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THE GREAT BATTLES OF THE GREAT WAR

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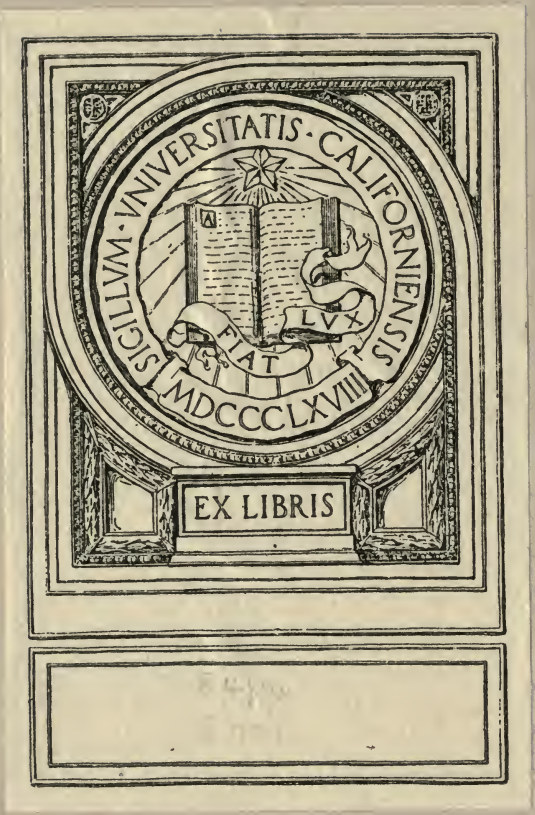
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THE GREAT BATTLES OF THE GREAT WAR

"DAILY CHRONICLE" WAR MAP drawn by G. W. BACON & CO., Ltd., 127, Strand, London

AREA OCCUPIED BY THE GERMANS ON SEPTEMBER 5TH AND OCTOBER 16TH 1914.

THE GREAT BATTLES OF THE GREAT WAR

"News of battle! News of battle!
Hark! 'tis ringing down the street;
And the archways and the pavement
Bear the clang of hurrying feet!
News of battle!"

Aytoun's "Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers."

PUBLISHED FOR The Daily Chronicle
BY HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON, MCMXIV

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THE GREAT BATTLES OF THE GREAT WAR

I. THE HEROIC DEFENCE OF LIÉGE

It is impossible to over-estimate the service rendered to Europe by little Belgium in holding up for several days the head-waters of the vast and menacing tide of the German invasion. "Rapidity of action is the great German asset" said the German Imperial Chancellor to our Ambassador in Berlin. We owe it to Belgian courage and tenacity that that asset was seriously impaired. This small State, which had no quarrel with any one and only desired to live at peace with its neighbours, was suddenly exposed to a cruel ordeal. Two days before the receipt of the German ultimatum, the Belgian Government was informed by the German Minister in Brussels that Germany would respect the neutrality of Belgium. Two hours before handing in the ultimatum on that memorable Sunday evening, Germany's accredited representative repeated his assurance. Then suddenly Belgium was confronted with a peremptory demand for free passage through her territory for the Kaiser's legions.

If in her weakness she had given permission, who could have blamed her? But with sublime heroism of soul Belgium declined, though well knowing the risk, and then flung herself with splendid intrepidity athwart the path of the Teutonic host. She has suffered terribly by her heroic resistance. Her whole national life has come to a standstill. Her fields, tilled by a frugal, hard-working peasantry, have been laid waste; her prosperous industries are stricken with paralysis. Louvain, with its architectural glories, its peerless library, its exquisite colleges has almost been blotted out; Visé, Tirlemont, Aerschott have been reduced to ruins; the Government of the country was compelled to flee from the capital to Antwerp, and from Antwerp to the foreign but friendly

city of Havre; hundreds of thousands of the Belgian people in town and country are homeless and have been reduced to beggary, and they have suffered, especially the women and the children, unimaginable horrors; thousands of Belgium's finest manhood of the country have perished on the battle-field. Half-a-million of her people have fled for refuge to Holland, to England, and to France. And yet through all the gloom of these horrors, these sufferings, this wicked destruction and these unavenged wrongs, the countenance of Belgium shines forth with a radiant glow.

Suffering and Achievement.

She has suffered much; yes, but she has achieved much. She mourns the loss of precious lives, the destruction of treasures, houses, crops, live-stock, merchandise. In a few short weeks she was reduced from wealth and prosperity to poverty and idleness. She has lost nearly everything, but she has found her own soul. And to-day in her ruin, Belgium confronts the world with a proud and an elate look. Through her capacity for sacrifice, through the valour of her sons, she has vindicated by a new and noble title her right to nationhood and independence.

The German General Staff prides itself on its skill in all that concerns the mechanism of war; but it cannot measure the soul of a people. It counted confidently on an easy, unopposed march through Belgium. It was rudely deceived. Belgium resisted with all its might. It is a small country with only seven millions of people and a total armed strength of about 300,000 men, most of whom had received very little training. But love of freedom and devotion to one's *patrie* can work wonders; and these militia-men fought like lions.

The upshot was that the carefully-prepared time-table of the Germans was deranged. Belgium's resistance robbed them of twelve days. This delay was an inestimable service to France, and it gave time to allow the British Expeditionary Force to take its place in the French fighting line on the north-eastern frontier. Belgium has placed France and England under an unforgettable debt. She has covered herself with glory. Her sons have fought with a grand heroism for their country against overwhelming odds. In the story of their achievements there is nothing more thrilling than the defence of Liége.

A Romantic Town.

Liége is a town with 250,000 inhabitants. It has an old and romantic history. It is the seat of a University and a famous musical centre. Situated in the heart of a great coal-mining district it is the home of many prosperous metal industries, among them the manufacture of explosives and small arms, particularly revolvers and sporting guns. The town is within a day's march of the German frontier. It nestles in a corner of the valley of the river Meuse, which flows from south-west to north-east. In spite of

the smoke and grime inseparable from industry, the country round about Liége is full of charm and beauty. The town owes much to the Meuse, which is as wide here as the Seine is in Paris.

By express train Liége is three hours only from the French capital; and it is less than 20 miles from the German frontier.

The town itself has no military strength. But it is surrounded by a dozen forts, which were planned by the late General Brialmont, one of the most famous military engineers of the nineteenth century. As Liége lies in a hollow of the valley of the Meuse, surrounded by hills, the forts have a commanding position over the surrounding country. Mr. Hilaire Belloc, writing in *Land and Water*, says: "The fortress of Liége is a modern ring fortress; that is, it consists of an area roughly circular, almost, or rather less than ten miles in diameter, protected by a ring of forts (twelve in number) surrounding the great industrial town of Liége. The river Meuse runs right through Liége and through the middle of the ring. One of the main railways of Europe runs through the same circle and leads from the chief German bases of supply in the North to the Belgian plain; other railways also come in and effect their junction with this main line within the circle of the forts."

Since the Germans were determined to invade Belgium, in order to be able to deliver a staggering blow at France before France was ready, the possession of Liége, commanding all these important routes of communication, became of supreme importance to them. The German plan was, while containing the French along the rest of the Frontier, to enter France on the north-east and then to attempt a great turning movement pivoting on the powerful fortress of Metz. German strategy coolly took for granted the invasion of Belgian territory, although Germany was and is under solemn pledge to protect the neutrality of Belgium. To a successful invasion of Belgium the fortress of Liége blocked the way.

Of the twelve forts six are large and six relatively small. The largest fort is five-sided. Around it runs a deep ditch, of which the counter-scarp is a masonry wall, while the earthen escarp is simply the prolongation of the exterior slope of the parapet. Behind the counter-scarp wall and running along almost the whole of its length is a vaulted gallery, which at the angles of the ditch is pierced for machine-guns and rifles so as to sweep the floor of the ditch at the moment of the assault. From this gallery small galleries run outwards and downwards at right angles to enable the defenders to counter-attack besiegers' mining operations, and other galleries communicate with the part below the floor of the ditch.

Galleried and Pierced.

In the rear of the fort the escarp

is of masonry, galleried and pierced so as to command the flow of the ditch. The parapet of the fort is a plain infantry breast-work with steel gun-cupolas bedded in concrete at intervals. Within this pentagonal work and supported from it by an inner ditch is a triangular mass of concrete, galleried and pierced on its rear side so as to sweep the rear of the inner ditch; and on all sides so as to give fire upwards upon the interior of the outer fort and thus prevent the enemy who has stormed the front part from establishing himself solidly in the interior and to keep open a way for reinforcements by way of the rear side or gorge. Access from the outer fort to the inner ditch is obtained through a tunnel from a southern area, all parts of which are kept under fire by carefully sloping the earth on the inner side glacis-fashion, so as to bring it under the observation of the cupola in the centre of the triangular keep.

The smaller forts, called "fortins," are triangular and contain no provision for interior defence. At the angles of the triangle are small cupolas for light quick-firing guns. The infantry parapet is traced in the shape of a heart. In the hollow of this heart is a solid mass of concrete on which are the shoulders of the gun-cupolas. Ditches add to the defensive power of the fortins.

In the whole fortress were 400 guns. Mr. Belloc estimates that for the full defence of the forts the services of 50,000 trained men are necessary. Unfortunately when the crucial ordeal came so suddenly early last August, little more than 25,000 were available and most of these were composed of militia. But the men had plenty of pluck; and above all things, they had a born leader, General Leman, who conducted the operations with equal daring, judgment and resourcefulness.

The War's First Hero.

General Leman may be described as the first hero of the war. The fame of his defence of Liége will not soon be effaced from the memory of mankind. A fair-bearded, good-looking man, with kindling eyes and a high forehead, Leman was for several years Director of Studies at the Ecole Militaire, in Brussels. He was for some time a professor of mathematics and on many occasions gave proof of his skill as an engineer officer.

It was at seven o'clock on the evening of Sunday, August 2nd, that the German Minister in Brussels, without any previous warning, launched an ultimatum at the Belgian Government. Germany demanded the unopposed passage of her troops through Belgian territory; she offered to pay for everything she required, promised compensation for any damage that might be done and guaranteed that Belgium's independence would remain unaffected at the close of the war. Twelve hours were given for the reply. King Albert, — a monarch who in

this cruel testing time has earned the admiration of the whole world by his personal bravery, his high patriotism, and the simple dignity of his demeanour—at once joined his Ministers in conference. All night long the King and his counsellors sat in solemn deliberation.

Then at four o'clock, in the small hours of Monday morning, August 3rd, they met the German demand with an emphatic negative. When news of the refusal became known in the morning of that lovely summer's day, all Belgium was thrilled with patriotic pride. "To arms" was the universal cry. Germany promptly declared war, and the 7th German Army Corps from Aix-la-Chapelle crossed the frontier on the Monday afternoon. Its instructions were to force the fortress of Liége. The attack began the same night. It was beaten back with heavy German losses. Next day more troops joined in the assault, but the forts were not to be taken. Repeated attacks by the Germans were repulsed with a heavy death-roll.

While the World Wondered.

All eyes the world over were now centred on this desperate assault, and this stubborn defence. To the amazement of Europe, little Belgium was holding up the German legions and the forts of Liége were breaking the spell of German invincibility. On Thursday, August 6th, the Germans brought up two more Army corps. Liége was now assailed by 120,000 men, and the new reinforcements had brought with them heavy siege guns. A desperate attack was made that night. The small garrison, fatigued by their terrible exertions and loss of sleep, were unable to defend all the intervals between the forts against this simultaneous assault. Two of the chief forts were destroyed, and in the darkness a considerable force of Germans penetrating a wide gap, worked their way into Liége. The town was now in their hands, but several of the forts remained intact.

As long as they so remained, the advance of a large German army into Belgium was impossible, for the Liége forts commanded the junction of the main railways by which alone supplies could be transported from the Rhine valley. Unable to transport a large army into Belgium, the Germans determined to send on bodies of cavalry to sweep the Belgian plain and to live on the country, and spread an atmosphere of terror. It was these roving bands of Uhlans, many of them suffering from the pangs of hunger, of whom we heard so much in the first ten days of the war.

So Liége, the fortress, still remained an obstacle to the German advance though Liége, the town, was in their hands. Right gallantly did the men in the remaining forts comport themselves. Airships hovered over the forts and dropped bombs upon them, but the spirit of the defenders was indomitable. Day and night the roar

of the guns hardly ever ceased. The last forts were not silenced until August 15th.

"MAGNIFICENT, BUT NOT WAR!"

In their first attacks on the Liége fortress, the Germans, after preparing the way with artillery, hurled forward their infantry in close formation, expecting to carry the positions by sheer force of impetus and mass of weight. The besiegers were then simply mowed down in hundreds under the deadly fire of the Belgian guns. A Belgian officer gives a vivid account of the first attack on the night of Monday, August 3rd; an attack, be it remembered, that came so suddenly as to leave the garrison scanty time for preparation:—

"Some of us late arrivals only managed to get to our posts when the German attack began. It was night time. We replied sharply with our guns. Until the dawn came we had no very distinct idea of what our practice was. Then we noticed heaps of slain Germans in a semi-circle at the foot of our fort. The German guns must have been much less successful, because they rarely hit us that night. They did better at daybreak. We did better still.

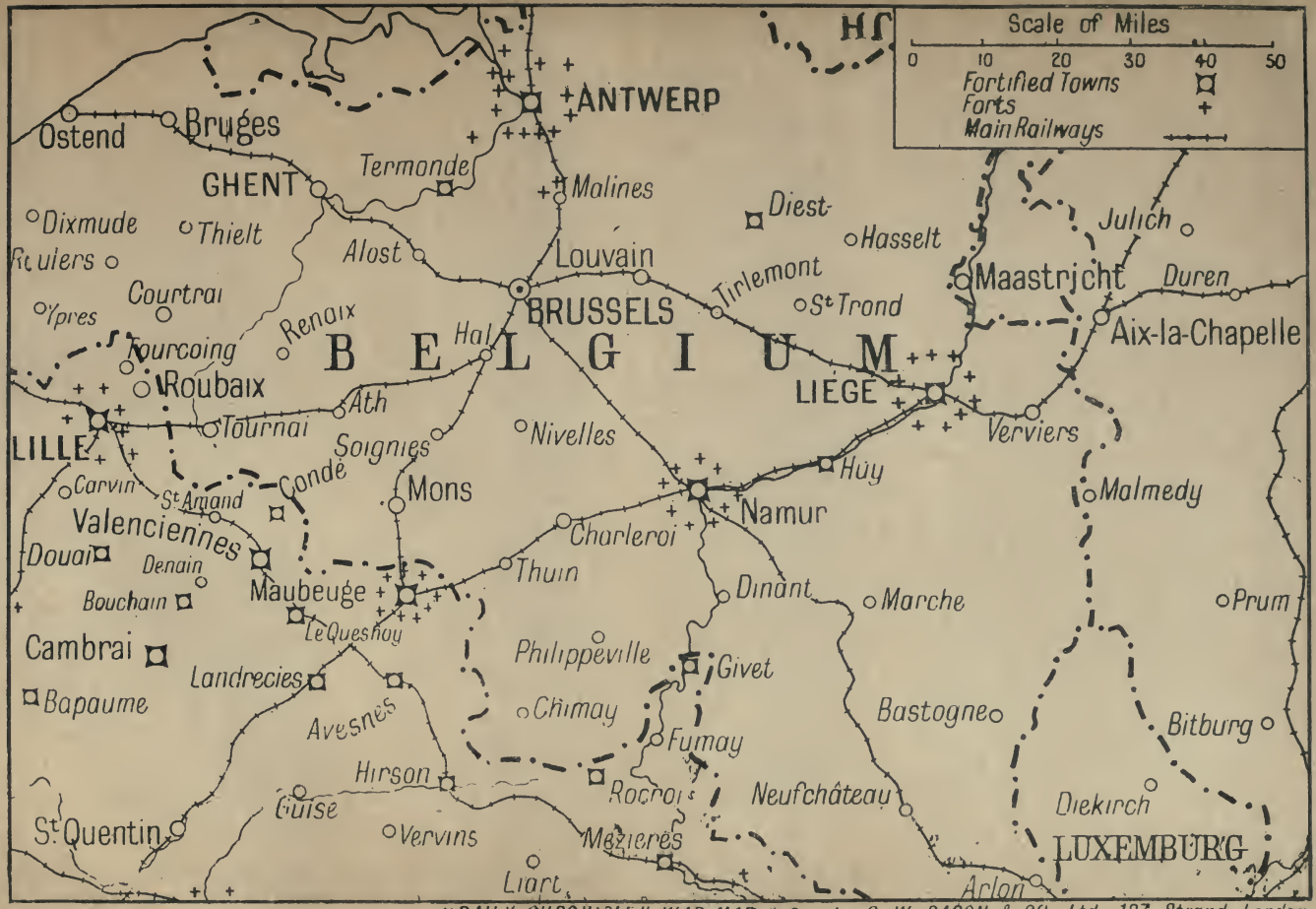
"As line after line of the German infantry advanced, we simply mowed them down. It was terribly easy, monsieur, and I turned to a brother officer of mine more than once and said, 'Voila! They are coming on again, in a dense, close formation! They must be mad!' They made no attempt at deploying, but came on, line after line, almost shoulder to shoulder, until, as we shot them down, the fallen were heaped one on top of the other, in an awful barricade of dead and wounded men that threatened to mask our guns and cause us trouble. I thought of Napoleon's saying—if he said it, monsieur; and I doubt it, for he had no care of human life!—'C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre!' No, it was slaughter, just slaughter!

A BARRICADE OF DEAD.

"So high became the barricade of the dead and wounded that we did not know whether to fire through it or to go out and clear openings with our hands. We would have liked to extricate some of the wounded from the dead, but we dared not. A stiff wind carried away the smoke of the guns quickly, and we could see some of the wounded men trying to release themselves from their terrible position. I will confess I crossed myself, and could have wished that the smoke had remained.

"But would you believe it, this veritable wall of dead and dying actually enabled those wonderful Germans to creep closer, and actually charge up the glacis? Of course, they got no further than half way, for our maxims and rifles swept them back. Naturally, we had our own losses, but they were slight compared with the carnage inflicted upon our enemies."

Mr. J. Byron Dolphin, British



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THE FIGHTING IN BELGIUM.

Vice-Consul at Liége, on his return to London after the fall of the town, said:

"The forts were subdued by the heavy siege guns of the Germans, two of the largest of which were of 42 c.m. calibre. Some of these guns were placed about one and a half miles from my house, and others were six or seven miles away. You could not see the effect of the firing; we only knew of the results from the statements of the soldiers who had been defending the forts.

"Several shells struck a large gasometer, but as the gas had been carefully filtered beforehand, so as to avoid any explosion, it simply burned itself out. Several shells fell close to the Vice-Consulate, and I was able afterwards to pick up pieces of shrapnel in my own garden. The noise of the bursting of these shells was absolutely deafening. It drove the women into a sort of frenzy. They were absolutely dumbfounded; they shrieked and vanished into the cellars. Everybody lived in a cellar, and few went to bed during the period of the bombardment of the forts. The heaviest attack on the forts was on the night of Wednesday, August 5th, and on August 6th, when the fighting around the Boncelles fort was terrific. This fort is three or four miles from the centre of the city. I was able, from my bedroom windows, to see the shells bursting throughout the whole night of Wednesday, and the sky was absolutely lurid—blood-red, relieved by the green flames caused by lyddite."

A Devoted Garrison.

Fort Loncin, where General Leman was himself in command, was subdued by the enemy on August 6th. That day there was a tremendous attack on this fort. In spite of a terrific cannonade, and the constant crash of immense projectiles into the precincts, dealing death and destruction all around, the devoted garrison stuck to their posts. They had taken an oath with General Leman to die rather than surrender. From dawn on August 6th the bombardment continued with little intermission hour after hour. Then at 5 o'clock in the afternoon the powder magazine took fire, and there was an earth-shaking explosion. The central part of the fort was shattered to fragments, vast concrete blocks were hurled into the air, and devastation was spread far and near. Many of the garrison lost their lives in this gigantic upheaval. After the roar and crash of the explosion came a silence as of death. Then the German soldiers ran forward eagerly into the fort.

In justice to them let it be said they did all they could to succour the injured men. General Leman, was discovered under a mass of debris, unconscious. He was tenderly removed. In one of the galleries the Germans found twenty-five men hardly to be seen in the thick smoke and fumes. They were as black as negroes. Their eyes were wild and bloodshot. Half asphyxiated, wounded, worn in body and mind, they had gathered in a corner of

the gallery to meet uncomplainingly the death they had vowed. Profoundly moved by the spectacle the Germans hastened to their succour, and got the valiant band of mutilated heroes out into the fresh air, where they revived. Of 500 men in Loncin Fort, 350 were killed during the siege.

The Shattering of Nerves.

A Belgian professor who conversed with several of the defenders says that they suffered quite as much from the heat, the smoke, and the nervous commotion, within as from the attack from without. "I met several men who had been fighting day and night in the forts. They complained of having had neither food nor sleep; and yet when food was now offered them they rejected it, and the lower jaw projected in an attitude of dogged determination, and they kept abusing the enemy who was no longer here. Although exhausted physically, they showed no sign of yielding or of fear, and they dragged their guns along though they could hardly stand, and thought only of obeying orders. These men were all heroes, worthy in spirit of their valiant commander."

The story of the last stand of the Loncin garrison is told in graphic language by a German officer who, though an enemy, did not conceal his admiration for the bravery of General Leman. Here is the narrative of this chivalrous German:

"General Leman's defence of Liége combined all that is noble, all that is tragic. The commander of one fort, at the moment when the bombardment was heaviest, went mad, and shot his own men. He was disarmed and bound. The cupola of another fort was destroyed by a bomb from a Zeppelin. Other forts were swept away like sand castles on the seashore before the relentless waves of the oncoming tide.

The Daily Round.

"As long as possible General Leman inspected the forts daily to see that everything was in order. By a piece of falling masonry, dislodged by our guns, both General Leman's legs were crushed. Undaunted, he visited the forts in an automobile. Fort Chaudfontein was destroyed by a German shell dropping in the magazine. In the strong Fort Loncin General Leman decided to hold his ground or die.

"When the end was inevitable the Belgians disabled the last three guns and exploded the supply of shells kept by the guns in readiness. Before this, General Leman destroyed all plans, maps and papers relating to the defences. The food supplies were also destroyed. With about 100 men, General Leman attempted to retire to another fort, but we had cut off their retreat. By this time our heaviest guns were in position, and a well-placed shell tore through the cracked and battered masonry and exploded in the main magazine. With a thunderous crash the mighty walls of the fort fell. Pieces of stone and concrete twenty-five cubic mètres in

size were hurled into the air. When the dust and fumes passed away, we stormed the fort across ground literally strewn with the bodies of the troops who had gone out to storm the fort and never returned. All the men in the fort were wounded, and most were unconscious. A corporal with one arm shattered valiantly tried to drive us back by firing his rifle. Buried in the débris and pinned beneath a massive beam was General Leman.

" ' Respectez le general, il est mort,' said an aide-de-camp.

Generous Moments.

" With gentleness and care, which showed they respected the man who had resisted them so valiantly and stubbornly, our infantry released the general's wounded form and carried him away. We thought him dead, but he recovered consciousness, and, looking round said, ' It is as it is. The men fought valiantly,' and then, turning to us, added, ' Put in your despatches that I was unconscious.'

" We brought him to our commander, General von Emmich, and the two generals saluted. We tried to speak words of comfort, but he was silent—he is known as the silent general. ' I was unconscious. Be sure and put that in your despatches.' More he would not say.

" Extending his hand, our commander said, ' General, you have gallantly and nobly held your forts.' General Leman replied, ' I thank you. Our troops have lived up to their reputations.' With a smile he added, ' War is not like manœuvres '—a reference to the fact that General von Emmich was recently with General Leman during the Belgian manœuvres. Then, unbuckling his sword, General Leman tendered it to General von Emmich. ' No,' replied the German commander, with a bow, ' keep your sword. To have crossed swords with you has been an honour,' and the fire in General Leman's eye was dimmed by a tear."

After his capture, General Leman addressed the following manly letter to the King of the Belgians :

" Sir,—After honourable engagements on August 4th, 5th and 6th, I considered that the forts of Liége could only play the *role* of *forts d'arrêt*. I nevertheless maintained military government in order to co-ordinate the defence as much as possible, and to exercise moral influence upon the garrison.

" Your Majesty is not ignorant that I was at Fort Loncin on August 6th at noon. You will learn with grief that the fort was blown up yesterday at 5.20 p.m., the greater part of the garrison being buried under the ruins. That I did not lose my life in that catastrophe is due to my escort, who drew me from a stronghold whilst I was being suffocated by gas from the exploded powder. I was conveyed to a trench, where I fell. A German captain gave me drink, and I was made prisoner and taken to Liége.

"I am certain that I have shown carelessness in this letter, but I am physically shattered by the explosion at Fort Loncin. In honour of our arms I have surrendered neither the fortress nor the forts. Deign pardon, Sire.

"In Germany, where I am proceeding, my thoughts will be, as they always have been, of Belgium and the King. I would willingly have given my life the better to serve them, but death was not granted to me.—LIEUTENANT-GENERAL LEMAN."

