monopoly of skilled men in order that we may take the highly skilled men away and put them into other work, we cannot do what we want. You may ask why it has not been done, and I will tell the House why, frankly. We found exactly the same difficulties as we found in the release of men from the Colours. There is an action to be fought in every area, every workshop, every lodge.

The weakness is this. Our bargain was that we should restrict the profits of the employer to a certain extent, and the fact that we have kept our bargain has been against us. A few employers have done their very best to do what is called diluting labour, and they have been met with

unquestionable resistance. It has taken us weeks to overcome this resistance. The rest of the employers know this, and say, "At any rate we have no personal interest in the matter. If we increase the output by means of night shifts it does not increase our profits." The personal interest has been completely eliminated, and when men are working hard superintending their work and suffering from overstrain they really do not feel like embarking in a conflict with their own men in order to increase the output which so far as their works are concerned makes no difference.

AN APPEAL TO EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYED.

There is only one appeal—to employer and employed; it is the appeal to patriotism. The employer must take steps, though he is loath to do it. They must really face the local trade unions, and put forward the demand, because until they do so the State cannot come in. We have had an Act of Parliament, but the law must be put into operation by somebody, and unless the employer begins by putting on unskilled men and women to the lathes we cannot enforce that Act of Parliament. The first step, therefore, is that the employer must challenge a decision upon the matter, and he is not doing so because of the trouble which a few other firms have had. But let us do it. Victory depends upon it. Hundreds of thousands of precious lives depend upon it. It is a question of whether you are going to bring this war to an end in a year victoriously or whether it is going to linger on in bloodstained paths for years. Labour has got the answer. The conflict was entered into with Labour; we are carrying it out. It can be done.

I wonder whether it will not be too late. Ah, fatal words on this occasion! Too late in moving here, too late in arriving there, too late in coming to this decision, too late in starting with enterprises, too late in preparing! In this war the footsteps of the Allied Forces have been dogged by the mocking spectre of "too late," and unless we quicken our movements damnation will fall on the sacred cause for which so much gallant blood has flowed, and I beg employers and workmen not to have "too late" inscribed upon the portals of their workshops at any rate, and that is my appeal.

THE WORKERS' RESPONSIBILITY.

Everything depends upon it, everything in the next few months of the war. We have had the co-operation of our Allies, and great results have been arrived at. At the last conference we had with the Allies decisions were arrived at which will affect the whole conduct of the war. The carrying of them out depends upon the workmen of this country. The superficial facts of

the war are for the moment against us; but all the fundamental facts are in our favour. That means we have every reason for looking the facts steadily in the face. There is nothing but encouragement in them if we look beneath the surface. The chances of victory are still with us. We have thrown away many chances. But for the most part the best still remain. In this war the elements that make for success in a short war were with our enemies; all the advantages that make for victory in a long war were ours—and they still are. Better preparation before the war, interior lines, unity of command—those belonged to the enemy. More than that, undoubtedly he has shown greater readiness to learn the lessons of the war and to adapt himself to them. He had a better conception at first of what war really meant. Heavy guns, machine guns, trench warfare—it was his study while our study was for the sea. There we have accomplished our task to the last letter of the promise. Then we have an overwhelming superiority in the raw material of war; it is still with us, in spite of the fact that the Central Powers have increased their reserves of men and material by their successes. We have the command of the sea that gives us ready access to neutral countries, and above all—and this tells in a long war—we have the better cause. It is better for the heart—nations do not endure to the end for a bad cause.

All these advantages are ours. But this is the moment of intense preparation. It is the moment for putting the whole of our energies at home into preparing for the blow to be struck abroad. Our Fleet and the gallantry of the troops of the Allies have given us time to muster our reserves. Let us utilize that time without the loss of a moment. Let us cast aside the fond illusion that you can win victory by an elaborate pretence that you are doing so. Let us fling to one side rivalries, trade jealousies, professional, political, everything. Let us be one people. One in aim, one in action, one in resolution, so to win the most sacred cause ever entrusted to a great nation.

APPENDIX IV.

LORD DERBY'S REPORTS.

To Field-Marshal The Earl Kitchener, K.G., Secretary of State for War.

I. (12th December 1915).

I propose to divide my Report into two parts. The first part describes the action taken with regard to the canvass of unstarred men and the second part gives the results in figures with my own deductions therefrom.