It is the letter of a gallant man. General Leman's name will always be associated with the defence of Liége, a defence, let it never be forgotten, which arrested for several days the German advance, and so helped to save Western Europe.

II. THE OCCUPATION OF BRUSSELS.

THE heroic resistance of Liége to the Kaiser's legions had an inspiriting effect on the Belgian troops. They opposed the invaders with gallant-hearted courage. At Haelen, on August 12th, the Belgian soldiers defeated a force of German cavalry and artillery; and on August 13th there was another Belgian success at Eghezee. Everywhere the spirit and courage of the Belgian troops were admirable. King Albert, in these anxious days, set a fine example to his people, going here and there among his soldiers, sharing their perils and privations, and preserving a serene faith, though his heart must have been wrung by the unmerited sufferings inflicted on his innocent people, and by the ruin and devastation carried through his beloved land by the modern Huns.

From the nature of things, it was impossible that little Belgium, by her own unaided exertions, could long keep at bay the myriad soldiers of the Kaiser. She held up for days the head-waters, but presently the rising German tide broke through the barrier of her resistance. Realising the inevitable, King Albert and his Ministers removed the seat of Government on August 17th from the capital to Antwerp. They had previously declined a fresh proposal from the Kaiser, who offered easy terms of peace provided Belgium would abandon its resistance.

IN BELGIUM'S CAPITAL.

Brussels is an open city without any defences. It is a city rich in noble public buildings and in art treasures. By the decision of the Government that Brussels should offer no resistance to the enemy, the Germans were left with no excuse for bombarding the city and despoiling it of its glories.

It was on August 19th that the Germans took possession of Brussels, and on the following day 50,000 of the enemy's forces marched through the principal streets of the city. It was characteristic of German methods, and of their desire to create a moral impression, that they selected for the march into Brussels troops that had not been in action, with all their accoutrements shining, men and horses very spick and span, bearing no trace of hardship and none of the stains of war. The march of this highly-burnished force through the city was witnessed by silent and

saddened spectators, whose hearts burned within them as they watched the invaders file by. A correspondent in *The Times* thus describes this spectacular display:

"The invaders were led by a typical Prussian general, whose name I could not get; 'a swarthy, black-moustached, ill-natured brute dressed in khaki-grey,' to quote a Belgian who escaped from the occupied city.

"The troops sang, but sometimes in a monotone that suggested an emphatic order to do so. 'Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles!' shouted one battalion as they marched, their heavy-soled boots clanking on the cobbled streets in harmony; 'Die Wacht am Rhein,' echoed another. Some of the more boisterous Prussians indulged in the catching refrain, 'Puppchen.' At first the Kaiser's host experienced the cold comfort of deserted streets and houses still as the grave, but towards the centre of the city the crowds had gathered on the pavements ten and twelve deep. In stony silence they watched the German soldiers pass; the children appeared interested in the wonderful spectacle, women trembled and whispered beneath their breath, old men and men too young for the Belgian colours stood white as ghosts and speechless with anger.

The Arrogant Prussian.

"The German soldiers behaved simply as they had been ordered to do, and cannot be said to have outraged the ordinary laws of war, but their arrogance and absolute lack of tact came out in the actions of the officers. They laughed derisively in the faces of the defenceless crowds, and mockingly tore down Belgian flags which flew from deserted dwellings and arranged them over the hindquarters of their chargers. They ordered hotels and cafés to be thrown open, and on the *terrasse* near the Gare du Nord Station they ate, drank, smoked, and made merry in the noisiest manner. Some mounted the stairs in different hotels in the popular quarters, took possession of the rooms, and sat smoking and drinking at the open windows or on the balconies far into the night. They never missed the opportunity to impress on the poor inhabitants that they were the conquerors, and that the populace was mere dirt."

It has been the hard fate of Brussels to suffer as few cities in Europe have suffered from the rude blasts of war. What a history is that of this beautiful city in the great plain of Flanders! Of what heroic incidents has it been the scene in its ten centuries of crowded life! The name Brussels is derived from "Bruksel," signifying "the manor in the marsh." It stands on one of the great highways of Europe. During the middle ages, and long before, here was the most frequented crossing of the river Senne. Through Brussels ran the main Roman and Frank road between Cologne and Tournai. Down the centuries great military captains have hammered at its gates or hurried through

its streets at the head of armed hosts. With distressing frequency the city was involved in quarrels not its own. But it had itself a militant population. In the middle ages Brussels was famed for its manufactures of cloth, and it was dominated by its merchant princes. Between them and the weavers raged fierce feuds comparable to the struggle between the plebs and the patricians in ancient Rome.

A Place of Events.

Few cities in Europe have so thrilling and romantic a history as Brussels. It became the capital of the Dukes of Brabant in the fourteenth century, and thenceforward was caught in the swirl of the European current. It was here, in the early years of the Reformation, that the Emperor Charles V. abdicated. Leaving Spain, the Netherlands, Naples, Milan, the Indies, and the protectorate of Rome, to his son Philip II., and Austria and Germany to his brother Ferdinand, the great emperor retired to a monastery in Spain, to spend the remainder of his life in a hermit's cell. In the wars of religion Brussels had an unhappy prominence. It was here in the Grand Place, during the tyrannous rule of Alva, that Egmont and Hoorn were executed. On the same spot many another gallant man paid with his life for an unsuccessful adventure or for fidelity to his religious convictions. The chief military captains of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries knew Brussels well—William the Silent, Parma, Don Juan, Tilly, Eugene, Marlborough, Napoleon, Wellington—European nations having fought out most of their quarrels on the plains of Flanders. Here, in very truth, is the cock-pit of Europe.

Within easy reach of Brussels are the sites of the most famous European battles. The city has itself made history. In December, 1789, the people of Brussels rose against the Austrian garrison and proclaimed the independence of the States of Brabant. Austrian power was re-established in 1791; but a year later it was swept out by the armies of revolutionary France. Flanders then shared for some years in the fortunes of the French Republic and the Empire. After the fall of Napoleon the country was united with Holland in one kingdom under the Prince of Orange. It was an unnatural alliance, owing to profound differences between two peoples in ideas, religion, language, spirit and tradition. An insurrection in Brussels in 1830 began the movement which culminated in the separation from Holland and the establishment of the independent kingdom of Belgium. Since then Belgium has prospered exceedingly.

Under the German Heel.

To-day Brussels is a beautiful and thriving city, with a population of over 700,000 persons. It has a fine University, a celebrated academy of

music, prosperous industries, magnificent public buildings. It is sad to think that this famous capital should have fallen into the hands of German soldiery. The Germans, not content with making free of the city and all its contents, imposed upon it a fine of £8,000,000, threatening if this were not paid that they would remove the art treasures. The Mayor of the city, M. Max, stood up manfully to the invaders. His energy and spirit during anxious, trying weeks cheered the citizens and won general admiration. Early in October the Germans, incensed at the spirit and energy of M. Max, arrested him; and a few days later the patriotic burgomaster was removed to Germany as a prisoner of war.

On August 20th the German General placarded the following proclamation all over Brussels:

> German troops will pass through Brussels to-day and on the following days, and are obliged by circumstances to demand from the city lodging, food, and supplies. All these matters will be regularly arranged through the municipal authorities.
>
> I expect the population to conform itself without resistance to these necessities of war, and in particular to commit no act of aggression against the safety of the troops and promptly to furnish the supplies demanded.
>
> In this case I give every guarantee for the preservation of the city and the safety of its inhabitants.
>
> If, however, there should be, as there has, unfortunately, been elsewhere, any act of aggression against the soldiers, the burning of buildings, or explosions of any kind, I shall be compelled to take the severest measures.
>
> The General Commanding the Army Corps,
>
> SIXTUS VON ARNIM.

THE SHREWD BURGOMASTER.

An interview between M. Max, the burgomaster, and General Sixtus von Arnim had the following results:

> (1) The free passage of German troops through Brussels.
>
> (2) The quartering of a garrison of 3,000 men in the barracks of Daily and Etterbeck.
>
> (3) Requisitions to be paid for in cash.
>
> (4) Respect for the inhabitants and for public and private property.
>
> (5) The management, free from German control, of public affairs by the municipal administration.

The Germans guaranteed the lives and property of the inhabitants on condition that they abstained from any demonstration against the German troops and that provisions and forage are supplied.

"Quarters must," said a German proclamation, "be found for soldiers and horses, and the inhabitants must

keep their houses lighted all night. They must also put the public roads into a condition enabling vehicles to travel easily, remove all obstacles, and assist the troops to the best of their ability, so that soldiers may be able to perform their duty, which is doubly difficult in an enemy's country.

"It is forbidden to hold meetings, to enter into relations with the enemy in any way, or to ring bells. The Mayor, a priest, and four citizens will be held as hostages.

"Any inhabitant found with arms in his house, or who attacks the troops, will be shot. The whole town is responsible for each one of its inhabitants."

To further terrorise the people powerful guns were placed in the principal squares; and field-guns were trained upon the Government offices and the Royal Palace.

From August 20th the Germans remained in possession of Brussels, but always the Belgians could hope that they would be driven forth, and that Brussels, free from the defiling touch of the conqueror, would be enabled to resume its gracious, active, fruitful and bustling normal life.

III. THE GIANT CONFLICT AT MONS

THE tremendous onslaught of the German hosts swept like a raging flood over Belgium, leaving the broken forts of Liége like rocks amid the torrent. Namur was the key of the valleys of the Meuse and the Sambre, through one of which the Germans intended to descend upon Mézières and Sedan, and through the other to carry out the great sweep of General von Kluck, who sought to envelop the flank of the Allies and pass onward to Paris.

On, on came the Germans up the valley of the Meuse, to its junction with the Sambre at Namur, and past that place they swept forward to Charleroi. Southwards from Brussels descended another column, crossing the forest of Soignies and the very field of Waterloo to join hands with the troops from the east and to confront the Allies in the line from Mons to Charleroi. Here, on August 21st and the following day, was fought a very terrible battle between the French and the enemy—a battle in which the French force was courageously fighting as one man to three, and which ended eventually in our gallant Ally being driven out by the continuous pressure of greatly overwhelming numbers.

A DESPERATE ISSUE.

The bombardment of Charleroi by the enemy went on unceasingly and relentlessly, and one learns how desperate and awful was the French resistance from a story, published by *The Times* newspaper, of a French infantryman, who said that the Turcos, with legendary bravery, actually debouched from the town during the enemy's hottest attack and charged the German battery, flinging themselves into their very midst, and bayoneting the gunners. Their loss in men was as great as their gain in honour, for out of their battalion only a hundred returned unscathed. It was another charge of the Light Brigade—but with far greater losses. Their bravery, however, was powerless against the persistent advance of the far superior weight of the German hordes, who pressed on foot by foot through the outskirts of the town into the very heart of Charleroi, where, in its narrow streets, the carnage was indescribably terrific. These streets became so jammed with dead that the killed remained upstanding where they were shot, resting like fainting

men against the shoulders of their dead brothers. It has been estimated in many quarters that the German losses in their attack upon, and the fighting in, Charleroi were between 50,000 and 60,000, far exceeding the losses of the French.

The Pursuing Legions.

The next episode in the pressing onward of the German legions was their capture of Namur. Remembering the wonderful defensive work of the Belgians at Liége, it was hoped that a similarly successful resistance would be made at Namur. But it was not to be—and again the reason of this loss to the Allies was in the fearful superiority of their enemy's numbers, coupled, it must be admitted, with the unexpectedness of the German attack, and with the deadliness of its great siege guns. While engaged in concentrating on Mons, the enemy was also bringing up his heavy guns against Namur, with the result that three of its forts were pulverised under a perfect hurricane of fire, and the French and Belgians, seeing the helplessness of resisting such a formidable attack, evacuated them in properly organised manner.

The fall of Namur was undoubtedly a very serious reverse to the Allies. For its possession was absolutely essential to the development of the arranged plan of operations. Still, the defence put up by the French and Belgians was one of great gallantry and perseverance, and it is not in the least to their discredit that they finally gave way before the determined rush of closely succeeding lines. And, as has been said, the siege howitzer fire of the Germans was one of fearful deadliness. While speaking most highly of the defenders of this fortress city, a Belgian officer, recounting his experiences to a correspondent of *The Times*, declared that at Namur they had had no chance at all against the German artillery; it was that and that alone which had given the enemy the advantage for the time being.

An Officer's Testimony.

In support of this explanation of the rapid fall of Namur it is of importance to quote a letter received by the Belgian Minister in London from one of the Belgian officers engaged in resisting the siege. A tremendous quantity of projectiles was used, he said, not only against the forts but also against the spaces between them. The German artillery employed cannon of 5, 10, 13, 15, 21 and 28 centimetres. It was the enormous 28-centimetre guns (14 inches) which destroyed the defences. The fire was so continuous that it was impossible to attempt to repair the damage done between the forts. The fort of Suarlée, for instance, was bombarded from Sunday morning, August 23rd, and fell on the 25th at three o'clock in the afternoon. Three German batteries of large cannon, using projectiles weighing 350 kilos (about 700 lbs.), shot 600 projectiles on the 23rd, 1,300

on the 24th, and about 1,400 on the 25th against this fort. When the fort fell all the massive central structure was destroyed, and further resistance was futile, as it would have been madly wasteful.

The defenders, however, were far superior to the Germans with the rifle; indeed, the Kaiser's men in many instances during this fight did not even put the rifle to the shoulder, but "fired it off anyhow." The German Army was very well organised at this point—but not at the bayonet point! "When they see a bayonet they turn and run," was the comment of a Belgian officer in this engagement; while a Turco said, "When we hit one German with the bayonet, five fall down"—words quaintly exaggerative of the terror that takes possession of the enemy when he sees the glitter of steel on the top of the rifle.

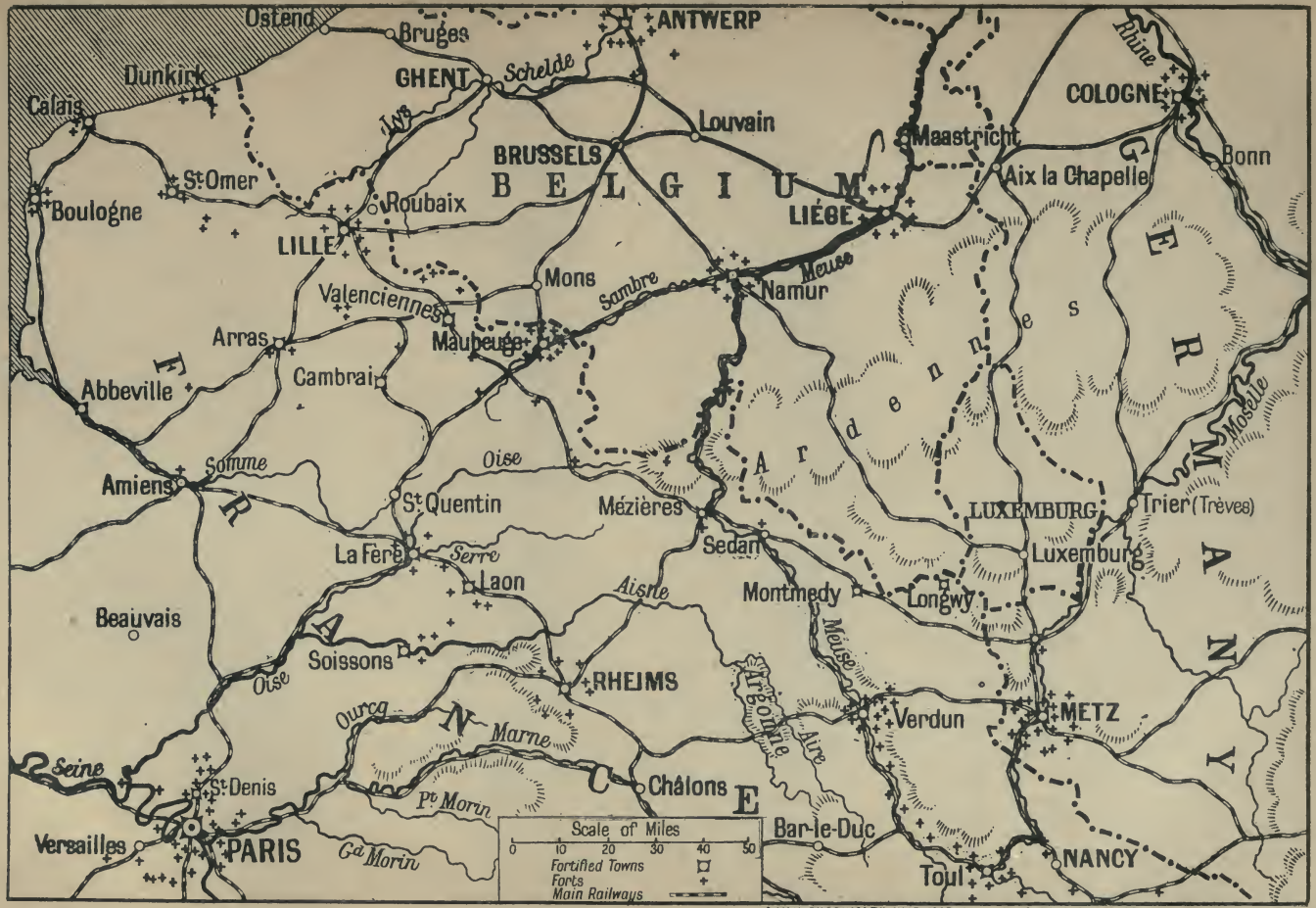
Tricks of the Game.

Tales of German treachery fall thick from the lips of our Allies, military and civil, in connection with the taking of Namur. There the German trumpets blew the French charge, and then, when the French soldiers had approached within three-hundred yards of the enemy, and were breathless with running forward to meet with great gallantry the overwhelming numbers on the German side, they were mercilessly cut to pieces by quickfiring guns. It was before Namur, or so the charge has been made again and again, that many of our brave Allies were shot down by German soldiers who had put on Belgian uniforms and declared themselves as "friends."

When the history of this great war comes to be recorded "without prejudice" by the mind which gives as well as takes—which, out of touch at last with the heat of national anger, long left behind with the havoc of grand cities and the bodies of the brave, is better able to look round for the great deeds of foe as well as friend—it will find it hard to give an account of the German victory at Namur without staining the page with the blood of the treacherously murdered. It is unfortunate for the character of the future Germany—whatever that is going to be like—that the written history of this war, be the writer the fairest and most unbiased chronicler in all the world, must of necessity contain an overwhelming indictment against the past commanders of its army. All credit for what they have done well must for ever go shackled with unforgettable disgust for what they have done ill. So much for the shattering and the seizing of Namur.

The British Line Up.

Let us now survey the preparations of the British Forces, which were soon to plunge into the great battle and turn the tables on the German legions. On the evening of Friday, August 21st, —the first of the two days of fierce fighting between the Germans and the French, at and around Charleroi—the concentration of our Field Force in Belgium was practically complete,



"DAILY CHRONICLE" WAR MAP drawn by G. W. BACON & CO., Ltd., 127, Strand, London.

THE COUNTRY INVADED BY THE GERMANS.

and Sir John French was able on the following day to effect the disposement of the troops to positions most favourable to the commencement of operations—these disposements being made, as our Field-Marshal reported to Lord Kitchener, in pursuance of plans sketched out by the French Commander-in-Chief, General Joffre. Accordingly a course was taken up extending along the line of the canal from Conde on the west, through Mons and Binche on the east, the Second Corps occupying the position from Conde to Mons, the First Corps being posted to the right of the Second Corps from Mons, and the 5th Cavalry Brigade being placed at Binche. In the absence of his Third Army Corps, it was Sir John French's plan to keep the Cavalry Division as much as possible as a reserve, to operate on the outer flank or to move to the assistance of any severely pressed or harassed part of the line. The forward reconnaisance of the 5th Cavalry Brigade was commanded by Brigadier-General Chetwode, strengthened by a few squadrons under General Allenby, both of whom, to quote the dispatch of the Field-Marshal, "did excellent work."

Comedy with Tragedy.

As comedy is mingled with tragedy on the stage, so is it in the theatre of war, and the arrival of our British troops in Mons was a sight to inspire laughter as well as a certain dignified sense of confidence and admiration. They arrived in nearly every conceivable conveyance under the sun—barring roller skates, as one of the cheerful soldiers put it in a letter home! Huge motor vans, the names of big English firms showing dully but certainly through the thin coat of paint on their sides, creaked with the weight of their loads of lightheartedness. Upon one of these vans were the familiar words, "Goods Carefully Removed." A facetious Tommy had run a chalk line through "Goods" and substituted above, "Germans"! On the motor-omnibuses were soldiers playing at conductors, demanding of their comrades, "Fares, please," and asking them if they wanted to get off at the Marble Arch—adding, "Where's yer girl, where's yer girl? Ain't yer got one?" from a passage of a popular rag-time song. Then there were "Johnnie Walker" vans, inscribed in chalk with "Teetotallers, we don't think!" and "Still going strong!" One really witty line ran, "This is the *carte* for me when Johnnie comes Walkering home!" On a Carter Paterson van was scrawled, "A few nice little parcels for the Kaiser, with England's love!" Such was the spirit in which our soldiers of the King arrived to fight the fierce battle of Mons—a spirit described in a Berlin newspaper as one of the utterest demoralisation and dejection!

The Battle Opens!

The real beginning of this battle was on Sunday, August 23rd, the Germans making a fierce and tremendous attack upon our Allied line

massed upon the river Meuse above Namur, along the line of the Sambre, and so on to Mons. Details of this Mons battle reached London on the evening of August 27th, and were published in the *Daily Chronicle* on the following day, but positions, towns and landmarks generally were " blacked out " by the Press Bureau, and one had to be satisfied with an unconfirmed story of British gallantry until the Field-Marshal's signed dispatch, published in London on September 10th, proved it to be in perfect order. The early story of the great and bloody struggle in the neighbourhood of Mons was outlined in a communication from the *Daily Chronicle* special correspondent, Mr. G. H. Perris, repeating the information of a Belgian with whom he conversed, and who was a spectator of our Tommies' first big encounter with the enemy.

The Germans were signalled on the Saturday (he wrote) as approaching from the direction of Charleroi and turning Mons by the north. The English prepared their lines with extraordinary rapidity, small parties being sent out to blow up the canal bridges, while the infantry and the artillery occupied points of vantage overlooking the valley. In several of the small villages about here, in order to establish entrenched firing lines, a number of houses and farm-sheds had to be destroyed. The village people, it seems, willingly helped in much of this work themselves, for they saw the necessity of it, and knew that British soldiers were incapable of wanton destruction. They continued these defensive arrangements throughout the day and part of the night, and on Sunday were still busy with them when they were surprised by a sudden attack. The enemy was coming out of the woods to the north-east of Mons in numbers greatly superior to those of the British. At the same time another considerable force of the Germans attacked the French positions beyond.

A Very Warm Reception.

The first German attack on the British advance posts near the canal was quickly repelled, and the enemy was seen falling back into cover in some confusion. After a while the invaders emerged once more from the shelter of the woods into the open, and were met again by a devastating fire from our guns. The British tactics had been to bring them out thus by ceasing fire and giving them the impression that the defence was weakening. As has been seen, the ruse succeeded admirably, our artillery mowing the enemy down by the thousand. Much of the shock received here by the Kaiser's hosts was provided by our splendid rifle fire from the trenches. By nightfall on this eventful Sabbath, the enemy, in spite of its huge numbers, had made little or no progress—except in the loss of its men! Their dead and wounded were scattered in dull and hideous pattern about the beautiful moonlit hills between the shimmering

canal and the dark forest, from the shelter of which they had issued all too confidently. The German fire, on the other hand, had proved somewhat ineffective, and the British losses up to this point were comparatively slight.

In his dispatch on September 7th to Lord Kitchener, Sir John French referred, as we have already said, to the "excellent work" done by the Brigadier-General Sir Philip Chetwode, with the 5th Cavalry Brigade, on Mons Sunday. We get something of the nature of this work towards the conclusion of the following account of the battle, furnished by a non-commissioned officer invalided home:

"As the Germans came into view in the open, in front of our hastily dug trenches, our men opened on them with a steady fire that never once went wide, and we could see clean-cut gaps in the tightly packed ranks as the hail of lead tore its jagged way through them. They were a game lot, however, and kept closing up the gaps in their ranks as though they were so many marionettes. However, flesh and blood cannot stand this sort of thing for ever, and after a while they began to come along towards us with a less confident step. Then they halted for a few seconds, gazed about them in a dazed sort of way, and ran like hares. Their place was taken by another bluish-grey mass behind them, and this body came on in much the same way until they too had had as much as they could stand, and then there was another bolt for the rear."

Of Countless Number.

This advancing and retiring went on for hours, each retirement unmasking a fresh body of men, and by the time they were close enough to hurl themselves upon our trenches, it was an entirely fresh set of troops, who had suffered little from our Tommies' fire, being screened by those who had in more senses than one "gone before."

"As they scrambled up they seemed very cocksure of themselves, but they had forgotten our men posted under cover on their right, and just as they were steadying themselves for one last rush at us a withering fire was opened on them, and at the same time we cleared the way for the Hussars, who were at them right and left as soon as the fire of our infantry ceased.

"Hell's fury blazed from the eyes of the Germans as they tried to grapple with their new foe, and our men in the trenches stood there silent and inactive spectators, lest they should hit their own cavalry. It only took the Germans a few minutes to make up their minds, and with a blood-curdling wail, that I shall remember to my dying day, they ran as though all the fiends were after them. They were cut down like chaff, and it was at this point that most of the prisoners were taken by our men. Rifles, bandoliers, caps, and everything else that could be cast off was sacrificed to speed, and

many of the scared men easily outpaced the tired horses of our Hussars. Later, during a lull in the fight, we went out to collect their wounded lying near our trenches, and you would hardly believe the fury some of these men manifested against us. I think they hate us ten times more than they hate the French, and that is saying a lot. Those of them who could talk English told us that had it not been for our interference they would have been in Paris now dictating terms of peace!"

A "Sea of Bluish-Grey."

The terrific superiority of the enemy's numerical strength at Mons, and during our retirement from that place, is a fact which has received quite remarkable corroboration from independent sources. Wounded English and French soldiers, who could never have met in the battle or after it to "compare notes," so to speak, all tell the same tale of being confronted wherever they moved by breaker after breaker of this inexhaustible sea of bluish-grey German soldiery. "They were three or four to our one"—that phrase is in nearly every letter home, and in nearly every mouth of the stricken in our hospitals and those of France. Even the enemy admits this great disproportion of "sides"—except, of course, in the Berlin press! A prisoner in the German Dragoons, speaking of the attack of our 12th Lancers and Scots Greys upon his own cavalry, declared that although his men were four to one of ours, they could not possibly stand against the English spears. "Mein Gott!" he exclaimed, "it is hell let loose when your English lancers charge! Never before have I seen anything like them in our army or in my sleep!"

The extreme severity of the battle around Mons prepared one for the subsequent information regarding the strategical retirement of the Allied Forces. It was, as we have said, a conflict of tremendous ferocity, owing to the great numerical superiority of the enemy and the undaunted spirit and bravery of the men upon whom they were continuously throwing layer upon layer of fresh weight. All Sunday the English held their ground at Mons; and at night there was no rest, in consequence of the persistent searchlight work of the Germans, which enabled them to drop shells into the English trenches with, at times, terrible accuracy. One gets a pretty vivid picture of this point of the battle from the words of one of our wounded infantrymen, in conversation with a representative of the *Daily Mail*:

Words of an Eye-Witness.

"We were to advance under cover of artillery fire, but in the meantime the enemy were doing a bit of artillery practice too, so we threw up trenches and snuggled down in them to wait for whatever might happen. He didn't keep us waiting long. The German gunners were over a ridge two or three miles in front, and their

shells soon came whistling round us. There we lay and watched them coming. I got what they call my baptism of fire, and at first I didn't like it! Fortunately most of them burst behind us and did no harm, though some of them burst backwards, as you might say, and did get in among us. We thought they might stop a bit when it got dark, but not they! They kept it up as hard as ever. In the daytime they had had aeroplanes to tell them where to drop the shells. They were flying about all the time. One came a bit too near. Our gunners, a long way behind us, waited and let him come on. He thought he was all right. Two thousand feet he was up I dare say. We could hear his engine. He may have made a lot of notes, but they weren't any use to him or to anybody else, for all of a sudden our gunners let fly at him. We could see the machine stagger, and then drop like a stone, all crumpled up. . . . In the dark they turned on searchlights. We could see them hunting about for some one to pot at. Uncanny that was. To see the blooming big lane of light working round and round until it came to something! Then we heard the shells whistle. And when it came round to us and lit *us* up so that we could see each other's faces, Lord, it made my blood run cold—just as I used to feel when I was a nipper and woke up and saw a light and thought it was a ghost and lay there wondering what would happen next!"

The Only Way.

This and a hundred other stories from our soldiers and the soldiers of France of the wearing-down strength of the German hordes, will remain on record as lasting evidence of the serious necessity for the retiring movement alluded to by Sir John French in his message from the theatre of war to Lord Kitchener:

"In view of the possibility of my being driven from the Mons position, I had previously ordered a position in the rear to be reconnoitred. This position rested on the fortress of Maubeuge on the right and extended west to Jenlain, south-east of Valenciennes, on the left. The position was reported difficult to hold, because standing crops and buildings made the siting of the trenches very difficult and limited the field of fire in many important localities. . . . When the news of the retirement of the French and the heavy German guns threatening on my front reached me, I endeavoured to confirm it by aeroplane reconnaisance; and as a result of this I determined to effect a retirement to the Maubeuge position at daybreak on the 24th" (Monday).

IV. THE MASTERLY BRITISH RETREAT.

WELLINGTON was asked what was the best test of a great general, and he answered, "To know when to retreat, and to dare to do it!" That is the text and moral and key of many a tremendous hour in the fighting which went on and on from daybreak on Monday, August 24th, and which was outlined in the concluding words of the previous chapter —words quoted from the despatch of Sir John French.

Fighting on when the enemy is giving way before you is a great and glorious thing, but it is nothing to keeping unbroken in retirement and pegging away steadily and coolly yard by yard before the pressure of fiercely invading hosts three or four times your own strength in number. Reckless charges against overwhelming odds are wonderful things, and the memory of them is a fine monument to the bravery of the men who make the sacrifice. But there are moments in great battles when it is as courageous and as difficult to retire as it is to advance; and the retirement from Mons by the French and English forces is a case in point. It has shortened the road to victory many a time, this knowing when to retreat and daring to do it! And, one might add, in admiring acknowledgement of the manner in which Sir John French and his commanders moved their men from Mons, knowing *how* to do it!

UNCOLOURED ACTUALITY.

The progress of this retirement is sketched in the uncoloured phrases of actuality in the report of our Field-Marshal. Let the plain and unvarnished, and perhaps somewhat too technical story in that despatch take its place intermittently in this chapter as a connecting chronological series of links between the narratives related of the various engagements by many a brave eye-witness now serving his season in hospital. Showing the road to these events, as it were, Sir John French wrote: "A certain amount of fighting continued along the whole line throughout the night, and at daybreak on the 24th the 2nd Division from the neighbourhood of Harmignies made a powerful demonstration as if to retake Binche, occupied on the previous day by the enemy. This was supported by the artillery of both the 1st and 2nd Divisions, whilst the 1st Division

took up a supporting position in the neighbourhood of Peisant. Under cover of this demonstration the Second Corps retired on the line Dour-Quarouble-Frameries. The 3rd Division on the right of the Corps suffered considerable loss in this operation from the enemy, who had retaken Mons. The Second Corps halted on this line, where they partially entrenched themselves, enabling Sir Douglas Haig with the First Corps gradually to withdraw to the new position ; and he effected this without much further loss, reaching the line Bavai-Maubeuge about 7 p.m. Towards midday the enemy appeared to be directing his principal effort against our left. . . . On the morning of the 24th, the 19th Infantry Brigade, which had been brought up by rail to Valenciennes on the 22nd and 23rd, were moved out to a position south of Quarouble to support the left flank of the Second Corps."

On Front and Flank.

With the assistance of the Cavalry Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien was enabled to effect his retreat to a new position ; although having two corps of the enemy on his front and one threatening his flank, he necessarily suffered losses in doing so.

It was in retirements of this kind that most wonderful courage was shown by cavalry and infantry alike. A splendid story was told in the *Daily Telegraph* of the manner in which the Irish Guards, in the retreat from Mons, met a charge of three German cavalry regiments and emerged from the encounter with undying glory. It is the story, we are told, of what those saw who were not in the firing line, and who awaited with apprehension and wonderment the collision between the grey hordes of the Kaiser's horsemen and the thin but unswerving line of Britishers in khaki, who, with bayonets fixed, made ready for their oncoming. These same Britishers had jovially shouted their adieux to the French troops who had been retired from their immediate neighbourhood, and in the brief interval before the crash came the watchers could see officers walking up and down the lines cracking jokes with their men and otherwise assisting to maintain their excellent spirits. When the German cavalry was only 200 yards away one of our men momentarily put down his rifle and begged a cigarette from a comrade, which he coolly lit !

Prepare for Cavalry !

Then they " prepared to receive cavalry," and did it in better order and with much less excitement than if they had been about to witness the finish of the St. Leger. Three regiments of German cavalry, splendidly horsed, splendidly equipped, charged a regiment of Irish infantry. The men who had been joking and smoking rose up to meet them, a bristling bulwark of giants holding weapons of steel in steel grips. For a few minutes there was an awful chaos, horses, soldiers grey and

soldiers yellow, glittering lances and bayonets, the automatic spit of machine guns, the flashes of musketry. Amidst it all the men in khaki stood immobile. Grimly and without budging they threw back, at the bayonet's point, in utter demoralisation, the troops of the Kaiser, the men who terrified the peasant villagers of Belgium and France. They wanted something to put on their banner, and their casualty list will have shown that, "if blood be the price," they achieved their aim.

Aeroplane incidents of the great retreat from Mons to Cambrai were as numerous as they were wonderful. Little did we know how near we were to "war in the air" when we read the famous novel of Mr. H. G. Wells! Thus it is of extraordinary interest to read of the part taken in this prodigious European struggle by flying machines which, but a few short years ago, were being almost sneered at by the unbelieving as things that could never get beyond the pale of the sporting entertainment world.

The Flying Warrior.

We have heard how in the trenches outside Charleroi a German aeroplane, flying 2,000 feet high, was brought hurtling to the earth by the British guns; how Sir John French sent his own flying men out to verify reports of the approach of reinforced armies of the enemy; and how, at odd times during the fighting between August 22nd and 24th, at Charleroi and Mons and in the retreat from the latter place, there were frequent encounters in the air which might almost be described as of a hand-to-hand nature. Then, in answer to the bomb-dropping exploits of the enemy, there has been a retort to that sort of warfare by our own men—notably at Dusseldorf. But this bomb-dropping does not seem half so terrible, half so fiercely dramatic, as the face-to-face encounter high up in the clouds, between a soldier of the Kaiser and a soldier of our King, or of France; and we are told that the following incident is only one of many that were connected with the historic retreat of the Allied Forces on their well-ordered way to Cambrai. It was told to a *Times* correspondent by a private in the 1st Royal West Kent Regiment.

"There was," he said, "one interesting sight I saw as the column was on the march, and that was a duel in the air between French and German aeroplanes. It was wonderful to see the Frenchman manœuvre to get the upper position of the German, and after about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour to see the Frenchman get on top and blaze away with a revolver on the German. He injured him so much as to cause him to descend, and when found the German was dead. The British troops buried the airman and burnt the aeroplane. During that day we were not troubled by any more German aeroplanes."

Fighting every Mile

To continue with our troops in their retiring movement, planned by Sir John French. For ever pressed by a seemingly endless world of the enemy, rolling up in new cordons wherever our fire had mowed the forward lines down, the English left the position they had taken up south of Quarouble and proceeded to a new one west of Bavai. This was accomplished by nightfall on the 24th, the west of Bavai being occupied by the Second Corps and the right by the First. This right was protected by the fortress of Maubeuge, the left by the 19th Brigade in position between Jenlain and Bry, and the Cavalry on the outer flank. The French on the right, being fearfully pressed by the enemy, though putting up a tremendous fight all the time, were retiring surely and certainly, and our forces were being left with no support except that which the Maubeuge fortress afforded; and the determined attempts of the Germans to get round our left flank, and so hem us against that place and surround us, made it imperative upon the Field-Marshal to order a retreat to still another position, viz., a position in the neighbourhood of Le Cateau. "I had every reason to believe that the enemy's forces were somewhat exhausted," wrote Sir John French, "and I knew that they had suffered very heavy losses. I hoped, therefore, that his pursuit would not be too vigorous to prevent me effecting my object."

Danger and Difficulty

The operation, however, was full of danger and difficulty, not only on account of the very superior force of the enemy, but also for the reason that the English troops, who had been doing little else but fight and march, and fight and march again, with scarcely an interval for sleep and food for two days and nights, were thoroughly exhausted. Still, the retirement was carried out successfully, and thus the design of the enemy to surround the former positions held by the English, and to crush into them with the weight of their ever increasing legions, was frustrated. This retirement to Le Cateau was begun in the early morning of the 26th (Wednesday). Two Cavalry Brigades, with the Divisional Cavalry of the Second Corps, covered the movement of the Second Corps, and the remainder of the Cavalry Division, with the 19th Brigade, the whole under the command of General Allenby, covered the west flank.

Meanwhile reinforcements were being prepared at Le Cateau, where the detrainment of the 4th Division on Sunday, and its completion by Monday, enabled Sir John French early in the morning of Tuesday to put eleven battalions and a brigade of artillery with divisional staff, under General Snow, into a position with their right south of Solesmes, and their left resting on the Cambrai-Le Cateau road south of La Chaprie. In this position, we are told, the

Division rendered great help to the effective retirement of the Second and First Corps to the new position. The troops had been ordered to occupy the Cambrai–Le Cateau–Landrecies position, and the ground had, during the 25th (Tuesday), partially been prepared and entrenched.

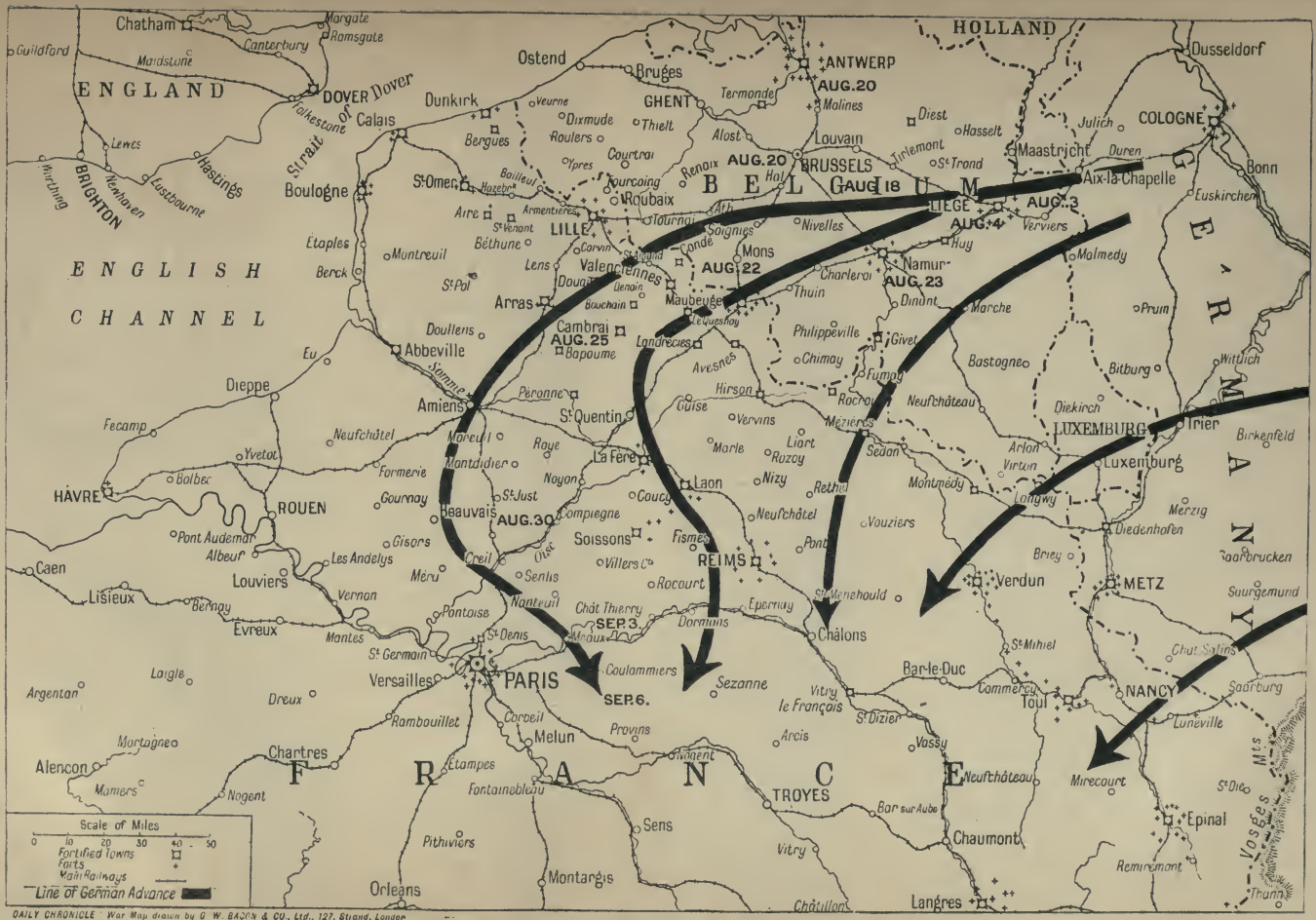
The Reasons Why

In the first place, the trenches were not deep enough or of sufficient length, our troops not having had time to carry out the work satisfactorily; in the second, and more important, Sir John French had been informed that the strength of the enemy was accumulating to a prodigious degree, and that the Kaiser's men were rolling on more relentlessly than ever. Having regard to this, and the fact that the French were being forced to retire on the right of our line—to say nothing of the tendency of the enemy's western corps to continue the enveloping scheme on our exposed left flank, or of the now desperately exhausted condition of the English troops—it was determined to make a great effort to continue the retreat until some substantial obstacle, such as the Somme or the Oise, could be put between our men and the Germans, and thus afford the former some opportunity for rest and reorganisation. Orders were, therefore, sent to the corps of commanders to continue their retreat as soon as they possibly could towards the general line of Vermand–St. Quentin-Ribemont; the cavalry, under General Allenby, being ordered to cover the retirement.

Throughout the 25th, and far into the evening the First Corps continued its march on Landrecies, following the road along the eastern border of the Forest de Mormal, and arriving at Landrecies at 10 p.m. It was the Field-Marshal's intention that this hunted and harassed, but still high-spirited, corps should come further west so as to fill up the gap between Le Cateau and Landrecies, but the men were too exhausted and could not get further along without rest. That the corps was allowed no rest, in spite of the almost impossible condition of the men, we shall read in the next chapter. The present one has served to show the progress of the retirement of our troops from Mons to the Cambrai–Landrecies–Le Cateau line; that marvellous feat of steadiness and courage and almost supernatural endurance which brings back to one's mind with special force the words of Wellington we have already quoted in reference to the test of a great general: "To know when to retreat, and to dare to do it!"

All Along the Line

There was mighty fighting on both sides all along this line of retreat from Mons to Cambrai—and, to their everlasting discredit, some mighty acts of treachery on the part of the enemy. Of this there can be no doubt whatever. Our men are



DAILY CHRONICLE War Map drawn by G. W. BACON & CO., Ltd., 127, Strand, London

MAP OF ROUTES BY WHICH GERMANS ADVANCED INTO FRANCE.

too fair and brave to tell untruthful tales against their opponents. They are sportsmen—and that says all that need be said. We refer to the treachery on the battlefield, not to the atrocities in the villages. These would make a chapter of their own—a chapter that would occupy a volume not easy to lift from the bookshelf.

It was along this line from Mons to Cambrai that many a casualty in our ranks was due not to the superior fighting of the enemy, but to its superior devilry. Here are two characteristic instances of German treachery in the field. The first happened near Mons; the second near Landrecies. "We then had dinner," writes an officer to a relative in London, "and I was just retiring for a calm night, as we understood no one was near, when there was a most terrific firing. This was no false alarm. They did not attack our side at all. The 3rd Brigade got most, nearly all, of it. What they (the enemy) did in the first rush up the road was to come up in French uniform, saying: 'Vive l'Angleterre!' The captain stepped forward to the wire, fifteen yards in front of the line, and challenged. When right up they charged, and knocked him down, and captured one of the machine guns. They were the only lot that got past, and were, of course, driven back. They came on in line after line, and were mowed down like corn. One machine gun fired over 10,000 rounds. The firing of the Germans was very bad. Only for ten minutes they did harm, with a howitzer gun, which was firing point blank, and happened to get the range. We then brought up a gun which knocked it out. It was impossible to know how many of them were killed, but I believe over 2,000. Our 3rd Brigade lost 119 men killed and wounded, two officers killed and three wounded."

Unsoldierly!

Then there is the story of the low and unsoldierly trick played by the Germans on the Coldstream Guards at Landrecies, a story received from official and other sources by Lord Plymouth, whose son, the Hon. Archer Windsor-Clive, was killed—practically murdered (according to *The Times*)—by the treachery of the Kaiser's men. During the main retreat from Mons half a battalion of the Coldstream Guards, of which the Hon. Archer Windsor-Clive was an officer, were detailed to act as outposts to stay the advance of the enemy, whilst the 4th Guards Brigade were billeted to the rear. As night fell, an officer, accompanied by two others dressed in French uniform, and speaking in French, came up and informed the officers of the Coldstream Guards that a large body of the French troops was approaching. He had come to tell them, he said, so that the British might not fire upon their friends by mistake. Shortly afterwards a large force appeared in front of the outposts,

and, when within easy firing distance, opened a heavy fire upon the British. This unexpected assault took our men completely by surprise. Immediately the truth of the position was understood, however, the half battalion of Guards made a firm stand across the main road guarding an important bridge, and from 8.30 p.m. until 2 a.m. gave the enemy a terrible punishment. Almost immediately after the Guards had taken up this stand, with two farmhouses on their flank, a German shell struck the Hon. Archer Windsor-Clive with fatal results. The affair took place on Tuesday, August 25th, at Landrecies.

While all these events were happening, the Kaiser had issued a very remarkable order, one which is likely to become historic, in these terms:

> "It is my Royal and Imperial Command that you concentrate your energies, for the immediate present, upon one single purpose, and that is that you address all your skill and all the valour of my soldiers to exterminate first the treacherous English and walk over General French's contemptible little army . . ."

Subsequently a denial of the existence of any such order was given out by the German authorities, but in any case we go on to see how the British army defied and even laughed at it.

V. HOW RETREAT LED TO VICTORY

As has been seen, the fall of Namur, and with it the failure of the French counter offensive pivoting on that city, changed the whole course of the war and necessitated the immediate falling back of the allied troops from the line of the Sambre prolonged from Namur to Mons to the line of Cambrai-Le Cateau-Landrecies-Mézières, which was reached, and the allied forces reformed thereon, on the night of Tuesday, August 25th, the eve of "the most critical day of all," to use Sir John French's words.

But although the British troops had been ordered to occupy the Cambrai-Le Cateau-Landrecies position, and the ground had, during the 25th, been partially prepared and entrenched, "I had grave doubts," says Sir John in his memorable dispatch of September 7th, "owing to the information I received as to the accumulating strength of the enemy against me, as to the wisdom of standing there to fight." Orders were, therefore, sent to the corps commanders to continue their retreat as soon as they possibly could towards the general line Vermand-St. Quentin-Ribemont.

Coming Through the Forest

"About 9.30 p.m.," says Sir John French's dispatch, "a report was received that the 4th Guards Brigade in Landrecies was heavily attacked by troops of the 9th German Army Corps, who were coming through the forest on the north of the town. This brigade fought most gallantly, and caused the enemy to suffer tremendous loss in issuing from the forest into the narrow streets of the town.

"This loss has been estimated from reliable sources at from 700 to 1,000. At the same time information reached me from Sir Douglas Haig that his 1st Division was also heavily engaged south and east of Maroilles. I sent urgent messages to the Commander of the two French Reserve Divisions on my right to come up to the assistance of the First Corps, which they eventually did. Partly owing to this assistance, but mainly to the skilful manner in which Sir Douglas Haig extricated his Corps from an exceptionally difficult position in the darkness of the night, they were able at dawn to resume their march south towards Wassigny on Guise.

"By about 6 p.m. the Second Corps had got into position with their right on Le Cateau, their left in the neighbourhood of Caudry, and the line of defence was continued thence by the 4th Division towards Seranvillers, the left being thrown back.

"During the fighting on the 24th and 25th the cavalry became a good deal scattered, but by the early morning of the 26th General Allenby had succeeded in concentrating two brigades to the south of Cambrai.

"The 4th Division was placed under the orders of the General Officer Commanding the Second Army Corps.

The French Cavalry

"On the 24th the French Cavalry Corps, consisting of three divisions, under General Sordet, had been in billets north of Avesnes. On my way back from Bavia, which was my 'Poste de Commandement,' during the fighting of the 23rd and 24th, I visited General Sordet, and earnestly requested his co-operation and support. He promised to obtain sanction from his Army Commander to act on my left flank, but said that his horses were too tired to move before the next day. Although he rendered me valuable assistance later on in the course of the retirement, he was unable for the reasons given to afford me any support on the most critical day of all, viz., the 26th."

At daybreak on the 26th the bulk and best of the vastly superior German forces to the north, which had pursued heavily during the retreat, were thrown against the left of the Allied line, with a view to delivering a swift and decisive blow similar to that unsuccessfully struck three days previously at Charleroi. The fullest and fiercest impact of the blow fell on the Second Corps and the 4th Division of our Army.

"At this time," reports Sir John French, "the guns of four German army corps were in position against them, and Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien reported to me that he judged it impossible to continue his retirement at daybreak (as ordered) in face of such an attack. I sent him orders to use his utmost endeavours to break off the action and retire at the earliest possible moment, as it was impossible for me to send him any support, the First Corps being at the moment incapable of movement.

He Cometh Not!