To the first part I am glad to say I have secured the unanimous assent of my colleagues on the Joint Committee, formed of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee and Joint Labour Recruiting Committee, which I will hereafter call the Central Committee.

The deductions made from the figures and given in the second part of the report are given on my own responsibility.

I took up office as Director-General of Recruiting at Lord Kitchener's request on Monday, the 11th October.

On that day I met the Central Committee, and laid before them a proposal that what was known as the "Pink Form" canvassing should be done through Local Parliamentary Committees. They accepted my proposal, and undertook to see the work done.

This will be an appropriate opportunity of expressing my most sincere thanks to the Central Committee and to the Parliamentary Recruiting Committees throughout the country. They have given me the most loyal and whole-hearted support, and without their assistance I am convinced the canvass would have been an entire failure.

I would also beg to thank the Military Authorities both in the War Office and throughout the country. The burden of work of a novel and exacting type that has fallen upon them has been met with a very evident desire to do everything possible to make the voluntary system a success.

I would especially thank Colonel Gosset, D.A.A.G., who by his foresight has made the canvass comparatively easy, and by his tact in dealing with difficult questions as they arose has materially lightened the task which was set before the Central Committee and myself.

I am quite aware that criticisms will be levelled at the inadequacy of the arrangements of recruiting offices for dealing with the abnormal flow of recruits during the present week. Such criticisms are most unjust. The impossibility of obtaining sufficient medical officers and experienced clerks has been the cause of the delay. This delay would have been obviated if there had been, during the past six weeks when the scheme has been before the public, a steady flow of recruits instead of the abnormal rush at the eleventh hour.

On the 16th October I laid before the Central Committee the scheme for enlisting men in groups. The Committee was good enough to approve of it. I need not go into any description of it, but it has formed the basis on which the whole of the present recruiting scheme has been worked and adopted as being the best way of getting men for the Army with the minimum amount of inconvenience to industry.

At subsequent meetings it was decided to form Local Tribunals, which have now been set up by the Local Government Board, and Advisory Committees, which are in process of being set up by the Local Parliamentary Committees, the latter to advise the War Office representative as to what action he should take before the Local Tribunal in cases of appeal.

Canvass commenced in each locality as the cards were ready for issue. Through nobody's fault, in some areas there was, I regret to say, a delay in their issue. It arose from the fact that there has to be a redistribution, as the system adopted by the Central Committee was not the same as that which had been previously proposed by the Military Authorities.

It was originally intended that the campaign should come to a conclusion on the 30th November, but it was subsequently decided, so as to avoid breaking into the week, to extend it to the 4th December, and for the purpose of giving me time to write my report further to extend the time for enlistments, both directly and in groups, to the 11th December.

Whilst gross numbers are available up to the 11th December, I regret to say details as to groups are only forthcoming up to the 30th November.

Many difficulties have been met with, but the chief difficulty has been the unreliability of the starring as distinguishing between those who should and those who should not be taken for the Army. Instead of starring being of assistance, it has been a distinct hindrance to the canvass. More especially is this so in rural and semi-rural areas, owing to the fact that it was known before Registration Day what branches of the agricultural industry would be

starred, with the result that many men who had no right to do so claimed to come under these particular headings. The sense of unfairness thus created and the inequality of treatment of farmers has been most detrimental in these areas. The farmer himself is not a starred man, but there are numberless cases of his sons and labourers being starred as cowmen and horsemen, etc., though in many instances it is known that they are not really so engaged.

It is essential that the starred list should be carefully investigated, and in cases of misdescription the star removed and the man made available for military service. This applies to the starred men in all industries.

The issue, during the process of canvass, of lists of trades which were to be considered "reserved occupations" has also proved an obstacle. I recognize that it was essential that such lists should be issued, but the fact remains that trades other than those mentioned in these lists have been applying to be so included, and the men engaged in those trades are expecting to be treated in the same way as "starred" men, and have been deterred from coming forward.

Many men also who would willingly serve find themselves barred from doing so by domestic, financial, and business obligations. This especially applies to professional and commercial men who find difficulties in meeting such obligations as payment of rent, insurance premium, interest on loans connected with their business, and provision for their family, due to the fact that their income is entirely dependent on their individual efforts, and ceases when they join the Colours—separation and dependant's allowances being quite inadequate in such cases to meet these obligations. This applies not only to married men, but also to single men in many cases.