"The French Cavalry Corps, under General Sordet, was coming up on our left rear early in the morning, and I sent an urgent message to him to do his utmost to come up and support the retirement of my left flank; but, owing to the fatigue of his horses, he found himself unable to intervene in any way.

"There had been no time to entrench the position properly, but the troops showed a magnificent front to the terrible fire which confronted them.

"The Artillery, although outmatched by at least four to one,

made a splendid fight, and inflicted heavy losses on their opponents.

" At length it became apparent that, if complete annihilation was to be avoided, a retirement must be attempted; and the order was given to commence it about 3.30 p.m. The movement was covered with the most devoted intrepidity and determination by the Artillery, which had itself suffered heavily, and the fine work done by the Cavalry in the further retreat from the position assisted materially in the final completion of this most difficult and dangerous operation.

" Fortunately the enemy had himself suffered too heavily to engage in an energetic pursuit."

In order to make clear the object of the enemy in his tremendous attack on the 26th, and to show how cleverly it was foiled, we will supplement the brief and precise statement of Sir John French with a passage from Mr. Hilaire Belloc's lucid and brilliant exposition of the war by land in *Land and Water*. " The enemy," he says, " attacked the left section of the allied line with peculiar vigour, because it was now their object not to break through the line but to outflank it, and to get round it by the west: to bend back and come round on to the rear of its left extreme. It was on this account that they attacked the western extreme of the line." On August 22nd and 23rd, the main German assault was hurled at the centre of the line; in the second engagement on the 26th, it was hurled at the western extreme in the hope of turning the whole line. At this western extremity were the English.

The Prussian Project

" This project," continues Mr. Belloc, " the English contingent which held that extreme left defeated. They were not outflanked: they were not pierced: but they fell back still further to a line representing about one day's march behind, that is to the south and west of the line Cambrai-Le Cateau. Upon Thursday, the 27th of August, the Allied line as a whole ran from Mézières westward, but no longer through Le Cateau to Cambrai, with some slight prolongation towards Arras. It was bent back and ran from Mézières, south of Hirson, south of Guise, just north of St. Quentin, to strike the Upper Somme above and to the east of Amiens.

" At that moment—a moment not exactly identical all along the line, but corresponding roughly to the afternoon of August 27th—there begins a two-fold development of the campaign, which would, had the Allied line failed, have made of the following few days the critical days in the first phase of the Western War. This two-fold development was as follows: First, the rapid German advance was checked for the moment, and with it (for the moment) the everlasting German routine of advancing to outflank, with their superior numbers, towards

the west or left of the Allied line. Secondly, in the checking of this, in the taking of the shock, the Allied line fluctuated in a curious and even dangerous manner. It was so bent that no one could at first tell from the fragmentary reports reaching us either whether it would probably break, or whether there was a breaking point in the enemy's line, or where in either case the strain would come. But though the twisting of the line did not yet afford any ground for judging the future, we could, by putting together the reports that had so far reached us, see what the curve of flexion had been, and what the serpentine front then held would appear to be. We could also judge the peril."

A Switchback Line

That is to say, what had been an almost straight line of the Allies from Cambrai through Le Cateau to Mézières on the 26th, was, by the pressure of the attack, turned into a switchback line, which ran from Bapaume down to La Fère, from La Fère up to Guise, from Guise down to Rethel, and from Rethel in a final loop to Verdun on the river Meuse. This serpentine, or sinuous, line was held over the week-end of August 29th, but by Tuesday, September 1st, it had become again a fairly straight line still farther back, running roughly from Compiègne, slightly up through La Fère and then straight on through Rethel, not turning until it reached the Meuse, with Verdun as its termination.

The loop-like nature of the line on August 29th showed that the Germans had for the moment abandoned the attempt to outflank the line and were, where the indentations, or loops, or notches in the line showed, endeavouring to break it through. Had they succeeded the first phase in the war would have been won by them. Fortunately they failed; the line remained intact and retiring unbroken, straightened itself out once more along the route indicated. In this connection it is important to remember that a retreat is as much a military operation as an advance, only differing from an advance in this—"that you abandon to the enemy that wastage from your organisation which you would in an advance send back out of the way, and well cared for, to your base."

An Authoritative Word

Sir John French, in a later dispatch dated September 17th (published on October 19th), thus refers to the situations on the 28th and 29th of September, which we have endeavoured to summarize:

"Some five or six German corps were on the Somme facing the Fifth Army Corps on the Oise. At least two corps were advancing towards my front, and were crossing the Somme east and west of Ham. Three or four more German corps were opposing the Sixth French Army on our left.

"This was the situation at one

o'clock on the 29th, when I received a visit from General Joffre at my headquarters. I strongly represented my position to the French Commander-in-Chief, who was most kind, cordial, and sympathetic, as he always has been. He told me that he had directed the Fifth French Army on the Oise to move forward and attack the Germans on the Somme with a view to checking pursuit. He also told me of the formation of the Sixth French Army on my left flank, composed of the Seventh Army Corps, four reserve divisions, and Sordet's corps of cavalry.

"I finally arranged with General Joffre to effect a further short retirement towards the line Compiègne-Soissons, promising him, however, to do my utmost to keep always within a day's march of him. In pursuance of this arrangement the British forces retired to a position a few miles north of the line Compiègne-Soissons on the 29th."

Having outlined, and sketched in, as far as possible, the strategy following the fall of Namur, we will return to the battle of August 26th, and the retreat which followed, endeavouring from the testimony of those who took part in both to gain some idea of the local conditions.

The Murder of Battle

Here is a glimpse of the battle on the 26th revealed by a soldier who was wounded in the elbow:

"It was awful on the Wednesday. We were right in the forward trenches. We lay there and could not move: the German machine-guns were sweeping overhead and you couldn't put a hand up without being hit. They couldn't damage us in the trenches but when we got out to move back, they fair mowed us down. What about our machine-guns? Why they piled 'em like heaps of sacks. There was one sergeant I saw working one of our guns and he was simply sweeping 'em away. I got a good sight of the Germans—at one time they were only 250 yards away when they formed up. During the greater part of Wednesday the exact range was 650 yards. They look big fat chaps, short hair—for all the world like a lot of brewers' draymen."

Another English soldier, a corporal of the North Lancashire Regiment, described the German forces as "never-ending. They were around us like a swarm of bees, and as fast as one man fell it seemed there were dozens to take his place." A wounded Highlander has given a graphic account of the way in which the German striking force of five army corps, or from 400,000 to 600,000 men, tried to "buckle up" the Allies' left, which consisted of the British troops.

"Hurled at Us!"

"While," he says, "the French had got their eye on the centre, the whole available force of the Germans were hurled at us, and before we had time to look round the lid of Hell was lifted and we were in it up to the neck. The

wonder to me is that we came through it as well as we did. Anything more astonishing than the way the Germans were thrown at us it would be hard to imagine. The Germans were bent on getting through our lines at any cost in men, and it was simply one grand procession of men toeing the death line in the hope of wearing us out. At first the Germans came on with easy confidence as though they were out for a picnic, but when our fire began to tear through their ranks, leaving ugly gaps a yard wide here and there they apparently began to realise that a funeral march was more appropriate than the skip of the beanfeaster, and their approach was less confident. . . . We could have got away with comparative ease had we gone the way they wanted us to go, but we would have uncovered the French left and every man of us knew that the safety of the whole French Army depended on our stand. Therefore we held on, and fought inch by inch until we had fallen back on the French left."

Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, thus refers to this battle: "The battle on this day was of the most severe and desperate character. The troops offered a superb and most stubborn resistance to the tremendous odds with which they were confronted, and at length extricated themselves in good order, though with serious losses, and under the heaviest artillery fire. No guns were taken by the enemy except those the horses of which were all killed or which were shattered by high explosive shells."

A Thrilling Story

In this connection the wounded Highlander above quoted tells a thrilling story; after saying the Germans did all in their power to transform the retirement into a rout he continues: "It was here that our guns were lost. Halted out in the open with weak infantry supports, and doing their best to stay the onward rush of the bluish-grey clouds of Germans, the artillerymen suffered terribly. German marksmen picked off the horses one by one and then, when the German cavalry swooped down, the men could not get the guns away.

"So long as possible they stuck to their posts, but the officers realised that it was a useless sacrifice attempting to save the guns, and they ordered their abandonment. I only saw one battery lost in this way. In another case where the German Lancers swooped down and killed the last man of one battery, the situation was saved by a couple of companies of an Irish Fusilier battalion—the Munsters, I think—who rushed at the Germans with fixed bayonets and put them to flight, while the enemy's artillery poured a merciless fire on them. Many of the Germans around that battery were killed, and of course, the losses of our men weren't light. The Fusiliers were furious when orders came that they were to abandon the guns as no horses were available. You could see them casting loving eyes on those

guns all the rest of the day, and at night when the time come to fall back the poor devils were dragging the guns with them, having captured a few German horses and supplemented them by men who were willing to become beasts of burden for the time."

Saving the Guns

The incident of the Irish trying to save the guns referred to in the foregoing is the theme of another soldier's letter:

"I saw," he writes, "a handful of Irishmen throw themselves in front of a regiment of cavalry trying to cut off a battery of Horse Artillery. Not one of the poor lads got away alive but they made the German devils pay in kind, and anyhow the Artillery got away. . . . Every man of us made a vow to avenge the fallen Irishmen. . . . Later they were finely avenged by their own comrades, who lay in wait for the German cavalry. The Irish lads went at them with the bayonet when they least expected it. Some of them howled for mercy, but I don't think they got it. In war mercy is only for the merciful."

All the testimonies of those who took part in the terrible struggle of August 26th, state that the Artillery fire of the enemy was devastating: "They attach," says a British soldier, "a lot of importance to massed artillery fire, and for hours all their guns seem to play on one little spot of our line until the din and the noise and the screeching of the shells overhead becomes so terrible that you feel as if it would be a relief to cry out." "The effect on the nerves," he adds, "is terrible—only the strongest can stand it for long. The German cavalry, too, have a trick of thundering along in a way that the horses' hoofs make the most awful din you ever heard," declares the same witness, "giving the impression that the whole earth is shaking beneath their tread. Added to that there are the wild, uncanny shouts that they indulge in."

Things Seen and Not Seen.

"The blue-grey uniforms of the Germans are hard to see at a distance," says a Yorkshire Light Infantry man who fought on the 26th, "and for concealing movements are more effective than our khaki, but it's surprising how quickly you learn to pick out such things as buttons and badges or armlets, and even the peaks of caps or spikes of helmets in the sun, and tell by them of moving men you cannot see otherwise. 'Aim at a button a mile off and you hit a German in the stomach,' is what we say, and it is near enough to the truth. The Germans are such sticklers for rules that I have seen their artillery keep firing away at a position of ours after it had been occupied by their own men, and at the hospitals they find quite a number of Germans hit by their own rifle fire."

Before passing to incidents of the retreat, continued far into the night of the 26th, and through the 27th

and 28th (on which date the troops halted on the line Noyon-Chauny-La Fère), it is essential to record General Sir John French's warm tribute to General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien: "I say without hesitation that the saving of the left wing of the Army under my command on the morning of August 26th could never have been accomplished unless a commander of rare and unusual coolness, intrepidity and determination had been present to personally conduct the operation."

Sir John French estimated his losses from the 23rd to 26th inclusive to amount to 5,000 or 6,000 men.

Tried and Foiled

While the German advance on Paris was proceeding the various bodies of the German line between the Meuse and Paris were daily attempting to outflank the Allied line retreating before them, attempts only foiled by the continued rapid and skilful retreat upon positions still farther in the rear. The aim of the enemy was to envelop, encircle, the western end of the Allies' line, an effort which, owing to their superior numbers, could only be countered by retreat. Not until September 4th when the line of the Allies had its left on Paris and its right on Verdun were the tactics altered and suddenly the outflanking movement was exchanged for a direct attempt to break the Allied line.

One of the most stirring of the many heroic incidents of the retreat was the series of charges carried out by the Black Watch and Scots Greys at St. Quentin. "Just as at the battle of Waterloo," writes the *Times* correspondent, "a Highland infantry regiment penetrated to the thick of the fight, the soldiers holding on to the stirrup-leathers of the Greys, so again at St. Quentin this gallant manœuvre was carried out many times. The Greys plunged straight into the ranks of the enemy, each horseman accompanied by a comrade on foot and the Germans taken completely by surprise were broken up and repulsed with tremendous losses." A wounded man who was a witness of one of the charges describes their effect as "overwhelming.' "Our men," he said, "came on with a mighty shout and fell upon the enemy with the utmost violence. The weight of the horses carried them into the close-formed ranks of the Germans and the gallant Greys and the 'Kilties' gave a fearful account of themselves."

A By-the-Way Scene

For the rest a good general idea of the sort of thing involved in the retreat may be had from the vivid little report of an English trainer connected with the racing stables at Chantilly, who took his string of fourteen horses out of one end of the village of Lacroix St. Ouen as the Germans entered at the other end. "At every point of vantage," he told a correspondent of *The Times*, "a halt is made. Riflemen fall into position at each side of the road. Machine-

guns appear as soon as the Germans come well in sight, and a murderous fire ploughs through the ranks of the advancing Teutons. These seem to take no precautions." The speaker himself witnessed such a rear-guard action. The British retreating left a detachment lining both sides of the road. The Germans appeared and were allowed to come within a few hundred yards. Then as if by magic two British machine-guns in command of an officer with a dozen men swing into the road, a sharp order and the machine-guns and rifles blaze at short range into the Germans. A few minutes later the British are marching along the road whistling to the next "station," as they call it, where they will have another exchange of compliments with the Germans. A more sombre picture is etched by Mr. Philip Gibbs, one of the War Correspondents of the *Daily Chronicle.*

On the Road

Describing the retreat to Amiens, a night scene he witnessed, he writes:

"Everyone knew it was a retreat, and the knowledge was colder than the mist of night. The carts carrying the quick and the dead rumbled by in a long convoy, the dropping heads of their soldiers turned neither to the right nor to the left for any greeting with old friends; there was a hugger-mugger of uniforms, of provision carts with ambulances. It was a part of the wreckage and wastage of the war, and to the onlooker, exaggerating unconsciously the importance of the things close at hand and visible, it seemed terrible in its significance and an ominous reminder of 1870, when through Amiens there came the dismal tramp of beaten men. Really this was the inevitable part of a serious battle, and not necessarily the retreat from a great disaster."

The official survey of this period of the campaign explained the situation as follows: "Since the battle at Cambrai on August 26th, where the British troops successfully guarded the left flank of the whole line of the French armies from a deadly turning attack supported by enormous force, the 7th French Army has come into operation on our left and this, in conjunction with the 5th Army on our right, has greatly taken the strain and pressure off our men."

Of High Significance

The retreating movement of the left wing was of the greatest significance at this stage of the campaign because of the enormous enveloping effort put forth by von Kluck's army of the German right. In addition to the cavalry fight under Sir Philip Chetwode on the 28th, when "our men went through the Uhlans like brown paper," a battle at Guise, on August 31st, formed another notable stand during these few days.

This last-mentioned engagement was fought by two French army corps, who made a vigorous attack

upon the Guard and the Guard Reserve Corps of the German Army. Under cover of this battle, the rest of the Allied line was able to retire in safety, the French throwing the German forces mentioned back to the Oise, with a loss, it was said, of 50,000 killed and wounded. Ultimately, however, this part of the Allies' line had to fall back, and in the meantime, on August 30th and 31st, there were some sharp rear-guard actions again on the left wing, fought by the British forces. The latter culminated in the battle of Compiègne, on September 1st, in which the 1st British Cavalry Brigade, with the help of the 3rd Corps, held up the German advance, beating it back with great loss, and capturing twelve guns. This gave to our men another momentary rest from fighting. Nevertheless a general retirement to the line of the Marne was ordered in accordance with General Joffre's tactics.

VI. LOUVAIN: THE BRAND OF SHAME

"Louvain, Malines, Termonde. These are names which will henceforward be branded on the brow of German culture." —Mr. Asquith *at Edinburgh, September 18th*, 1914.

The sack of Louvain—"the greatest crime committed against civilisation since the Thirty Years' War. With its buildings, its pictures, its unique library, its unrivalled associations, a shameless holocaust of irreparable treasure lit up by blind barbarian vengeance."—Mr. Asquith *at the Guildhall, September 4th*, 1914.

"When you come into contact with the enemy strike him down. Quarter is not to be given. Prisoners are not to be made. Whoever falls into your hands is into your hands delivered. Just as a thousand years ago, the Huns, under their king, Attila, made themselves a name which still appears imposing in tradition, so may the German name be known in China in such a way that never again will a Chinaman dare to look askance at a German. The blessing of the Lord be with you. Give proof of your courage, and the Divine blessing will be attached to your colours."—*The German Emperor to his troops, July 27th*, 1900.

The ancient and beautiful city of Louvain, the capital of Brabant in the fourteenth century, before the rise of Brussels, derives its name from Loo signifying a wooded height and Veen a marsh. Local tradition attributes the establishment of a permanent camp at this spot to Julius Cæsar but Louvain only became important in the eleventh century as a place of residence for the dukes of Brabant. In 1356 the city was the scene of the famous *Joyeuse Entrée* of Wenceslaus, which represented the principal Charter of Brabant. At that time its population numbered from 100,000 to 150,000, most of whom were engaged in the cloth trade, the city containing no fewer than 2,400 manufactories.

The Turbulent Weavers

Here, as in other Flemish towns, the weavers were a very turbulent class, and soon after the *Joyeuse Entrée* a serious feud arose between these craftsmen and the patrician class, Duke Wenceslaus eventually throwing in his lot with the latter. After a struggle of over twenty years' duration, the White Hoods, as the citizens called themselves, were crushed, but during an insurrection in 1378 they massacred thirteen magistrates of noble family by throwing them from the window of the Hôtel de Ville on to the spear points of the populace below, a crime which

brought down on them the vengeance of the Duke, who in 1382 took the city and severely punished the citizens, one hundred thousand of whom emigrated to Holland and England, carrying with them the secrets of their handicraft. From this period the importance and prosperity of Louvain steadily declined, Brussels correspondingly gaining.

But what Louvain lost in trade and commerce it practically recovered as a seat of learning, for in 1423 Duke John IV. of Brabant founded the University which was to become the most famous in Europe, which made Louvain the intellectual metropolis of the Low Countries, the Oxford of Belgium, where in the sixteenth century the presence of over six thousand students bore witness to the reputation of its celebrated head, Justus Lipsius, and increased the distinction of his justly renowned name.

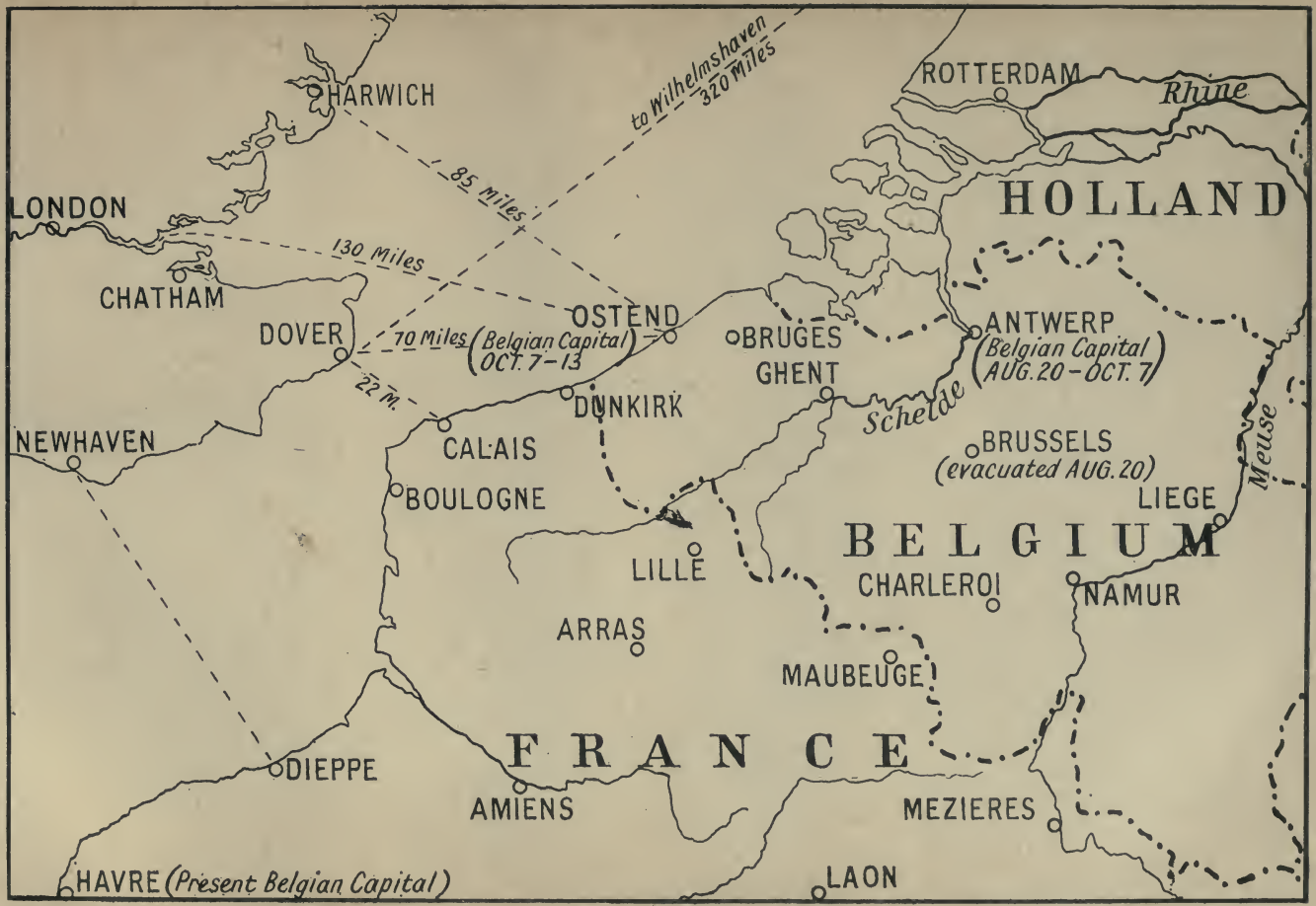
A Hall of Learning

In 1679 the University was established in the old Cloth Workers' Hall which, erected in 1317, testified, until its destruction by the German soldiers, to the wealth and taste of its founders. With arcades sixty-six yards long, the upper stories supported by graceful pillars, it housed the most valuable library in Belgium and one of the most precious libraries in the world. Adorned with fine wood carvings it contained 90,000 volumes and some 500 manuscripts, many of these being priceless in worth. Under Joseph II. the reputation of the University somewhat declined, but it continued to exist until the close of the last century. Some conception of its position may, however, be gauged from the fact that formerly no one could hold a public appointment in the Austrian Netherlands without having taken a degree at Louvain. After having been closed by the French Republicans, the University was revived by the Dutch Government in 1817. Since 1834 it has been maintained by the Bishops as a free (*i.e.*, independent of the State) Catholic University. It possessed (until a few months ago) some 2,000 students residing in the four colleges attached to the University.

The most remarkable building in Louvain, and the only one spared by the modern Huns, is the Hôtel de Ville, one of the richest and most ornate examples of pointed Gothic in Europe. Resembling the town halls of Bruges, Ghent, Brussels and Oudenaarde, but surpassing them in elegance and harmony of design, the Hôtel de Ville was the masterpiece of Mathieu de Layens, a master-mason who worked at it from 1447–1463.

A Lovely Church

Opposite the Hôtel de Ville, and now practically, if not completely, destroyed stood the lovely church of St. Pierre, a cruciform structure of noble proportions (especially in the interior) with a low tower to which the spire was never added. This



"DAILY CHRONICLE" WAR MAP drawn by G. W. BACON & CO., Ltd., 127, Strand, London

SHOWING THE MOVEMENTS OF THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT.

church, built on the site of an older church between 1425 and 1497, contained seven chapels, two of them containing splendid examples of the genius of the artist, Dierich Bouts. The choir was separated from the nave by an elaborate Jubé, or Rood Loft in the late Gothic style, executed in 1490, consisting of three arches adorned with statuettes and surmounted by a lofty cross. The massive twelve-branched candelabrum was executed by Jean Matsys. This brief chronicle does not exhaust the treasures of St. Pierre, which included in addition a richly carved organ dating from 1556, a beautiful Gothic tabernacle fifty feet in height, executed in 1450 by de Layens, the ancient tomb of Henry I., Duke of Brabant and founder of the Church, four paintings by Verhaghen, depicting the life and death of Margaret of Louvain, a pulpit carved by Jos. Bergé, a fine monument by Professor Boyarts, dating from 1520, and an extensive altar piece, the centre painted by Dierich Bouts.

A Sign of Four

Four other noted churches did Louvain cherish, viz., St. Gertrude, St. Quentin, St. Michael and St. Jacques. The church of St. Gertrude was erected in the Flamboyant style at the close of the fifteenth century with the exception of the choir, which was added in 1514–26. The choir stalls dating from the first half of the sixteenth century and embellished with statuettes and twenty-eight reliefs of scenes from the life of the Saviour, St. Augustine and St. Gertrude, were among the finest specimens of late Gothic wood carving in Belgium; they were executed by Mathias de Waydere. The church of St. Michael, erected by the Jesuits in 1650–66, with an imposing façade, was notable for the beautiful proportions of the interior; it contained many modern pictures by Mathieu, de Keyser, Wappers, and other artists. The church of St. Jacques possessed several pictures of the school of Rubens, a fine St. Hubert, by de Crayer, some good modern works and a Tabernacle in stone executed in 1467, with a copper balustrade in the Renaissance style, cast by Jan Veldeneer in 1568. The sacristy contained finely embroidered vestments from the Abbey of St. Gertrude and two reliquaries of St. James and St. Margaret.

If the reader will endeavour, with the aid of his imagination, to recreate these edifices, to restore to them their rich and rare treasures, to estimate the genius that gave them birth and the affection and piety which gave them cherishing, if he will further place them in their pleasant streets, lined with ancient houses rich in ornament and character as well as with modern buildings of distinction, and if he will, giving the wings of his imagination a still wider sweep, endeavour to gauge the veneration with which this historic city was regarded by the Belgian people, he will be able to understand in some degree the

horror and grief its destruction has entailed.

The Measure of it

Here in restrained and measured language is the official announcement of the sack of Louvain by the German soldiery:

"Ancient and beautiful Louvain, a town of forty-five thousand people, a seat of learning, famous for its ancient and beautiful churches and other buildings, many of them dating from the fifteenth century, has been utterly destroyed by one of the Kaiser's commanders in a moment of passion to cover the blunder of his own men. The excuse for this unpardonable act of barbarity and vandalism is that a discomfited band of German troops returning to Louvain were fired upon by the people of the town who had been disarmed a week earlier. The truth is that the Germans, making for the town in disorder, were fired upon by their friends in occupation of Louvain, a mistake by no means rare in war. The assumption of the German commander was in the circumstances so wide of probability that it can only be supposed that in the desire to conceal the facts, the first idea which occurred to him was seized upon as an excuse for an act unparalleled in the history of civilised people.

"The Emperor William has stated that the only means of preventing surprise attacks from the civil population has been to interfere with unrelenting severity and to create examples which by their frightfulness would be a warning to the whole country. The case of Louvain is such an interference; without even the miserable excuse suggested. Louvain is miles from the scene of real fighting. In International law it is recognised that 'the only legitimate end which the States shall aim at in war is the weakening of the military forces of the enemy.' And the rules under the annex to Convention IV. of 1907, which expand and demand the provision of the Declaration of Brussels, lay down that any destruction or seizure of enemies' property, not imperatively called for by military remedies, is forbidden.

"In destroying the ancient town of Louvain, the German troops have committed a crime for which there can be no atonement and humanity has suffered a loss which can never be repaired."

The Fuller Indictment

But even the above statement does not refer to one half the appalling crimes committed by the German troops in the ill-fated city. Mr. A. J. Dawe, who with a friend actually witnessed its destruction, in a letter to *The Times* of September 3rd writes: "Burning houses were every moment falling into the road; shooting was still going on. The dead and dying burnt and burning lay on all sides. Over some the Germans had placed sacks. I saw about half a dozen women and children. In one street I saw two little children walk-

ing hand in hand over the bodies of the dead men. I have no words to describe these things." Every one offering opposition was killed, every one found in the possession of arms shot. An assistant in a bicycle shop in Louvain, who, though a Dutchman, was given special facilities for escape owing to his being mistaken for a German, gave the following account of what he witnessed to the Special Correspondent of the *Daily News and Leader* in Rotterdam :

" ' At midday last Tuesday,' (August 25th) he begins, ' a fearful uproar broke out in the streets while we were at dinner, and the crackle of musketry was soon followed by the roar of artillery near at hand.

" ' Hearing shrieks from the inhabitants of our streets, I rushed to the window and saw that several houses were already in flames. Soldiers were smashing the shop windows and looting in all directions.

" ' As the people rushed into the streets from the burning houses they were shot down like rabbits. With my governor, his wife, and little boy, we fled to the cellar, where I and the boy hid under a pile of tyres, while the manager crept into a chest, and his wife far into a drain, where she stood with water up to her waist for many hours.

The Veil of Night

" ' Night fell,' he continues, ' and the sound of shooting in the streets became brisker. I crept out of my hiding-place to get some water, and, peeping out of the window, saw, to my horror, that almost the whole street was in ruins. Then we found that our own house was alight, and it was necessary to choose between bolting and being burnt to death where we were.

" ' I decided to make a dash for it, but the moment I was outside the door three Germans held me up with their revolvers and asked me where I was going. My reply was that I was a German, and that my master and his wife were Germans who had been trapped in the burning house.

" ' Apparently my German was good enough to make them believe my statement, for they promised to give us safe conduct out of the town. Our walk through the streets to the railway station I shall always remember as a walk through hell.

" ' The beautiful town with its noble buildings was a sea of flame. Dead bodies lay thick in the streets. Dreadful cries came from many of the houses. It was half-past five on Wednesday morning when we reached the railway station. Soldiers were even then still going about the streets with lighted brands and explosives in their hands, setting alight any buildings that still remained intact.

The Quick and Dead

" ' In the parks they had already begun to bury the dead, but in many cases so shallow were the graves that a large part of each body was still visible. At the railway station we

witnessed a truly harrowing spectacle. Fifty citizens, both men and women, had been brought from houses from which the soldiers swore that shots had been fired.

"'They were lined up in the street, protesting with tears in their eyes that they were innocent. Then came a firing squad. Volley followed volley, and the fifty fell dead where they stood.'

"This appalling story," continues the Special Correspondent, "is fully confirmed by an independent dispatch from a Dutch journalist who happened to be at Louvain on his way to Brussels. He states that he was standing on Tuesday evening near the railway station at Louvain talking to a German officer, when he was strongly advised to leave the spot, owing to the great danger.

"A group of some five hundred men and women described as hostages were ranked in the open space by the station, and they were informed that for every soldier fired on in the town ten of them would be shot. This arrangement was carried out with true German regard for the punctilious observation of all rules.

"The wretched people sobbed and wrung their hands and fell on their knees, but they might as well have appealed to men of stone.

"Ten by ten as the night wore on they were brought from the ranks and slaughtered, without regard to age or sex, before the eyes of those who remained."

Confirming the Facts

The *Daily News* correspondent draws special attention to the fact that "both my informants are Dutchmen who can have no object in spreading anti-German lies." Their story is corroborated by M. Auguste Van Ermen, Town Treasurer of Louvain, whose permanent headquarters had been in its historic town hall, and who witnessed the tragedy. This statement of what occurred appeared in *The Times* of September 8th. The following are citations from it:

"At last on the Tuesday night there took place the unspeakable crime, the shame of which can be understood only by those who followed and watched the different phases of the German occupation of Louvain. It is a significant fact that the German wounded and sick, including their Red Cross nurses, were all removed from the hospitals. The Germans meanwhile proceeded to make a last and supreme requisition, although they knew the town could not satisfy it.

"Towards six o'clock the bugle sounded, and officers lodging in private houses left at once with arms and luggage. At the same time thousands of additional soldiers, with numerous field pieces and cannon, marched into the town to their allotted positions. The gas factory, which had been idle, had been worked through the previous night and day by Germans, so that during this premeditated outrage the people could

not take advantage of darkness to escape from the town. A further fact that proves their premeditation is that the attack took place at eight o'clock, the exact time at which the population entered their homes in conformity with the German orders—consequently escape became well-nigh impossible. At 8.20 a full fusillade with the roar of the cannons came from all sides of the town at once.

The Light of Murder

"The sky at the same time," we read, "was lit up with the sinister light of fires from all quarters. The cavalry charged through the streets sabring fugitives, while the infantry, posted on the footpaths, had their fingers on the triggers of their guns waiting for the unfortunate people to rush from the houses or appear at the windows, the soldiers praising and complimenting each other on their marksmanship as they fired at the unhappy fugitives.

"Those whose houses were not yet destroyed were ordered to quit and follow the soldiers to the railway station. There the men were separated from mothers, wives, and children, and thrown, some bound, into trains leaving in the direction of Germany.

"I cannot but feel that, following the system they have inaugurated in this campaign, the Germans will use these non-combatant prisoners as human shields when they are facing the Allies. The cruelty of these madmen surpasses all limits. They shot numbers of absolutely inoffensive people, forcing those who survived to bury their dead in the square, already encumbered with corpses whose positions suggested that they had fallen with arms uplifted in token of surrender.

"Others who had been allowed to live were driven past approving drunken officers by the brutal use of rifle butts, and while they were being maltreated they saw their carefully collected art and other treasures being shared out by the soldiers, the officers looking on. Those who attempted to appeal to their tormentors' better feelings were immediately shot. A few were let loose, but most of them were sent to Germany.

"On Wednesday," this narrative continues, "at daybreak the remaining women and children were driven out of the town—a lamentable spectacle—with uplifted arms and under the menace of bayonets and revolvers.

"The day was practically calm. The destruction of the most beautiful part of the town seemed momentarily to have soothed the barbarian rage of the invaders.

"On the Thursday the remnant of the Civil Guard was called up on the pretext of extinguishing the conflagration; those who demurred were chained and sent with some wounded Germans to the Fatherland. The population had to quit at a moment's notice before the final destruction.

"Then, to complete their devastation, the German hordes fell back on the surrounding villages to burn them. They tracked down the men —some were shot, some made prisoners—and during many long hours they tortured the helpless women and children. This country of Eastern Brabant, so rich, so fertile, and so beautiful, is to-day a deserted charnel-house."

The Commission appointed by the Belgian Government to inquire into breaches of the law of nations and the laws and usages of war confirmed these facts in its report of August 31st, and in a second report, dated Antwerp, September 10th, adds:

"Another fact which emphasises the ruthless character of the treatment to which the peaceable population of Louvain was subjected has also been established. On August 28th a crowd of 6,000 to 8,000 persons, men, women, and children, of every age and condition, was conducted under the escort of a detachment of the 162nd Regiment of German infantry to the riding school of the town, where they spent the whole night. The place of confinement was so small in proportion to the number of the occupants that all had to remain standing, and so great were their sufferings that in the course of this tragic night several women lost their reason and children of tender years died in their mother's arms."

Two names which will be treasured by all lovers of heroism are those of Valerie di Martinelli and Leonie Van Lint, both Belgian telephone operators, who during the destruction of Louvain, with shells bursting around them and the Exchange on fire, remained at their post switching through the orders of the Belgian General Staff directing the retreat.

The Town of Bridges

The ancient town of Malines, also destroyed by the Germans, situated on the tidal river Dyle, which flows through the town in numerous arms and is crossed by thirty-five bridges, is the seat of Cardinal Mercier, the Primate of Belgium. A town of regular streets, handsome squares and fine buildings, its greatest possession is its cathedral of St. Rombold, begun at the end of the twelfth century and completed in 1312, but to a great extent rebuilt in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (after a fire in 1342) with money paid by the pilgrims who flocked thither to obtain the indulgences issued by Pope Nicholas V. The altar-piece representing the Crucifixion, by Van Dyck, is one of that master's finest works. Among the other famous pictures in the cathedral were Erasmus Quellin's "Adoration of the Shepherds," and Wouter's "Last Supper"; these, and the Van Dyck are fortunately reported to be intact. Three or four shells pierced the fabric itself, wrecking the fine Gothic arches and mutilating the famous pulpit carved in wood by

Boeckstuyns, of Malines, and representing the "Conversion of St. Paul." The stately pillars escaped, and though a shell passed through the spire, it did not cause structural weakness. The stained-glass windows, however, of great richness and beauty, the world-famous chimes in the tower, and the fine gateway of the cathedral are reported to be destroyed. The shrine of St. Rombold and two Rubens in the Church of St. Jean were removed to Havre and Antwerp respectively before the bombardment began.

Seen on the Spot

M. Emile Van der Velde, the eminent Socialist leader, and a member of the Delegation appointed by the King of the Belgians to acquaint the United States with the atrocities committed in Belgium, says: "I went to Malines after the fighting in order to investigate the state of affairs. I found only eight Belgian people in the town, but even then the Germans were bombarding the deserted houses, apparently with the sole object of destroying them."

Dr. Charles Sarolea, the Special Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, in a message received from Antwerp on August 31st, wrote that he had visited "the desolate city of Malines yesterday." "I went," he continues, "down some cellars, and there saw the most uncanny scene I have witnessed during these eventful weeks. The underground passages extended in every direction, and everywhere on the earthen floors and along the walls oozing with moisture I perceived through the darkness the shadows of about 200 old men and women, stretched on mattresses, shaking in all their limbs. They stared at me in a frenzy of terror. In vain did I try to reassure them. They only asked, 'Are they coming, are they here, are they coming to kill us?' As I passed along they gazed at me as the ghosts in hell looked up at the shade of Dante in the circles of the Inferno. Not only was Malines destroyed, but the Belgian official Commission of Inquiry in its Report of August 31st states: 'We can affirm that the houses in all districts between Louvain and Malines and most of the suburbs of Louvain have practically been destroyed.'"

Bombs from Zeppelins

The dropping of bombs by a Zeppelin airship over Antwerp at night was conduct worthy of the assassins, murderers and looters of Louvain and Malines. Before even a fortified town is bombarded the rules of war provide for twenty-four hours' notice, but the Germans at dead of night sailed over the sleeping city, dropping bombs without warning on the sleeping inhabitants and killing women and children. The first visit of the Zeppelins was on August 25th; the second in the early hours of September 1st. The objective of the airship on the first occasion was the Palais du Roi, where the Queen

of Belgium, the little Princes, and the Princess Marie José, lay asleep. But the bomb, which was to have fallen on the Palace, fell into an adjoining street, wrecked a house, and injured two women. Another, apparently intended for the Banque, struck the attic of a house near by, killed a servant as she slept and injured two others. Another bomb fell into a shrubbery, dug a deep hole, uprooted shrubs and blew the frames out of the St. Elizabeth Hospital, where wounded lay. Still another struck a house inhabited by poor people, killed a woman, terribly mutilated three girls, killed two Civic Guards, and seriously injured a third. One poor girl had half her face blown away.

The second visit, on September 1st, was not unexpected, and the Zeppelin was received with such a cannonade that the crew dropped its bombs indiscriminately, just outside the fortifications. Five dropped on one group of houses, destroying three of them and slightly injuring four of the inhabitants. Seven bombs were dropped in the Parc du Rossignol, close to some houses where two hospitals were established. The houses, which were flying the Red Cross flag, were damaged, ten or twelve persons being injured. The bombs were filled with special bullets calculated to inflict horrible wounds. "Such a type of bomb," says the official statement of the visit issued from Antwerp, "has never been used by artillery, and is completely unknown to them. It is made on the same model as that used by the notorious Bonnot robber-band in France."

Ruskin and Teutonism

Is it any wonder that John Ruskin declared that a German "does not understand even the meaning of the words 'meek' and 'merciful,' and cannot be either. Accordingly, when the Germans get command of Lombardy, they bombard Venice, steal her pictures (which they can't understand a single touch of), and entirely ruin the country, morally and physically, leaving behind them misery, vice, and intense hatred of themselves, wherever their accursed feet have trodden. They do precisely the same thing by France—crush her, rob her, leave her in misery of rage and shame, and return home, smacking their lips, and singing Te Deums."

This is precisely what they have done by Belgium. The Kaiser's motto printed at the head of this chapter is: "Quarter is not to be given. The blessing of the Lord is with you," a sickening blend of blasphemy and savagery.

VII. THE DRAMATIC TURNING POINT

At the end of the first week of September it seemed as though the next event was to be, if not the siege of Paris, at least a German attack upon the fortifications of that city. A regular investment of Paris was hardly likely. It is the strongest fortress in the world. The perimeter of its outer ring of forts exceeds a hundred miles. A besieging army would need to be at least half a million strong. What was much more likely, and, indeed, expected, was a sudden and overwhelming German assault upon some sector of the perimeter of forts: probably on the north and east sides. We have learnt since of the tremendous power of the German siege-train, but even in the early days of last September it was beginning to be realised that against modern artillery, used as the Germans use it, permanent fortifications have little value.

Those few people who read the German papers during the war had just began to learn of that monstrous weapon, the Krupp 42-centimetre, and of the havoc that it had wrought upon General Brialmont's concrete and armour-steel forts outside Liége. Around this 42-centimetre a legendary, more than half-mythical, fame has arisen, so that one has occasional doubts about its existence. It has never been photographed, nor has it ever been mentioned in the official war-bulletins—German, French, or English. At any rate, a direct assault upon Paris was daily expected, and the current impression was that the Germans would use the same methods of attack—that of concentrating the whole of their artillery and infantry force upon a small sector of the fortification ring—that have since been employed with brilliant success against Antwerp. It was not merely a popular expectation.

The German Expectations

The transfer of the Presidency and the Ministries to Bordeaux showed that the Government shared it. The political value to the Germans of a triumphal entry into Paris, little more than a month after the war began, was obvious. It was thought that they would be unable to resist the temptation, the fame of the achievement would travel throughout the entire world. Opinion in neutral countries would have become much more pro-German as a consequence. The spectator, like Providence, prefers

to be on the side of the big battalions. At least, it likes to be for the winning side, if only for the pleasure of saying: "I told you so." Neutral countries, anxious about the outcome of the war, and about their own future—like, for example, Turkey and Bulgaria—might have all their indecision removed, and their course of action determined by so tremendous a *coup de théatre* as the spectacle of a German army marching with bands playing and the men goose-stepping proudly along the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne to the Arc de Triomphe.

Such was the German expectation at that time—so confidently felt that the inhabitants of the outer suburbs of Paris would not have been surprised at any moment by the clatter of hoofs and the appearance of the dreaded Uhlans in their midst. Yet the expectation was never fulfilled. Instead of continuing its advance on Paris, hardly more than a day's march distant, General von Kluck's army suddenly swerved at right angles to its course, and moved with astonishing rapidity southward and south-eastward. For a day or two the people of Paris could hardly realise what had happened. Then came, first, a sigh of relief, and, afterwards, questionings — how had a change so dramatic come about?

The "Left-Wheel" Order

On September 3rd the German First Army (under General von Kluck) had reached Creil and Senlis on the direct road to Paris from the Belgian frontier. Two days later that army had turned "left-wheel" and was crossing the Marne near Meaux. The new direction was at right angles to that which had been previously followed. Paris was no longer the objective, but was left disregarded on the right. The Second German Army had in these two days crossed the Marne below Rheims. In less than a week General von Kluck's cavalry screen was crossing the Grand Morin and Petit Morin Rivers, had reached the Upper Seine near Provins, some miles south-east of Paris. No wise general, however, could ignore that city, and everyone will admit that General von Kluck is not the sort of man to overlook such an elementary precaution as guarding the flank that he now presented to Paris against a sally from the force that he knew must have been collected in the city. He left, therefore, a fairly strong covering force along the River Ourcq to face the French capital.

As the event proved, however, this force was hardly strong enough for its purpose. This shrewd German general had, at a critical moment in the war, made a miscalculation. He knew that behind the fortifications there must be a certain force, but he imagined it to be much smaller and much poorer in fighting quality than it really was. His mistake very nearly brought him to disaster. The covering force was driven back over the Ourcq with comparative ease. Only by his military skill, and by

forcing his men to an almost superhuman degree of exertion was he able to extricate his army. The retreat had almost assumed the character of a rout before von Kluck managed to bring his army into security behind the prepared positions along the Aisne.

"Strike Hard"

Undoubtedly it was the German purpose to inflict a crushing blow on the French army at the first stroke. "Strike hard and keep on striking," is their favourite military maxim. The defeat of the Allies at Mons and Charleroi was to have been turned into a rout, and the Allied army scattered. Instead of being routed, however, the defeated Allies retreated in good order—it was perhaps the most wonderful retreat in history—and kept themselves together. Had they, or a portion of their army, been broken, the Germans would have launched themselves upon the outer walls of Paris and probably, though after a great effort and much loss, would have made a breach and forced an entry. But they dared not attempt so tremendous a task as long as the Allied army remained intact and in splendid fighting trim. In short, the first object was, necessarily, the destruction of the French army. Other things had to wait.

On September 5th the Paris *Temps* thus summarised the position of the German armies:

I.—The Crown Prince advancing across the Argonne.

II.—The Prince of Wurttemberg between Chalons and the Aisne valley.

III.—The Saxon Army between the former and Rheims.

IV.—General von Bulow's army, widely extended, to the west of Rheims and in touch with

V.—General von Kluck's army, which, after heading directly for Paris, had turned off south-eastward toward Meaux and Coulommiers.

Weight and Thrust

The object was clear. These armies were converging together into a mass across the Plain of Champagne between the Argonne and Rheims. In this region they hoped by sheer weight and thrust to break the French line. In that event the French army would have been divided into two halves: the westward portion retiring, if it could, to Paris, and if it could not, to Coleans and the Loise; the other portion falling back southwards upon the frontier fortress barrier. It was, at least, a bold plan; characteristic of the thinking of the Imperial General Staff. That it failed was due to three things: (1) General Joffre's clever strategy in selecting the line of the Marne for the French stand; (2) the utter incompetence of the Kaiser's eldest son as a General; and (3) the Russian invasion of East Prussia, which forced the Germans even as early as September 5th to begin transferring men

from the western to the eastern theatre.

General Joffre had done wisely in selecting the Marne for his purpose. A glance at any map of France, showing the railways and rivers, will explain why. Reserves could be readily collected along this line from every part of France. In reaching the Marne, a German army would find itself with two great fortresses—Paris and Verdun—on its western and eastern flanks. These fortresses would effectually prevent the Germans, who dislike parallel actions, from their favourite device of outflanking their opponent. Moreover, the Germans would be exposed to sorties from these strong places, threatening their communications, and as the event showed, a sortie from Paris came within an ace of utterly destroying their right wing. In turning aside from Paris towards the Marne, the Germans lost the advantage of the main railways which concentrate upon the capital. Instead of proceeding along the useful iron rails they had now to march without them. It was much the same with the roads.

Taking the Low Road

The Germans had to turn aside from the magnificent, world-famous *routes nationales*, to the inferior and narrow *routes vicinales*. Finally across their path lay a series of tributaries of the Seine; von Kluck, for example, having to push his way across no fewer than five rivers—the Aisne, the Ourcq, the Marne, the Grand Morin and the Petit Morin. All these things tended to slow off the German motion, which had hitherto been so rapid, and rapidity was essential to any success of a lightning back-stroke upon the French centre.

But still more essential to success (in this plan as in every plan in the history of modern war) was it that the converging armies should keep in step, as it were. Von Kluck was more than energetic; so with the other Generals of the German centre and right wing. But there was a laggard, who spoiled everything—no less a personage than the Crown Prince. The reason for his failure too was a perfectly simple one. His army had been thoroughly beaten on September 6th and 7th, and instead of continuing its triumphal march, had been compelled to retreat forty kilometres in precipitate confusion. To this hour the Crown Prince is the only German General who has been thoroughly whipped in equal battle on French soil. It is said, though the figures seem improbable, that the casualties in his army amounted to one hundred thousand. This would amount to a loss of about one man in three or four—a proportion that would almost constitute a record.

Saving the Crown Prince

The whole German scheme had now collapsed. At all odds the Crown Prince's army had to be saved. General von Kluck once more wheeled his army—this time to the east—and

marched rapidly, with the other western armies, to protect the Crown Prince's retreat. That the German forces were able to extricate themselves from the mess into which the Kaiser's eldest son had put them, is clearly a proof of their high military skill, and of the quality of their troops. Particular credit attaches to von Kluck's achievement, for a strong Allied force had swept back his covering army, crossed the Ourcq and had virtually cut his communications. For a long time the Crown Prince's army was in the greatest peril, and it seemed as if the difficulty of getting so large a body of men and guns across the barrier of the Argonne —a roadless, densely-forested, clay plateau—was about to result in another Sedan, and the surrender of the Crown Prince and his army.

The whole German strategical plan had failed, and that failure must have been exceedingly bitter to the Kaiser. As the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* put it: "In the plan of the German operations, the path that promised the greatest glory was reserved for the Crown Prince. This was in accordance with the policy of bolstering up the fast-fading popularity of the Hohenzollerns. Throughout Germany he was acclaimed as the hero of Longwy." In those days the German papers had poems in eulogy of the Crown Prince and the illustrated weeklies used to come out with gorgeous coloured pictures of him riding with magnificent mien and an unfamiliar manliness of bearing at the head of his troops. To-day there are no panegyrics of this hope of the Hohenzollerns in prose, verse or picture to be found in the German press. General von Hindenburg has supplanted him as the national hero.