Another obstacle to recruiting has been the unequal treatment of individuals. Parents and relations especially cannot understand why their sons, husbands, or brothers should join while other young men hold back and secure lucrative employment at home.

Apart from the number of men who have actually enlisted and attested there are many who have promised to enlist when "so and so" has also promised to go. There may, of course, be a number of men who make this answer as an excuse. But that it is genuine in a very large number of cases, and is accentuated by bad starring, there is no reason to doubt.

Further, the system of submitting cases to Tribunals to decide is a novel one and is viewed with some distrust, partly from the publicity which may be given to private affairs and partly to a fear, which personally I do not share, that cases will not be fairly and impartially dealt with.

The canvass shows very distinctly that it is not want of courage that is keeping men back, nor is there the slightest sign but that the country as a whole is as determined to support the Prime Minister in his pledge made at Guildhall on the 9th November 1914 as it was when that pledge was made. There is abundant evidence of a determination to see the war through to a successful conclusion.

DERBY.

II. (12th December 1915).

The second part of this Report is not given. The figures it contained were rendered valueless owing to the influx of recruits being so great during the last few days on which enlistment under the group system was open.

III. (20th December 1915).

I would ask that the figures in the second part of my previous Report should be ignored, because, as I pointed out in that Report, the influx of recruits was so great in the last few days on which the group scheme was in operation that, for any purpose of helping the Government to arrive at a decision with regard to the future system of recruiting, they were valueless.

I have only taken the figures as between 23rd October 1915 and 15th December 1915, the period when canvassing for the group system was being carried out. The gross figures are shown in the table at top of opposite page.

Large as are the figures, I am afraid that on analysis they do not prove as satisfactory as I could have wished. Owing to the great rush of recruits it was impossible in many cases to have more than a most perfunctory medical examination, and the number of men who will be rejected when the various groups are called up and are subject to a proper examination must be very large, the number of men actually unexamined being 925,445. This total includes both “starred” and “unstarred” men.

23rd October to 15th December 1915 (inclusive).

	Single.	Married.
Men of military age (*a*)	2,179,231	2,832,210
Number starred	690,138	915,491
Number of men enlisted (*b*)	103,000	112,431
Number of men attested (*c*)	840,000	1,344,979
Number of men rejected (*b*)	207,000	221,853
Total	1,150,000	1,679,263
Men of military age	2,179,231	2,832,210
Presenting themselves	1,150,000	1,679,263
Number remaining	1,029,231	1,152,947
Total starred men attested	312,067	449,808
Number unstarred attested	527,933	895,171

(*a*) Men who joined His Majesty's Army between the 15th August 1915 and the 23rd October 1915 are excluded from these figures.

(*b*) Whilst total is based on actual records, the distribution as between single and married is only an estimate, but may be taken as substantially accurate.

(*c*) Actual records.

Grand total of military age	5,011,441
Total attested, enlisted, and rejected	2,829,263

Total number remaining	2,182,178
	=========

For the same reason—the great rush of recruits—I fear there may be many instances where men have not been noted as being "starred," "badged," or belonging to "reserved" occupations, and a deduction must be made on this account.

Lastly, there are many who will come under the heading of being indispensable—men who are the only sons of widows, sole support of a family, etc.

Single Men Attested.

Total number of single men attested	840,000	
Of these the number starred was	312,067	

The number of unstarred single men attested was therefore	527,933	
For final rejection as medically unfit a number of unstarred men have not been examined, say	*260,000	

Balance	267,933	
Deduct 10 per cent. “badged” and “reserved”	*26,793	

Balance	241,140	
Deduct 10 per cent. “indispensable”	*24,114	
	---	217,026
As shown above, it is estimated that of the unstarred single men attested those not examined as to medical fitness numbered	*260,000	
Deduct 10 per cent. “badged” and “reserved”	*26,000	

Balance	234,000	
Deduct 10 per cent. “indispensable”	*23,400	

Balance 210,600		
Deduct 40 per cent. unfit	*84,240	

	126,360	
Estimated net number available of single men attested		343,386

Married Men Attested.