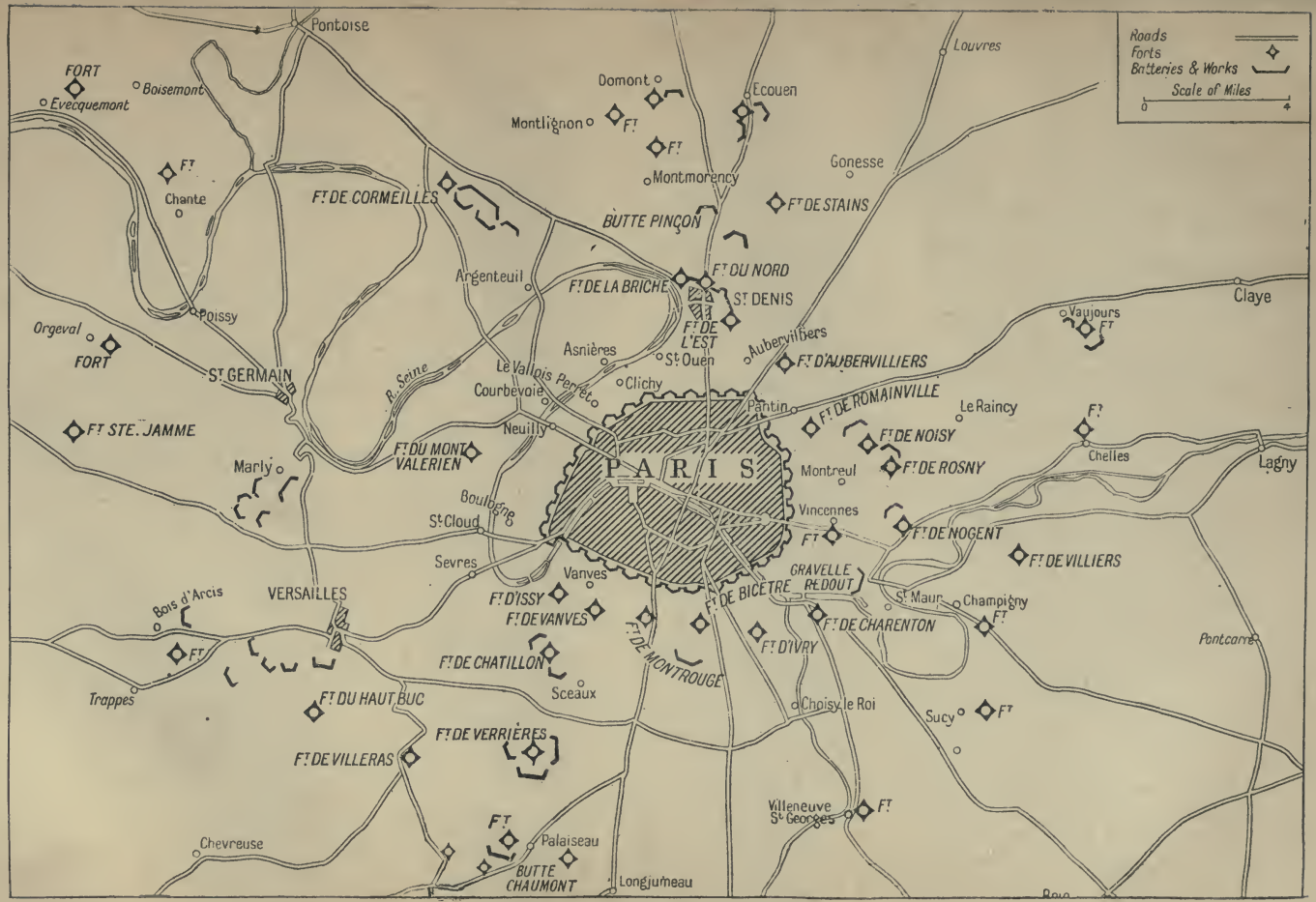
VIII. PARIS PREPARES FOR SIEGE

THE shadow of siege fell over Paris almost upon the anniversary of Sedan. True, there had been no Sedan this time, or anything approaching it, but the long retreat of the Allied Forces before the sweep of the German legions through Northern France made the Parisians realise, at the beginning of September, that once again the city might be called upon to endure, as it had done just forty-four years previously, all the horrors of a bombardment and siege.

When the third stand of the Allies' left wing, at Compiégne and Soissons, had failed to stem the invasion, the city found itself actually face to face with the danger. Up to then confidence had been expressed in the belief that Paris could not be attacked. But on August 31st, German cavalry patrols were within forty miles of the French metropolis, and on the following day they were in sight of Chantilly, only twenty-three miles distant from their goal, and the investment, or at least a raid, seemed only a question of a day or so. Paris realised then that the enemy was only a day's march from the boulevards. For nearly a fortnight its fate hung in the balance, and these were dark days for the City of Light. The rapidity with which fortresses such as Namur, supposed to be almost impregnable, had fallen made people ask each other if the great forts of Paris, considered invincible, could successfully hold out against the enemy.

LIKE BIRDS OF PREY

The threatened horror of warfare was brought vividly home to the Parisians at this time by the daily visit of German aeroplanes, which hovered over the city like great birds of prey. The first was sighted on August 30th, and thereafter these aerial visits of the enemy were daily repeated. Their bombs did not succeed in creating any panic in the city, but the gloom of the situation was increased by the constant stream of wounded from the fighting lines so near, and the influx of terror-stricken refugees from the country fleeing from the German advance. Thousands came into the city, from towns and villages within a radius of fifty miles, train load after train load arriving at the Gare d l'Est, the Gare du Nord, and the Gare d l'Ouest, while the roads into Paris were crowded with the



FORTIFICATIONS OF THE CITY OF PARIS.

vehicles of country folk escaping with as much of their belongings as possible.

Nevertheless, Paris was preparing to meet its possible fate with calmness. From the very beginning of the war it had resigned itself to the grimness of the conflict. It had changed, from the very first day of the mobilisation, from grave to gay. It had determined, even if it fell to the enemy, that France should not thereby receive a mortal blow. Those who remembered the days of 1870, when a similar fate was overtaking Paris, contrasted the comparative stoicism of the city now with the feverish panic then. However, the insatiable appetite for sensation, so characteristic of the true Parisian, did not desert the people. The daily aeroplane visit was eagerly looked for, and on the days when it came not there was actually disappointment. Possibly in the same spirit they were prepared to see Uhlans riding down the boulevards.

Taken by Surprise

Undoubtedly the swiftness of the invasion of France took Paris by surprise. It was realised from the first that the city was threatened, but few thought of the possibility that the invader would be at the gates by the end of August. The blow, indeed, appeared to be about to fall with unexpected and terrible swiftness. Those who still remained confident, during the days of the Allies' continued retreat, had their confidence somewhat shaken by the tidings on August 31st, that the Ministry was preparing to shift its headquarters immediately to Tours, and then, if necessary, to Bordeaux.

That day and the following saw every Government department engaged in packing up its effects and mobilising its staff. Motor cars removed the State archives and documents to the Quai d'Orsay and Austerlitz stations, whilst other vehicles with Government property were sent off post-haste by road. However, two days later it was decided to transfer the Government right away to Bordeaux without a previous halt at Tours. Early on the morning of September 3rd, President Poincaré and his cabinet left Paris for the southern city, and later in the day the members of the Senate, Chamber Deputies and other State officials also made their departure.

An Eloquent Defiance

Before leaving, the President issued a proclamation as follows:

> Frenchmen, — For several weeks fierce fighting has been going on between our heroic troops and the enemy. In several places the valour of our soldiers has gained marked advantages. But on the north the pressure of the German forces has compelled us to retire. This situation imposes on the President of the Republic and the Government a painful decision. To watch over the national safety

the public authorities are, under duty, withdrawing for the moment from the City of Paris.

Under the command of an eminent chief, a French army, full of spirit and courage, will defend the capital and its patriotic population against the invader. But the war must go on meanwhile in the remaining parts of our territory. Without peace or truce, without hesitation or faltering, the sacred struggle for the honour of the nation and the restoration of violated right will go on. None of our armies is broken.

If some of them have suffered too great losses, gaps have been immediately made good by Reserves, and the supply of recruits assures us of new resources in men and energy for the morrow.

Stand fast and fight on! This is the watchword of the Allied Armies of England, Russia, Belgium, and France.

Stand fast and fight on, while on sea the English help us to cut the communications of our enemies with the world.

Stand fast and fight on, while the Russians continue to advance to deliver a decisive blow at the heart of the German Empire. It is the Government of the Republic that must organise this determined resistance. Everywhere Frenchmen will rise in defence of their independence. But to give to this formidable struggle all its vigour and efficiency it is indispensable that the Government should keep its liberty of action.

At the request of the military authorities the Government, then, transfers its residence for the moment to a point of territory where it can remain in constant relations with the whole of the country. It asks members of Parliament not to remain at a distance from it, so that they may form in the face of the enemy, with the Government and their colleagues, a united front of national defence.

The Government only leaves Paris after having ensured the defence of the city and of its entrenched camp by all means in its power. It knows it has no need to recommend the admirable population in Paris to calm resolution and coolness. Every day Parisians show that they are equal to the highest duties. Frenchmen, show yourselves worthy in these tragic circumstances. In the end we shall obtain victory. We shall obtain it by untiring will, endurance, and tenacity. A nation which refuses to perish and which in order to survive falters not in the face of suffering or sacrifice is sure of victory.

Still a Paris Left

Some of the foreign Ambassadors also removed to Bordeaux, but the

Spanish and American Ambassadors remained in the threatened city. To complete the removal, the treasure of the Banque de France was also sent away.

The civil authorities remained behind to support the military Government. A committee was formed by the President of the City Council and the Council of the Seine department, to act under the military Governor and the Prefects.

An exodus of the population had begun some days previously. The military Governor had advised those with friends in the provinces to send their women and children away from the city, and the huge task of evacuating the military hospitals, with their thousands of wounded was begun. Many were sent away to be placed on hospital ships and taken by water to distant parts of the country, and others were dispatched by rail to the far south. Thousands of the civil population were evicted by the military authorities from their homes in the suburbs, for the purposes of the city's defence. Naturally a large proportion of the residents, which had the opportunity and means of leaving, did so. While there was no panic, extraordinary scenes of flight were witnessed for days. Thousands besieged the railway stations, and hundreds of motor cars carrying people and their possessions hurried out by the main roads west and south. As the German forces drew nearer the city it became increasingly difficult to escape. The railway lines west were partially invaded, with bridges and track blown up by enemy patrols, and Havre, Cherbourg and other western towns could only be reached by detours. By the first days of September there remained practically only the direction of south-west or south, by which flight was possible. Nevertheless, the exodus reached enormous dimensions, especially when it was known that the Government was removing to the south.

Scenes of Anxiety

Extraordinary scenes were witnessed. Cabs laden with families and their household goods raced to the western and southern stations, where great crowds of people were endeavouring to take train for Brittany, Bordeaux, and the far south. It was estimated that on one day there were no less than 10,000 at a time in the Montparnasse station, booking for St. Malo, Brest, Rennes and elsewhere. At the Quai d'Orsay and the Gare de Lyon there were just as many. Travelling was only possible under terrible conditions. Many trains to Bordeaux were composed mostly of cattle-trucks, and in one truck there were often as many as thirty passengers, for a journey which would take about twenty-four hours. At some of the termini enough tickets had been issued to fill the trains for days ahead.

The great main roads out of Paris, south and west, saw, as already mentioned, equal activity. Even the

Seine was utilised. River boats full of passengers, journeyed up to Havre (at £10 per passenger) where crowded steamers left for England and distant French ports.

Such was the great exodus from Paris. A well-known war-correspondent, Mr. Phillip Gibbs, stated that on the road from Paris to Tours he saw, one day, a line of sixty miles of people, on foot, and in vehicles, rich and poor. His description of this stream of fugitives is so realistic that it may be quoted.

The Great Procession

"They came," he wrote, "in every kind of vehicle—taxi-cabs for which rich people had paid fabulous prices, motor-cars which had escaped the military requisition, farmers' carts laden with several families and with piles of household goods, shop carts drawn by horses already tired to the point of death, because of the weight of people who had crowded behind, pony-traps and governess-carts.

"Many people, well-dressed and belonging obviously to the well-to-do bourgeoisie, were wheeling barrows like costers, but instead of trundling cabbages were pushing forward sleeping babies and little children, who seemed on the first stage of the journey to find a new amusement and excitement in this journey from home. But for the most part the people were on foot.

"They trudged along—oh, so bravely!—carrying their babies and holding the hands of their little ones. They were of all classes—rank and fortune being annihilated by this common tragedy. Elegant women, whose beauty is known in the Paris salons, whose frivolity perhaps in the past was the main purpose of their life, were now on a level with the peasant mothers of the French suburbs, and with the midinettes of Montmartre—and their courage did not fail them so quickly.

"It was a tragic road. At every mile of it there were people who had fainted on the roadside. And poor old people who could go no further but sat on the banks below the hedges weeping silently on bidding the younger ones go forward and leave them to their fate.

"Young women who had stepped out so jauntily at first were footsore and lame, so that they limped along with lines of pain about their lips and eyes. Many of the taxi-cabs, bought at great prices, and many of the motor-cars had broken down as I passed, and had been abandoned by their owners, who had decided to walk.

"Farmers' carts had jolted into ditches and lost their wheels. Wheelbarrows, too heavy to trundle, had been tilted up, with all their household goods spilt into the roadway, and the children had been carried further, until at last darkness came, and their only shelter was a haystack in a field under the harvest moon."

The Waiting Millions

But in spite of these scenes of

flight, there remained in the city some two million inhabitants to face whatever might come, with calmness and courage. Cafés still remained open and still had customers. Newspapers were still produced, although reduced, by decree, to one edition a day. There was abundant evidence that Parisians refused to consider the city as doomed. The defence might last a very long time, and in any case the enemy would have a stupendous task.

In the face of danger the city seemed, to those in it, to take on a new beauty. The great avenues, with but few vehicles and pedestrians, looked unusually dignified and majestic under the brilliant sun and cloudless sky of those late summer days. Still more romantic was the aspect at night, with the dim lights everywhere, instead of the usual blaze. Never did Paris look so mysterious and wonderful, a city waiting in tragic beauty for a great blow.

During these days the final preparations for the military defence of Paris were being pushed forward silently and swiftly by General Gallieni, who had been appointed Governor. His stirring proclamation inspired courage. "Army of Paris. Inhabitants of Paris. The members of the Government of the Republic have left Paris in order to give new impetus to the national defence. I have received the order to defend Paris against the invader. This order I shall fulfil to the end."

An Entrenched Camp

Probably but few of the countless visitors from other countries to France's beautiful capital have ever realised that the city is a huge modern fortress, ringed around with a wonderful chain of forts said to be inpregnable. Perhaps even Parisians had forgotten this although now they were reminded in a striking way of their existence. Of the triple chain of forts, the outer ring has a circumference of nearly 100 miles, the fortresses extending from west to east across a distance of 30 miles (from Marly, beyond Versailles to Chelles), and from north to south (from Domont to Palaisean), a radius of 23 miles. So long as these outer forts could hold out, the city itself would be free from bombardment, and accordingly the Governor's energies were directed upon them. The outskirts of the city were turned into a huge entrenched camp. Earthworks and trenches were constructed everywhere between the batteries and forts, and miles of barricades and barbed-wire entanglements were placed in position. A very drastic, but necessary step was the demolition of hundreds of buildings—private houses, factories, churches—which might have obstructed the fire of the guns and also given cover to the enemy. For days the air resounded with explosions caused by the blowing up of these buildings by the military engineers, and the value of the property so destroyed must have been enormous.

The Stout Parisian Heart

Preparations such as these were watched with interest and much *sang-froid* by the Parisians. The streets were filled with the soldiers of the garrison army, and the constant dashing to and fro of military and armoured motor-cars gave yet another touch of actual warfare in the very midst of the capital. The task of provisioning Paris also provided the citizens with a further sensation. One can imagine with what feelings they looked upon the sight of the Bois de Boulogne turned into a cattle farm! For days great herds of oxen and sheep were driven in from the country and quartered in the park which is the pride of Paris, and also in many adjacent open spaces. Huge supplies of wheat had been hurried in from the time that the war began, and in the matter of fresh greenstuff Paris was well supplied by the numerous market-gardens which lie on the outskirts of the town, just within the outer ring of forts. Nevertheless how long the supplies would last seemed an uncertain quantity. On the other hand, it was evidently the opinion of those in authority that any siege would not be a long one. A decision one way or the other would probably be inevitable in a short time.

Elaborate precautions were also taken for the protection of the monuments, and art treasures of Paris. Many of the chief buildings were prepared to resist shells. The treasures of the museums, galleries and libraries were, in most cases, removed to vaults and other strongholds remote from the possibility of bombs.

An Agony of Suspense

At the Louvre special steel rooms were constructed in which the Venus de Milo, the Gioconda, and other priceless antiques were all placed. Vast barricades of sacks of earth and sand were placed in position upon the roofs and around the rooms where the most valuable objects had been deposited. This system of steel and earth screens was also adopted at the Luxembourg and other famous art repositories. In addition, some of the more portable of the city's treasures were removed to distant parts of the country and securely hidden.

For a fortnight Paris lived in this agony of suspense. The movement of the German right flank to the east somewhat relieved the anxiety, but not until the battle of the Marne had been fought and won was the menace of invasion over, for the time being. But as the enemy was slowly rolled back by the Allies into its entrenchments along the Aisne, Parisians breathed more freely. True, the enemy was still only sixty miles distant, at the nearest point from the city to the firing line, but he was securely held there. Trains began to run once more to the coast, and

life in the city resumed its usual course, as much as it had done since the war began. But the great shadow of siege would assuredly remain always in the memory of all those who lived through that tragic fortnight in Paris, and the city itself would bear traces of it for long.

IX. THE BATTLE OF THE MARNE

THE whole of the vast movement of swift retirement on the part of the German armies from before Paris, and of the no less rapid advance of the Allies will go down to history as the Battle of the Marne. On September 3rd the Commander of the largest of the three great armies of the enemy advancing on Paris, which was the one nearest the capital, discovered "the presence of a large reserve accumulated by the French commanders behind Paris." He thereupon decided not to retreat, but to turn at right angles to the course he had been pursuing, join up with Armies Nos. 2 and 3, and try to cut the Allied line in two. This movement involved his marching right across the front of the French and British lines, and is the movement referred to by Sir John French in his Dispatch of September 14th, when he spoke of the enemy being "prepared to ignore the British." The German Commander's rash daring was unsuccessful. He was repulsed and compelled to retire the way he had come, with the Reserve French Army behind Paris and the British troops pounding after him.

A HISTORIC DISPATCH

The first stage in the Battle of the Marne is thus recorded by Sir John French:

"The general position of our troops on Sunday, September 6th, was stated to be south of the Marne with French forces on our right and left. On Friday, September 4th, it became apparent that there was an alteration in the direction of advance of almost the whole of the 1st German Army. That army, since the battle near Mons on August 23rd, had been playing its part in the colossal strategic endeavour to create a Sedan for the Allies by outflanking and enveloping the left of their whole line, so as to encircle and drive both British and French to the south.

"There was now a change in its objective; the German forces opposite the British were beginning to move in a south-easterly direction, instead of continuing south-west on to the capital. Leaving a strong rearguard along the River Ourcq (which flows south and joins the Marne at Lizy), to keep off the French 6th Army—then to the north-west of Paris—they were evidently executing

what amounted to a flank march diagonally across our front.

Ignoring the British!

"Prepared to ignore the British, as being driven out of the fight, they were initiating an effort to attack the left flank of the French main army which stretched in a long curved line from our right towards the east, and so to carry out against it alone, the envelopment which had so far failed against the combined forces of the Allies. On Saturday, September 5th, this movement on the part of the Germans was continued, and large advanced parties crossed the Marne southwards at Trilport, Sammeroy, La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and Château-Thierry. There was considerable fighting with the French 5th Army on the French left, which fell back from its position south of the Marne towards the Seine.

"On Sunday large hostile forces crossed the Marne and pushed on through Coulommiers past the British right. Further east they were attacked at night by the French 5th Army, which captured three villages at the point of the bayonet.

"On Monday, September 7th, there was a general advance on the part of the Allies in this quarter of the field. Our forces, now reinforced, pushed on in a north-easterly direction, in co-operation with an advance of the French 5th Army to the north and of the French 6th Army eastwards, against the German rearguard along the Ourcq.

"Possibly weakened by the detachment of troops to the east, and realising that the action of the French 6th Army against the line of the Ourcq, and the advance of the British placed their own flanking movement in considerable danger of being taken in rear and on its right flank, the Germans on this day commenced to retire towards the north-east."

The Various Movements

Before continuing Sir John French's Dispatch, we will make a break here in order to explain in greater detail the movements to which he refers. The last line of this portion of the Dispatch leaves the enemy beginning to retire for the first time since the opening of the war. As already stated, on September 2nd or 3rd, General von Kluck with an army of some 200,000 men, learnt of a large reserve force collected by the French commanders behind Paris. He had also in front of him as he faced Paris the 5th and 6th French Armies, and the British contingent. He had two alternatives, to retreat the way he had come, a movement which would leave the other German armies to the east isolated and their western flank unprotected, or cross right along the front of the French and British lines with a view to uniting with those other German armies on his left.

Leaving a large body of his army on the plateau running west of the River Ourcq, and around the villages of Penchard and Bégy to safeguard his communications, he started with

the rest of his army on his perilous adventure. "Upon Saturday, September 5th," says Mr. Hilaire Belloc in his notes on the Battle of the Meaux or of the Ourcq (as the first section of the Battle of the Marne will be known), in *Land and Water*, "the columns of this first German Army, von Kluck's, the largest German Army in the field, crossed the Marne at Trilport, La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and just below Chateau Thierry. The French 5th Army fell back before this advance; and on Sunday, the 6th, the remainder of the Germans, with the exception of the large rearguard which had been left to keep off the increasing French pressure along the Ourcq, had pushed right down through Coulommiers to the neighbourhood of Provins. Its cavalry patrols had even reached the Seine in the neighbourhood of Nogent."

The German "Farthest South"

This spot represented the German army's "Farthest South." During the night between Sunday the 6th and Monday the 7th, the counter-offensive of the Allies began, and, to quote Sir John French, "there was a general advance," followed on Monday 7th, by the Germans commencing "to retire towards the north-east." "This was the first time," continues Sir John, "that these troops had turned back since their attack on Mons a fortnight before, and from reports received, the order to retreat when so close to Paris was a bitter disappointment. From letters found there was a general impression amongst the enemy's troops that they were about to enter Paris."

Mr. Hilaire Belloc vividly describes the first move in the counter-offensive of the Allies during the night of Septemper 6th: "The French 5th Army attacked with the bayonet, and recovered some little ground north of the Seine, and by daylight on Monday the British contingent advanced northwards against the enemy. The British fought their way through, and beyond the Forest of Crecy and through Coulommiers. The 5th French Army beyond them to the east attacked La Ferté and Gaucher Esternay, and this southern part of the Allied line crossed the Grand Morin river and approached the next defensible line held by the Germans, the Petit Morin."

The Flowing Tide

This brings us to Tuesday, September 8th. On that day, says, Sir John French, "The German movement north-eastwards was continued, their rearguards on the south of the Marne being pressed back to that river by our troops and by the French on our right, the latter capturing three villages after a hand-to-hand fight and the infliction of severe loss on the enemy. The fighting along the Ourcq on this day was of the most sanguinary character, for the Germans had massed a great force of artillery along this line.

"The French 5th Army also made a fierce attack on the Germans in Montmirail, regaining that place.

"On Wednesday, September 9th, the battle between the French 6th Army and what was now the German flank guard along the Ourcq continued.

"The British Corps, overcoming some resistance on the River Petit Morin, crossed the Marne in pursuit of the Germans, who were now hastily retreating northwards.

"One of our corps was delayed by an obstinate defence made by a strong rearguard with machine guns at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, where the bridge had been destroyed. On Thursday, September 10th, the French 6th Army continued its pressure on the west, while the 5th Army, by forced marches reached the line Château-Thierry-Dormans on the Marne."

Over the Marne

By the 10th the Germans had been everywhere pushed right over the river Marne. Sir John French continues:

"Our troops also continued the pursuit on the north of the latter river, and after a considerable amount of fighting captured some 1,500 prisoners, four guns, six machine guns and fifty transport wagons.

"Many of the enemy were killed and wounded, and the numerous thick woods which dot the country north of the Marne are filled with German stragglers. Most of them appear to have been without food for at least two days. Indeed, in this area of operations, the Germans seem to be demoralised and inclined to surrender in small parties.

"Much brutal and senseless damage has been done in the villages occupied by the enemy. Property has been wantonly destroyed, pictures in the chateaux have been ripped up, and the houses generally pillaged. It is stated on unimpeachable authority, also, that the inhabitants have been much ill-treated.

"Interesting incidents have occurred during the fighting. On Thursday last part of our 2nd Army Corps advancing north found itself marching parallel with another infantry force. It was thought that this was another British unit, until it was found to be a body of Germans retreating. Measures were promptly taken to head off the enemy, who were surrounded and trapped in a sunken road, where over 400 men surrendered."

Their Ablest General

The retreat, as cleverly conducted by General von Kluck as his advance had been, continued during Friday the 11th and Saturday the 12th, the pursuing Allies receiving their first check on Sunday the 13th, the German forces by this time having begun to occupy a very strong defensive position north of the River Aisne, which river gives its name to the next stage of the war. By Monday, the 14th, the Germans were well-established in their new position of defence, their line consisting not only of General von Kluck's army, but also

of the 2nd and 3rd Armies, both having had to fall back.

At this point we will supplement Sir John French's Dispatch, with the official Report of the Press Bureau issued on September 12th, for though it covers the same ground as that covered by Sir John, it adds certain particulars to our information:

"A summary, necessarily incomplete, may be attempted of the operations of the British Expeditionary Force and the French Armies during the last four days.

"On September 6th the southward advance of the German right reached its extreme points at Coulommiers and Provins, cavalry patrols having penetrated even as far south as Nogent-sur-Seine.

"This movement was covered by a large flanking force west of the line of the River Ourcq, watching the outer Paris defences and any Allied force that might issue from them.

"The southward movement of the enemy left his right wing in a dangerous position, as he had evacuated the Créil-Senlis-Compiègne region through which his advance had been pushed.

"The Allies attacked this exposed wing both in front and flank on the 8th. The covering force was assailed by a French army based upon the Paris defences, and brought to action on the line Nanteuil-le-Haudouin-Meaux.

A Frontal Attack

"The main portion of the enemy's right wing was attacked frontally by the British Army, which had been transferred from the north to the east of Paris, and by French corps advancing alongside of it on the line Crecy-Coulommiers-Sezanne. . . The German outer flank was forced back as far as the line of the Ourcq.

"There it made a strong defence, and executed several vigorous counter-attacks, but was unable to beat off the pressure of the French advance.

"The main body of the enemy's right wing vainly endeavoured to defend the line of the Grand Morin River, and then that of the Petit Morin.

"Pressed back over both of these rivers and threatened on its right owing to the defeat of the covering force by the Allied left, the German right wing retreated over the Marne on September 10th.

"The British Army, with a portion of the French forces on its left, crossed this river below Chateau Thierry, a movement which obliged the enemy's forces west of the Ourcq, already assailed by the French corps forming the extreme left of the Allies, to give way and to retreat north-eastwards in the direction of Soissons.

"Since the 10th the whole of the German right wing has fallen back in considerable disorder, closely followed by the French and British troops.

"Six thousand prisoners and fifteen guns were captured on the 10th and 11th, and the enemy is reported to be continuing his retirement rapidly

over the Aisne, evacuating the Soissons region.

"The British cavalry is reported to-day to be at Fismes, not far from Rheims.

"Strongly Engaged!"

"While the German right wing has thus been driven back and thrown into disorder, the French Armies further to the east have been strongly engaged with the German centre, which had pushed forward as far as Vitry.

"Between the 8th and 10th our Allies were unable to make much impression west of Vitry. On the 11th, however, this portion of the German Army began to give way, and eventually abandoned Vitry, where the enemy's line of battle was forming a salient under the impulse of French troops between the upper Marne and the Meuse.

"The French troops are following up the enemy, and are driving portions of the forces northwards towards the Argonne forest country.

"The 3rd French Army reports to-day that it has captured the entire artillery of a hostile army corps—a capture which probably represents about 160 guns.

"The enemy is thus in retreat along the whole line west of the Meuse, and has suffered gravely in *moral*, besides encountering heavy losses in personnel and material."

Earlier in this chapter we stated that General von Kluck, before marching across the front of the Allies' left behind a strong force to protect his communications on the plateau running west of the River Ourcq, and around the villages of Penchard and Bégy. This German rear-guard offered a most determined resistance, and the French lost heavily before they succeeded in forcing the line of the Ourcq. Once, however, the line was forced the German retreat was inevitable.

The Restrained French Way

The French military authorities, in their Report, dated Paris, September 11th, thus refer to this engagement:

"By its clever and rapid movements, this army (the army commanded by General von Kluck) has succeeded in escaping from the Allies' grip, and was throwing itself with the greater part of its forces against our enveloping wing to the north of the Marne, and the west of the Ourcq, but the French troops, which were operating in this region—powerfully aided by the bravery of our British Allies—inflicted considerable losses on the enemy, and gained the necessary time to allow our offensive. At present, on this side, the enemy is in retreat towards the Aisne and the Oise. He has fallen back more than 60-75 kilometres (35 to 45 miles) in four days.

"In the meantime, the Anglo-French forces which have been operating to the south of the Marne have not ceased pursuing their offensive. Starting, some of them, from the district to the south of the Forest of

Crecy, others from the district to the north of Provins and the south of Esternay, they have opened out from the Marne.

"On the left, the army of General von Kluck and the army of General von Buelow are falling back before our troops."

Obliged to Retire

The army of General von Buelow was the one we have referred to as army No. 2. It had been holding the line against the Allies between Paris and the Toul-Verdun line, and operating on the Plateau of Sezanne It lay next to the left and east of von Kluck's army, and was obliged to retreat because its flank was exposed by von Kluck's retirement. The following is the passage in the French Report referring to its action as well as to the action of the German Army No. 3:

"It is in the region included between the plateaux to the north of the Sezanne and Vitry-le-François that the most desperate fighting has occurred.

"In it have been operating, besides the left of the army of General von Buelow, the Saxon army and a part of the army commanded by the Prince of Wurttemberg.

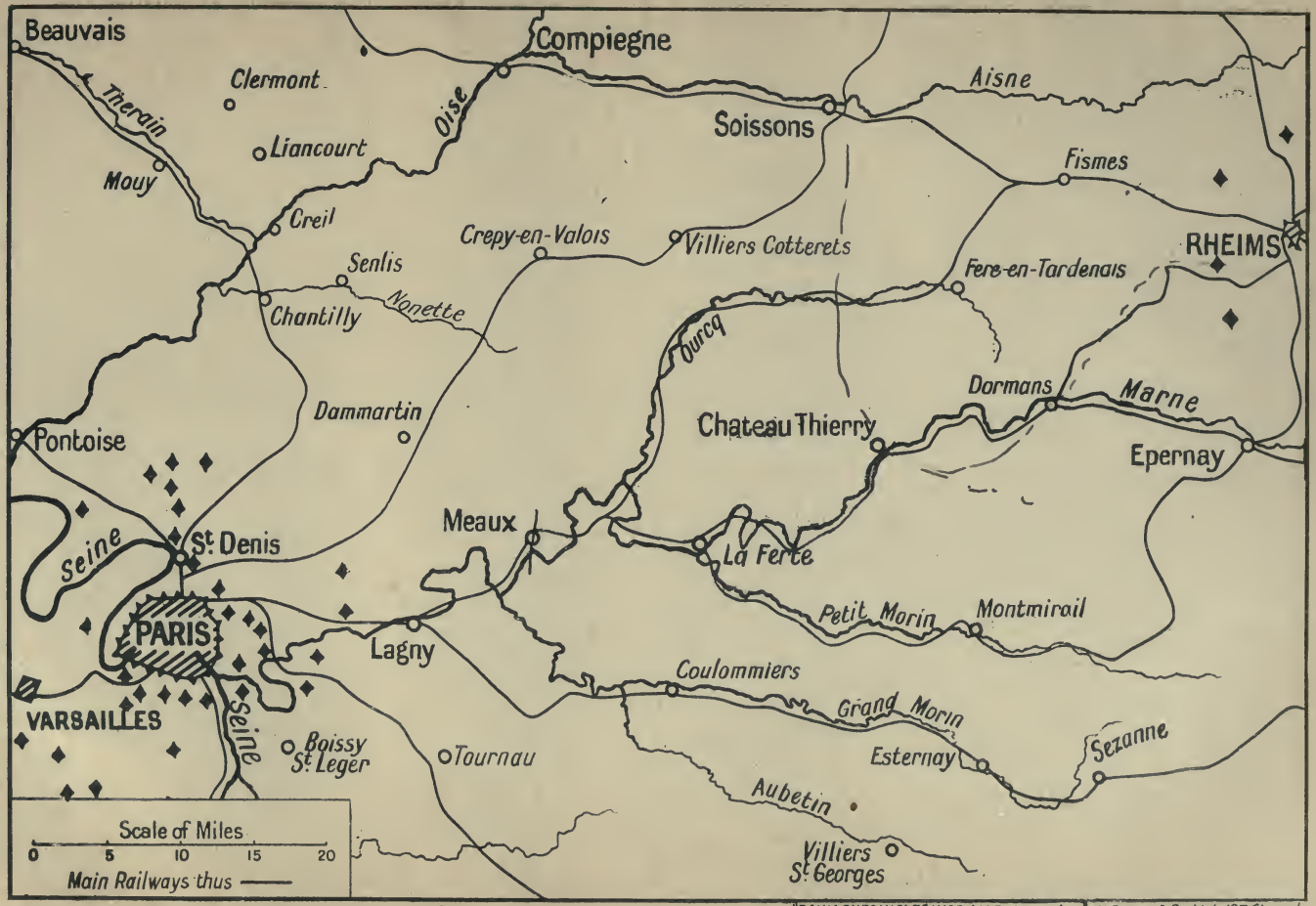
"The Germans have tried to break our centre by repeated violent attacks, but did not succeed.

"Our success on the plateaux to the North of Sezanne has enabled us in our turn to take the offensive; and in the course of last night the enemy stopped fighting on the front between the Marsh of Saint Gond, and the Sommesous district, and fell back in the region immediately to the west of Vitry-le-François."

The marshes of Saint Gond are the sources of the river the Petit Morin: they are some ten miles long: "at their narrowest, less than a mile: at their broadest over two miles broad."

In the Marshes

"In a hurried retreat very heavily pressed by the enemy," writes Mr. Belloc, "these marshes of Saint Gond might prove an awkward obstacle, even in a dry summer, and even though they are crossed by five roads; for a large force would be strictly confined to those roads and would be upon defiles, that is, confined to long and narrow columns, while it was crossing the marshes. But it is evident that there was no such pressure upon this retreat of the German second group. All the energy to be spent in those days by the Allies was being exercised upon the army of von Kluck immediately to the west." The army of General von Buelow, when it fell back over the Marne at Epernay made for Rheims and came into line north of Rheims with the German armies No. 1 and No. 3 behind the River Aisne. The third huge mass of German troops, Army No. 3, was on the left, or east, of Army No. 2, under von Buelow, and just as von Buelow's retreat was necessitated by



"DAILY CHRONICLE" WAR MAP drawn by G.W. Bacon & Co. Ltd. 127 Strand

WHERE THE BRITISH FOUGHT IN THE MARNE BATTLE.

von Kluck's, so was that of Army No. 3 under the Prince of Wurttemberg made imperative by the retirement of von Buelow, and for the same reason. This 3rd Army had marched far south and was "holding Sommesous Vitry-le-Francois, the railway line and the high road between them, and had entrenched a defensive line along the River Saulx, and further along the River Ornain (its tributary) as far as Revigny."

Not Advance but Retreat

This was the crisis of the first phase of the campaign, for it was here, if anywhere, that the line of the Allies might be pierced. How much depended on this effort of the Germans is shown by the order of the General in command of the German forces at Vitry, dated September 7th, 10.30 p.m., which he left behind in his precipitate flight. In it he impressed on his men that everything depended "on the result of to-morrow." The attempt to break the French line in two failed and instead of advance came retreat.

"The failure at Vitry," writes Mr. G. H. Perris, the able *Daily Chronicle* Special Correspondent at Paris, "was not as drastic as between Meaux and Château-Thierry, but it was sufficiently complete. The French crossed the Marne yesterday (September 12th) between Epernay and Chalons and thence southwards to Vitry, and 20 miles north-east of the latter place, the little town of Revigny has been re-taken. I am informed by a French officer just back from the front that when the Prussian Guard was thrust back to the north of the St. Gond Marshes on Friday they left a number of heavy guns stuck in the swampy land. All along the line the heavy rain of Friday helps to account for much of the German artillery losses."

It only remains to refer to the 4th great German army, that of the Crown Prince, which before the general retreat began had its headquarters at St. Menehould. The object of this 4th army was to either reduce the fortress of Verdun or of Toul, or break through the chain of forts between these two strongholds. If the Crown Prince could succeed in doing either of these things he would remove the barrier guarding the flank of the French line from Toul-Verdun to Paris, and "would open new, good and *quite short* lines of communication" for the Germans with Western Germany. But he failed completely, and at one moment it even looked as if he would be caught before he could get away.

A Summing-Up

The retreat of the German forces was summed up as follows in the French Report, dated Paris, September 11th: "The general situation has thus been completely transformed during the last few days, both from the strategical and tactical point of view. Not only have our troops stopped the Germans' march—which they thought was a victorious one—but the enemy has fallen back before

us at nearly every point." The Battle of the Marne, which ended, as General Joffre said, "in incontestable victory" for the Allies after five days' fierce fighting, was one of the most important ever contested. It was really a series of battles, in which no fewer than forty-three Army Corps, or over 3,000,000 men, are reported to have taken part. Sir John French in a later dispatch dated September 17th, says the Battle of the Marne began at sunrise on September 6th and closed on the evening of the 10th September.

We have touched on the character of the country in which the battle occurred, but in order to seize the significance of the movements of the armies engaged it is necessary to give a general idea of its nature. "The land upon which the great battle was fought," writes the special correspondent of *The Times*, "consists of high plateaux, woods, and streams running betwixt deep banks. It is among the most beautiful in France. Forming a great loop to the north is the Marne, which flows into the Seine just outside of Paris. This river gives off at Meaux a tributary, the Ourcq, which runs at first due north, and then west. Sweeping south-east, the Marne passes by Vitry-le-François. The country south of the Marne, which up till Sunday (September 6th) was occupied entirely by the enemy, is intersected from east to west by, to the north, the Petit Morin, flowing into the Marne, and to the south the Grand Morin, flowing into the Seine, which latter river flows through Sézanne. To the east, near the Marne, are the great swamps of St. Gond, to the west the Seine, and the Forest of Fontainbleau. Thus we have a series of rivers running east to west, while encircling the whole are the Seine to the south, and the Marne to the north and east. Between the rivers are woods and plains."

Looking Forward!

Having in this chapter outlined the campaign of the Battle of the Marne, and traced the movement of the German troops from the moment their advance on Paris ceased, until they were safe, for the time being, behind the Aisne, we shall in the next chapter endeavour, from the evidence of eye-witnesses of the great Retreat, to fill in the details of the picture. The reader will thus be enabled when reading the vivid stories illustrating the Battle of the Marne to fit the incidents with which they deal into their proper place in the tremendous whole of the five days' conflict by referring to the dates and places given in this chapter; possessing a general idea of the armies of the German and French commanders he will better appreciate the indiviudal moves on the board, which otherwise would be robbed of half their significance and interest

X. THE GERMANS HURLED BACK

You have to imagine the mighty German host rolling down to Paris sweeping everything before it like a broad, rushing river. "The stream of refugees which passed me night and day during the week-end," says a Special Correspondent of *The Times*, in a brilliant message dated five miles south of Provins, September 11th, "and which I encountered at a hundred different points, told its own sad tale. Everywhere was terror and despondency. 'Fly!' they told me. 'They are here.' From Troyes the story came, from Nogent-sur-Seine, from Romilly. These poor people had suffered terribly; above all they seemed to dread the 'Taube,' the aeroplane, one of which wrought great fear along this line, and finally dropped some bombs on the platform of the station at Troyes. But in the towns people are less terrified." The tremendous wave reached Provins; it even extended to Nogent, but it got no farther, though when it ceased to move forward the main German mass was in touch with the fortifications of Paris, and the triumphant success of the German plans seemed assured. It only remained to deliver the final blow when von Kluck discovered the big French army in reserve behind Paris, and foiled, started his disastrous march across the Allies' front.

A British Attack

On Friday, September 4th, the encounter began. On that day the British attacked the Germans in the neighbourhood of the Grand Morin River. The engagement was hot, and the British took a number of prisoners. The next day, Saturday, 5th, the flank march of Kluck continued, and on Sunday, the 6th, the great attack on his exposed right wing began. This right wing lay in the region of Meaux at the junction of the Ourcq and the Marne. "Simultaneously with the attack upon it," reports *The Times* Special Correspondent already quoted, "battle was joined along the whole front—Meaux, Esternay, Sézanne, Vitry-le-François, and extending to Verdun. The sound of cannon became audible from where I was, and it was clear by many signs that the tremendous encounter was in progress. Over the line of battle, and under a blazing sun, a great black pall of smoke gathered, out of

which boomed the cannon with terrible insistency. I waited in thrilled anxiety. The day wore on; night fell cool and gracious."

"Fierce and Terrible"

The fighting that Sunday was of a fierce and terrible character. It began at dawn, and the importance General Joffre, the French commander, attached to the battle is evinced by the impressive Order he issued that morning to his troops:

"At the moment when the battle on which our country's salvation depends is being fought, it is important to recall to all that the moment is no longer one in which to look behind. Every effort must be made to attack and push back the enemy. A troop which can no longer advance must at all costs guard the ground conquered, and die on the spot rather than retreat. Under no circumstances can failure be tolerated."

In the region of La Ferté-Gaucher the Allied troops drawn up to receive the Germans understood they must maintain their position to the end: "in order that the attacking force at Meaux might achieve its task in security." And they never wavered. A French sergeant of infantry gave Mr. G. H. Perris, the Special Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, the following account of his experiences: "We had been ready since Friday evening and during Saturday the sound of cannon came ever nearer without our being engaged. On that evening we had orders to fall back beyond C——, but during the night we advanced afresh, and our regiment gathered on a hillside. At dawn on Sunday we came into touch with the enemy, who was attempting a turning movement on our left. We were told to hold firm until our British Allies, who were acting in the neighbourhood of Meaux, had repelled the German forces on that side. There was no difficulty in doing so, for from the beginning of the afternoon the enemy fell back in disorder towards the east. There was, however, a very lively engagement to the north of Ferté-Gaucher. This continued all night, and was at its height on Monday morning."

Two Army Corps

Another officer of infantry expressed the opinion that the defeated Germans of this two days' battle comprised two army corps. "They had enormous losses—I saw more than 600 corpses in a single trench. Our men were superb. Despite orders one of our battalions charged a German battery, although they were well placed." A French officer told Mr. H. M. Tomlinson, the Special Correspondent of the *Daily News*, that the German reply to the French offensive against the right of the enemy at Meaux on the Monday "was hell." The French had only light guns; the Germans had heavy cannon. But though inferior in force and weight of arms the French bravely held their ground after their

offensive was checked. Mr. Tomlinson continues:

"The Germans devastated the French attacks. The French infantry advanced, only to come upon lines of masked machine guns, which swept them, driving them back for several hundred yards. German light artillery then advanced, and wrecked their lines still more. But they held to it, the brave fellows, knowing the supreme importance of that action, determined to wait for reinforcements till night came and further waiting was hopeless.

"But help was nearer than they thought. It came late, but it came in time to tip the beam. When things were at their worst, and the day seemed lost, the British heavy artillery rolled down on the field in a scene of wild enthusiasm, and literally blew the German position to atoms.

Carnage—"Horrible!"

"The carnage among the Germans was not only great, it was horrible. Eye-witnesses tell me of that battlefield being strewn with fragments of men. That was the beginning of the German retirement. And on that night, in the north-east, the French and British soldiers saw the flames of the pyres where the Germans were burning the gathered heaps of their slain.

"The Germans have been beaten across the River Ourcq. And here again I must pay a tribute to the French soldier. You get the definite impression that only death will put him out of action. I know that in all those four days of fighting, those village affairs, and finally the long and desperate battle about Meaux, he was without water. He gave his last drink to his horse."

The Germans made tremendous efforts to construct bridges to cross the River Marne, the French having blown up the existing bridges, and covered the river with their heavy guns. Time after time the German engineers tried to get their pontoons into position, each time a hail of shells descending as soon as the work began. At one point sixteen attempts at bridge-building were thus foiled, a mass of soldiers being hurled into the water at the final effort.

An Ugly Crossing

The character of the crossing is vividly depicted by Private Duffy, of the Rifle Brigade, in an interview published in the *Manchester Guardian* of September 14th: "A mixed force of British and French infantry was told off to prevent the Germans crossing the River Marne at one point. About half a mile from the river bank we came out from a wood to find a French infantry battalion going across in the same direction. We didn't want to be behind so we put our best foot forward, and one of the most exciting races you ever saw followed. We got in first by a head, as you might say, and we were just in time to tackle a mob of Germans heading for the crossing in

disorder. We went at them with the bayonet, but they didn't seem to have the least heart for fighting. Some of them flung themselves in the stream, and tried to swim to safety, but they were heavily accoutred and worn out, so they didn't go very far. Of about 300 men who tried this not more than half a dozen succeeded in reaching the other bank, and the cries of the drowning men were pitiful in the extreme.

"Away on our left the German army had thrown pontoons across the river to facilitate the retreat of their men, but the French and British artillery had found the range to an inch or so, and kept dropping shells right in the thick of them. It looked so terrible from the shore that a great number of Germans hadn't the heart to risk the crossing, and they flung themselves down by the river side to escape from the deadly hail of fire. We were sent against these men, and when we reached them we found that we could only capture them by coming under the fire from our own guns. We did our best, but we knew it was no use expecting our artillery to cease fire, and it was from a shell from our own lines that laid out me and others of our regiment."

No Dinner!

The German retreat was precipitate. The enemy fled too swiftly even to return the fire of his pursuers; in one place he retired twenty kilometres without firing a single shot, and the British fast on his heels took seven cannon, two machine guns, and about 1,000 prisoners. On Monday night, after the fierce fighting on the Ourcq throughout the day, the French entered a village in this district only just vacated by the enemy. In one large house they found a well-spread dinner table, at which the German Staff had undoubtedly been seated. The candles still burned on the table, testifying to the suddenness of the stampede.

By Monday night von Kluck's army had been thrown back from the Ourcq, the Marne and the Grand Morin, viz., from the region of Meaux to that of Sézanne. To protect their line of communications, reinforcements were hurried north to the Meaux and Ourcq districts with a view to overcoming the French resistance. "Meaux being"—to quote *The Times*—"to Paris as Reading is to London." It was by this route that a way was to be opened up to the capital. But this second attempt of the Germans on the Ourcq was as unsuccessful as their first. Beginning on Monday night it continued through Tuesday the 8th, and was, says Sir John French, "of the most sanguinary character, for the Germans had massed a great force of artillery along this line." "Through all night and well on into Tuesday the great German guns boomed along this river—the German guns have a heavy sound 'boum,' the French a much sharper one, 'bing'—the resistance of the Allies could not be broken" and on

Wednesday at midnight the official communication issued from Paris reported: "On the left wing all German attempts to break those of our troops on the right bank have failed. The British Army has crossed the Marne. The enemy has fallen back forty kilometres."

How the News Came

While the Ourcq was being held the resistance of the enemy at La Ferté Gaucher and Sézanne was, on this Tuesday morning, being broken. "I had the news in two ways," says *The Times* correspondent, "the cannon were silent; the wounded poured down to the bases—wounded men no longer down-hearted but full of spirit eager to be back to the fray. 'Their army is in full retreat; they have crossed the river; they have left La Ferté Gaucher; they are rushing back home.' So the good story ran. And from every French lip there was a generous addendum to it—and your compatriots—they have fought like lions. They have smashed the Germans. Nothing can withstand them." "Only those," wrote Mr. G. H. Perris from behind the Allies lines at Château Thierry, on September 13th, "who have seen these British divisions in the field—not only the gunners, cavalry and infantry, but the supply services and columns of communication, the flying corps, the pontoon outfit, the field telegraph and the rest—can appreciate how much the complete preparation and clockwork order of these contributed at this essential point to the general result."

It is admitted on all hands that the German artillery fire is exceptionally good; their rifle fire, however, is bad. An officer wounded in the fighting which took place on the Marne thus described the latter to Mr. George Renwick, Special Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*: "Their rifle fire was strangely erratic. German soldiers, by the way, do not aim at all. At times they came near enough to allow us to see through our glasses the curious methods of the German riflemen. They do not put their rifles to their shoulders and take aim; they put the butt of their rifles under their arms, and simply fire away, trusting to the effectiveness of volleys."

The Havoc of Battle

Mr. Thomas Naylor, Special Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, who traversed the Marne Valley on the Sunday following the battle, found abundant traces of the fierceness of the conflict and the haste of the retreat. Outside Meaux on a hill to the eastward huge trees had been cut right off close to the ground by shellfire. All around lay the unburied bodies of German soldiers who bore on their collars the number 9. "The scene was a terrible and a sickening one. Most of them were finely built fellows and all round them lay the carcasses of horses. Men were busy burying the men and burning the horses." On the summit of the hill

to the east of Meaux was a small farm consisting of an orchard, house and outbuildings. There the battle had raged with great ferocity. The Germans had constructed a trench about a hundred yards from the road, which ran for nearly three miles in the direction of Trilport. Great pits had been torn in the earth about this trench by the Allies' artillery: "The rain of the previous night had washed away the earth revealing the thousands of shrapnel bullets which had penetrated it. The carnage must have been fearful as every shell seemed to have burst right over the trenches. One mess tin I picked up had no fewer than fifteen bullet holes in it."

In these trenches still lay empty meat tins, packets of biscuits done up in cloth, empty wine bottles and pails raided from surrounding farmhouses and left in confusion. Thousands of picture postcards, evidently seized by the German soldiers on crossing the French frontier were scattered about, while great coats, rifles, knapsacks, blankets, and haversacks bore silent testimony to the headlong nature of the flight. Some guns behind the trenches had also been abandoned but the heaps of empty shell cases remained.