Total number of married men attested	1,344,979	
Of these the number starred was	449,808	

The number of unstarred married men attested was therefore	895,171	
For final rejection as medically unfit a number of unstarred men have not been	*445,000	

examined, say		

Balance	450,171	
Deduct 15 per cent. “badged” and “reserved”	*67,526	

Balance	382,645	
Deduct 20 per cent. “indispensable”	*76,529	

	306,116	
As shown above, it is estimated that of the unstarred married men attested those not examined as to medical fitness numbered	*445,000	
Deduct 15 per cent. “badged” and “reserved”	*66,750	

Balance	378,250	
Deduct 20 per cent. “indispensable”	*75,650	

Balance	302,600	
Deduct 40 per cent. unfit	*121,040	
	-------	181,560
Estimated net number available of married men attested	487,676	
	=======	

The figures marked * are estimates only

(There are probably more married men than single men who are in reserved occupations, and certainly amongst the indispensable class. I have increased considerably the percentage of deductions in both these cases.)

The figures marked * are estimates only.

My calculations for these necessary deductions have been submitted to Dr. T. H. C. Stevenson, Superintendent of Statistics at the General Register Office, and the preceding tables are now presented in accordance with his recommendations. The percentages of deductions are my own. They must of necessity be only estimates, but they have been arrived at upon the best information available.

But, as in the former Report, I must again draw attention to the fact that the men in the married groups can only be assumed to be available if the Prime Minister’s pledge to them has been redeemed by the single men attesting in such numbers as to leave only a negligible quantity unaccounted for.

On comparing the above figures it will be seen that of the 2,179,231 single men available, only 1,150,000 have been accounted for, leaving a

residue unaccounted for of 1,029,231.

Deducting the number of starred single men who have attested, 312,067, from total number of starred single men, 690,138, leaves 378,071 starred men.

If we deduct this figure from 1,029,231 (the remainder of single men left who have not offered themselves), it shows a total of 651,160 unstarred single men unaccounted for.

This is far from being a negligible quantity, and, under the circumstances, I am very distinctly of opinion that in order to redeem the pledge mentioned above it will not be possible to hold married men to their attestation unless and until the services of single men have been obtained by other means, the present system having failed to bring them to the colours.

I have been at some pains to ascertain the feeling of the country, and I am convinced that not only must faith be kept with the married men in accordance with the Prime Minister's pledge, but more than that; in my opinion some steps must be taken to replace as far as possible the single men now starred, or engaged in reserved occupations, by older and married men, even if these men have to a certain extent to be drawn from the ranks of those already serving. Especially does this apply to those who have joined these occupations since the date of the Royal Assent to the National Registration Act. This applies, though naturally in a minor degree, to munition workers.

There is another point to which I would most earnestly ask the Government to give consideration. I have already drawn attention in my previous Report to the detrimental effect that the issue from time to time of lists of "reserved" occupations has had on recruiting. Even since that Report was written further and lengthy lists have been issued. I do not presume to state what are or are not industries indispensable to this country, but if there is to be any further reservation of occupations it is quite clear that the figures I have given above must be subject to a reduction, and I cannot help hoping that there should be some finality to the issue of these lists.

Before concluding, it might be interesting to give one or two features of the campaign. The figures given above refer only to recruits received between the 23rd October and the 15th December, but as I have been in my present office since the 11th October I include recruits for immediate enlistment from that date to Sunday the 19th December inclusive, and I also include belated returns of men (61,651) taken in the group system. It has not, however, been possible to allot these latter accurately as between single

and married; the majority appear to be men in starred occupations. During that time there have been taken for the Army as follows:—

Some of the figures of the take of recruits under the group system for particular days may also be of interest:—

In order, however, to get at the number of men who have offered themselves it is necessary to add to the above figures those who have been definitely rejected on medical grounds, viz., 428,853. This shows that a total of 2,950,514 men have shown their willingness to serve their country, provided they were able to be spared from their employment and could be accepted as medically suitable.

There will be additions to make to these numbers, slight, but very significant. In foreign towns where there are English communities, men have banded themselves together to come under the group system. Men have written from Hong-kong, Rhodesia, Cadiz, California, offering to come home to be attested for Army Reserve (Section B).

DERBY.

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TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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