Train Loads of Booty

The following Reuter message dated Paris, September 14th, shows how much booty was captured after the Battle of the Marne: "Twenty-one train-loads of booty collected in the Marne battlefields have been brought to Vincennes since yesterday morning. The spoils of war include eleven guns, seven motor wagons full of ammunition, four mitrailleuses, three aeroplanes, two large lorries filled with helmets, rifles, swords, cartridges and boxes, besides gun carriages and wagons of different kinds. It is estimated that since the beginning of last week about sixty guns, thirty mitrailleuses, and forty wagons have been captured from the Germans in addition to a considerable quantity of ammunition."

By Tuesday night our troops were in possession of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, Charly and Château-Thierry. On the same day the French in the neighbourhood of Vitry le Francois achieved a great victory, incidentally driving back the German Imperial Guard from Sézanne to the Marshes of St. Gond; in the morass of the latter the enemy lost over two batteries of field artillery and were literally mowed down while making frantic efforts to save the guns. Their retreat at this point became a stampede, and on the elevated plateau to the south of the morass and in the fields between the villages of Oyes and Soizy-Aux-Bois many pyramids of heavy shrapnel shells abandoned in the rout were afterwards found. On Wednesday the British Army continued its pursuit towards the north, and on the following day, Thursday, September 10th, the French 6th army continued its pressure on the west, while the 5th Army by forced marches reached the line Château-Thierry—Dormans

on the Marne. The French troops also continued their pursuit north of the Marne, capturing some 1,500 prisoners, four guns, six machine guns, and fifty transport wagons.

Prisoners in the Woods

Large numbers of prisoners were caught hiding in the thick woods dotting the country north of the Marne; most of them had been without food for two days, and appeared absolutely demoralised. Much brutal and senseless damage, reports Sir John French, had been done by the Germans in the villages they had occupied. Property had been wantonly destroyed, pictures ripped up, the houses generally pillaged and the inhabitants "much ill-treated." Here is a picture of the kind of senseless damage perpetrated by the apostles of the new "culture." It is drawn by a correspondent of *The Times* in France.

"I set off on a bicycle towards La Ferté Gaucher and at a distance of about seven kilometres from that town, finding myself on a lonely road with nothing to guide me but the sound of guns, I turned down a lane leading to a manor house where I meant to inquire the way. Windows and doors were open, but the place was as silent as the grave. I walked into the courtyard and saw no one. Then I entered the house and understood. The beautiful old manor which looked so warm and placid in the summer morning had been deserted by its owners and had been ruthlessly pillaged by the German troops. The dining-room table was heaped with the wreckage of a drunken meal. There were empty wine bottles everywhere, and across the table and in the dishes there was flung a great crimson splash that looked like blood, but proved to be the outpoured contents of a tureen of beetroot soup. Every drawer from sideboard and cupboard lay on the floor where its contents had been turned out in a search for all that was valuable. I passed from room to room and everywhere found the same litter. It seemed that not a single wardrobe or press in the house had not been rifled. The beds were overturned, the telephone instrument smashed, and even a pile of gramophone records had been trodden under the German heel."

The Art of Hunnery

At Esternay, a village close to Sézanne, and a pivot of the Marne battle, the Germans arrived on the evening of Saturday, September 5th; they broke the windows of the little shops, stole the gold communion service of the church, mounting a machine gun on the turret, where they had already hoisted the Red Cross flag, drank all the liquor they could find and engaged in wholesale robbery, spoliation, and outrage. Many inhabitants fled, but among those who remained was a sister of the café-keeper opposite the Café de la Gare, a young woman of twenty. The drunken and bestial German officers ordered her to serve them, their

taste being "in the direction of Roman orgie." When she refused to obey them they slew her. Fortunately the ringleader of these "cultured" murderers, the German commandant, was found by the French in hiding on their arrival at the village; he was placed against the wall of the café and shot. But what happened at Esternay was characteristic, and apparently inseparable from the German occupation of any village; the whole countryside rang with stories of their robbery and cruelty. At Esternay their drunkenness was their undoing. Every cellar was ransacked and at the chateau to which we have referred they drank the contents of some 3,000 bottles, mostly champagne. In consequence, the French arrived in the district practically unobserved. The German occupation lasted from Saturday afternoon until early Monday morning, when they disappeared in the direction of Soissons. Following their usual custom, says *The Times* correspondent, they took ten villagers as hostages including the Mayor and the Curé. One of these prisoners, an elderly man, white-haired and apparently about seventy, they kept without food for two days. Happily there was something to drink as they were intered in a wine shop.

Over Difficult Country

Towards the end of the retreat, notably on Friday 11th, torrential rain fell and added to the difficulties of the enemy: "The great wheels roll no longer upon easy ways. The roads are turned to river ways. The wheels sink into deep ruts that tax all the strength of those overwearied steeds. The drivers shout and ply the lash unmercifully. The great beasts strain and struggle in heroic effort. But the wheels sink deeper. The huge guns lurch and swing. A horseman dashes up 'Haste, haste; they are coming, those terrible Englishmen!' Again the descent of those wet-sodden whips. Again that terrible straining on the traces. It is vain; the wheels are fast. Men cut the traces. The liberated horses gallop off. The retreat draws slowly away through the dusk—an endless stream, worn and weary, famished, without ammunition."

It was the Aisne or destruction. Once over the Aisne "the German Army had the river Oise on his right and for the moment the danger of being outflanked was averted." The original defensive position was occupied by the Germans on Sunday, September 13th, and it was on that day that they turned and faced their pursuers. Their position ran in a fairly even line east and west from the forest of Argonne to the Oise River, along a line of heights varying in character from east to west. Between Thursday, September 10th, and Saturday, September 12th, the day on which von Kluck was about to take up a defensive position on the Aisne, some of his regiments marched over twenty miles a day and none to marches of less than fifteen. Their

"DAILY CHRONICLE" WAR MAP drawn by G. W. BACON & CO., Ltd., 127, Strand, London.

THE BATTLE ON THE AISNE AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION.

losses in men and guns in comparison with his enormous numbers was insignificant. By Sunday, the 13th, the whole mass of German forces—much more than a million men—" was standing at bay " along a line extending " from the Argonne, past Rheims and Soissons, to the River Oise, at a point beyond Noyon and Compiègne."

XI. THE BATTLE OF THE RIVERS

In our last chapter we left the whole mass of the German forces standing at bay strongly entrenched behind the River Aisne along a line of over eighty miles in length, stretching from the River Oise, which guarded their right flank, through Soissons and Rheims to the Forest of Argonne, which protected their left flank, the position being described by Mr. Hilaire Belloc as "one of the strongest and best in Europe." So far the war has comprised three phases; (1) the German advance to Paris; (2) the German retreat to the Aisne; (3) the German defence behind the Aisne. This third phase began on Monday, September 14th, and developed into one of the longest and greatest battles in history. The splendid defensive position occupied by the enemy consisted of two limbs: (1) The plateau running from Craonne all along the north of the River Aisne past the town of Soissons to the Oise; (2) A long, low ridge, or rather swell, which goes in a great curve from the Aisne at Berry-au-Bac to the neighbourhood of the Forest of Argonne, all round and behind, and then to the east of, the town of Rheims.

A Tremendous Task

It is impossible to realise the tremendous task confronting the Allies unless the natural features of the German position is understood. Mr. Belloc, in his article on "The War by Land," in *Land and Water* for September 26th, describes these "two limbs" as follows: "The first or western limb (which may also be called the Soissons half), is a rather high tableland which has been cut by the erosion of a number of brooks into a series of separate platforms. All of these platforms or buttresses join up to the north with one running level of land. The whole district may be regarded as a sort of flat-topped embankment rising everywhere above the north bank of the River Aisne along its lower reaches, from its emergence above the Plains of Champagne until its junction with the Oise. But it is an embankment the sides of which have been deeply scored by erosion; ravines have been cut out of it on its southern edge by the series of brooks which run from the summit down to the Aisne. This embankment, or plateau, falls

very gradually from east to west. It is over 450 feet above the river on the west above Craonne, where two conspicuous summits mark its culminating points. Within five miles of the Oise, at and above Lombray, it is no more than 300 feet above that river. Its total length from the village of Craonne to Pontoise on the Oise in the neighbourhood of Noyon is, as the crow flies, fifty-eight kilometres, or very nearly thirty-seven miles. . . .

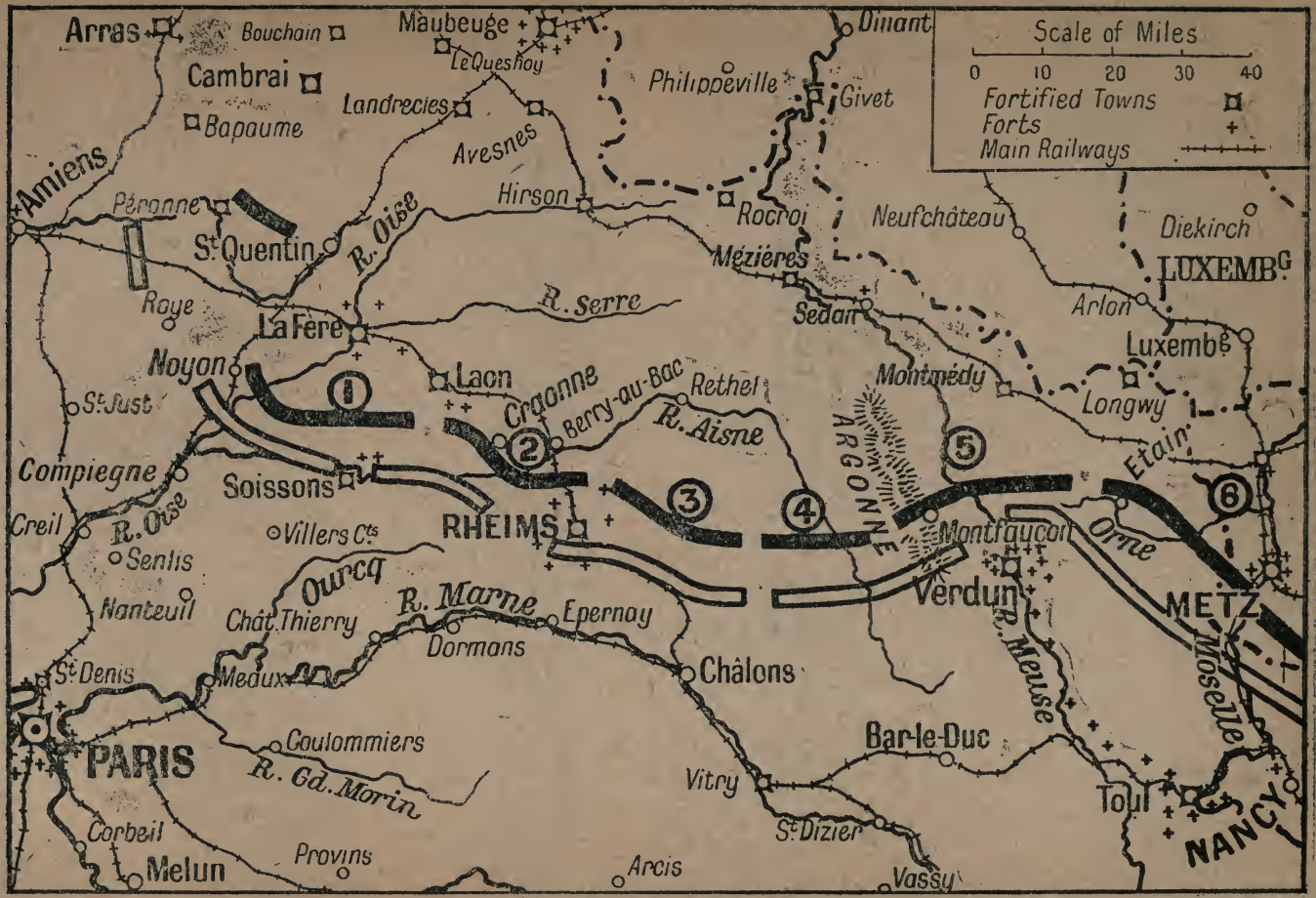
Almost Impregnable!

"As to the second eastern limb of this long position, which may also be called the 'Rheims limb,' it runs from the point of Berry-au-Bac to the Argonne through very different country. It follows the course of the river Suippe, and the backbone of it is that swell . . . rising northward and eastward from the water of the Suippe, crowned generally with plantations and stretching through the tumbled, rough lumps of bare plough land before Ville-sur-Tourbes, until it reposes upon the Argonne. All this eastern limb of the great defensive position stretches through bare, hedgeless fields, cut by orderly spinneys. It lies low along the horizon. It differs wholly from the wooded, ravined, and somewhat bold heights of the western limb between Craonne and the Oise."

It is now possible to picture the battlefield, with the river passing from east to west with, so far as the western limb is concerned, its steep banks rising to a plateau or series of plateaus ranging from 300 to 450 feet above, ideal areas for artillery, these natural gun platforms controlling the valleys being made still more effective by the woods on the heights where artillery could be concealed. The terrible task of the Allies will now be better gauged. They had to cross the bridgeless river swept by the German guns and to advance across and up the banks to the plateaus, every inch of the ground being rained upon by the German fire, the enemy themselves being almost impregnably entrenched above them.

West to East

The 37 miles of the western limb were occupied from west to east, or right to left, thus: From the River Oise to Soissons the 6th French Army was posted; next, from Soissons, the British Army continued the line, whilst the 5th French Army joined on the British right and occupied the rest of the line to the end of the western limb. It follows that as the 5th French Army was opposite and on the flank of the extreme right of the Germans—for the French were also along the Oise, which, as we have said, guarded the right German flank—the object of the 5th French Army was to get right round this flank and cut off the great main line of the enemy's communications; next along the line, and roughly in the centre of the western limb, came the British, who had the honourable and difficult



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THE LINE OF BATTLE ON THE AISNE.

task of attaining the heights in front of them in face of the fierce German resistance, and once there to hold the plateaux and drive the enemy down the slopes in the rear of these plateaux. Next again come the 6th French Army with a task similar, and, if possible, even harder than that of their British comrades, for the heights they had to scale and force, were higher here than they were opposite the British.

The length of time occupied by the Battle of the Aisne was due to each side having entrenched itself in a practically impregnable line of semi-permanent works, so that the "battle" was for both a "siege" along a total line of about 100 miles, the Allies and the enemy facing one another at distances varying from a mile to a hundred yards. Mr. G. Ward Price has given us a capital description of the trenches of the Germans in the *Daily Mail*: "They are," he writes, "very elaborate, these trenches in which for nearly a fortnight now the great host of the German Army has been living like a gigantic long-drawn-out warren of greeny-grey rabbits. They are floored, many of them, with cement; they are roofed over with boards covered with sods that serve both to keep out the rain and to hide them from French or British aeroplanes; they are divided into chambers communicating by doors.

A Warren-Like Town

"There are, of course, several lines of them. There is the most advanced trench in which the outposts mount guard at night, then two or three hundred yards behind is the main line of entrenchments, and behind that again are great pits dug out of the ground to serve as kitchens or dormitories in which the reserves and supports for the first line live.

"These rearward trenches are connected with the foremost line by parallel passage-ways, and there are other parallels in which machine-guns are posted to fire over the heads of the men that line the parapet. Then behind all, often in the chalk quarries of the hills, are the emplacements where the big siege guns, bolted down to their cement platforms, and the howitzers that toss a shell high into the air for it to fall three miles away, are posted.

"A whole semi-subterranean town in fact, with main thoroughfares and side-streets and telephone wires running all along, where hundreds of thousands of men eat and live and sleep, and yet so well concealed that from a little way down the hill in front you could see nothing to tell you of its existence unless it were a hardly noticeable little bank of earth slightly raised above the surface of the ground.

"The defensive position which the Germans have taken up on the hills that line the valley of the Aisne compels them to spend these damp days and chilly nights cooped up in trenches, which are dug in a chalky soil.

"In these pits and galleries that stretch for miles along the hillsides they are without exercise, cramped, confined, obliged to sleep and eat and spend every hour of the day in the same section of damp, depressing trench.

"WER DA!"

"For by day the Allies' guns keep up an almost incessant fire that makes it impossible to step up to the level ground without imminent danger of death, and by night the chance of a surprise attack from their infantry is so great that every German soldier must be at his post, sleeping as best he may in the narrow ditch which is at once his home and his defence, with his rifle by his side, ready to spring up to his place along the parapet on the first alarm. And alarms come often during these dark, cloudy nights.

"The sentries that are thrown out in advance of the German lines, straining ear and eye in the stillness and the gloom, very easily interpret the most innocent sounds of the night into the noise of French infantry stealing to the attack. A loosened stone rolls down the hillside, the dry branch of a tree cracks in the wind, and the startled sentry swings round; there are shadows all around him, and among them his scared eyes seem to see the forms of men creeping stealthily towards him to overwhelm him in a silent bayonet rush.

"'*Wer da?*' he shouts into the dark, and fires at the spot his fancy has peopled with the enemy. The crack of the report brings the whole of the force behind him to its feet. The advanced post from which the sentry has been sent out comes up at the double, and all along the line of trenches behind the sleeping men spring up and seize and load their rifles, ready to fire if the alarm prove to be well-founded.

"It is these night alarms that weary the soldiers; half a dozen times a night their sleep will be broken by false alarms, and the French and English outposts, who on some parts of the long line of battle front are now only a few hundred yards away, hear the splutter of their rifles that are aimed only at trees or stones which fear and the darkness of the night have caused the enemy to mistake for the men of the Allied army advancing to the attack."

TRENCH AND GRAVE

Later on in the prolonged conflict the very projection of the trenches increased the troubles of the enemy, for they were made so deep that it was a most difficult business to lift the dead out, and in some instances the attempt was relinquished with dire results for the living. "In one instance," said the *Daily Mail* correspondent, in a dispatch dated North of the Marne, October 3rd, "a line of dead was arranged along the trench with the weapons apparently in the grasp of the dead. Sanitary

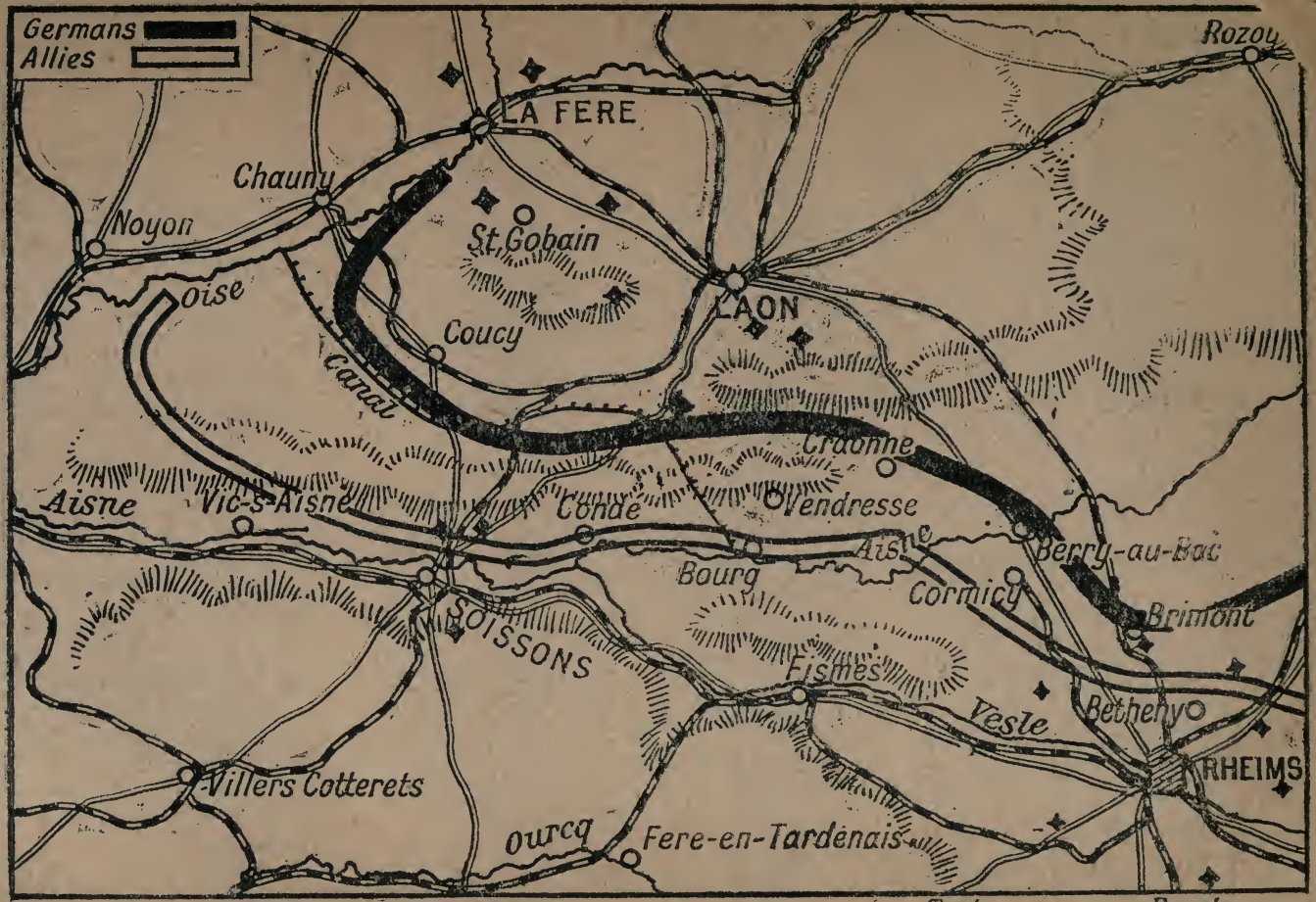
reasons, as well as military, make the advance slow." The whole position on both sides was so elaborately organised, with each point carefully covered by the fire of several others, that not a foot could be won from the enemy without heavy loss. Save in certain places direct attacks were only sparingly made and for many days the battle was practically reduced to a continuous cannonade and fusillade from both sides. Under the perpetual fire "one gets absolutely dehumanized," said a French soldier who had been continually in the trenches; "it is the only alternative to going mad. One has no consciousness of hardship or danger, but answers to orders without realising what they mean. One forgets what death is."

The German trenches "to the north of Rheims and to the east and west" are described by a correspondent of *The Times* as "wonderful works of art. Dug to a depth of six feet, they are covered and protected in many cases with layers of reinforced concrete. The work was executed by forced labour of the inhabitants to form a defensive position in case of need while their troops were still fighting on the Marne." But here too the condition of the trenches after their abandonment was found to be terrible. Rain had fallen heavily and the Germans were living for weeks like rats in undrained holes. The fighting was without pause, and the wounded as well as the dead had to lie where they fell amid the wet and filth. The French, who had worked their way foot by foot till in places their front was not 100 yards from the German trenches, could hear the cries of the wounded coming across the intervening space during the pauses between the firing.

Breast-High Waters

In some of the trenches on the heights above Rheims the French drowned the Germans out by laying lines of hose pipe from the city and working the fire pumps till the water stood breast high in the trenches. The approaches to the German trenches were mined and surrounded by barbed wire entanglements. Another device was the making of quagmires in front of the trenches, usually by digging extra trenches a few hundred feet from the real ones, throwing in the loose clay and then flooding them in order to produce a ditch of liquid mud. North of Chalons the enemy's trenches were just over a yard deep, with shell shields every twenty metres and rest chambers. The multiple line of the trenches were flanked with further defence works concealing mitrailleuses, the trenches themselves being covered with doors torn from houses and covered with earth.

We have described at some length the defence works of the enemy because these largely explain the protracted nature of the conflict. "It was clearly established," writes an English officer who was in the firing line, "that the Germans before we crossed the Aisne had carefully



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WHERE THE BRITISH FOUGHT ON THE AISNE.

selected their position and had dug gun pits and trenches ready some few days before to receive us."

Fighting and Waiting

The Battle of the Aisne began on Monday, September 14th; on September 18th the following descriptive account of the period between the 14th and 18th was issued by the Press Bureau. It is compiled by the officer attached to Sir John French's staff:

"General Headquarters,

"September 18th, 1914.

"At the date of the last narrative — on September 14th — the Germans were making a determined resistance along the River Aisne. The opposition, which it was at first thought might possibly be of a rearguard nature not entailing material delay to our progress, has developed, and has proved to be more serious than was anticipated. The action now being fought by the Germans along their line may, it is true, have been undertaken in order to gain time for some strategic operation or move, and may not be their main stand.

"But if this be so, the fighting is naturally on a scale which, as to extent of ground covered and duration of resistance, makes it indistinguishable in its progress from what is known as a 'pitched battle,' though the enemy certainly showed signs of considerable disorganization during the earlier days of their retirement. Whether it was originally intended by them to defend the position they took up as strenuously as they have done, or whether the delay gained for them during the 12th and 13th by their artillery has enabled them to develop their resistance and to reinforce their line to an extent not originally contemplated, cannot yet be said.

"So far as we are concerned, the action still being contested is the battle of the Aisne, for we are fighting just across the river along the whole of our front. To the east and west the struggle is not confined to the valley of that river, though it will probably bear its name. The progress of our operations and of those French armies nearest to us for the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th will now be described.

Holding New Ground

"On Monday, the 14th, those of our troops which had on the previous day crossed the Aisne after driving in the German rearguard on that evening found portions of the enemy's forces in prepared defensive positions on the plateau on the right bank, and could do little more than secure a footing north of the river. This, however, they maintained in spite of two counter-attacks, delivered at dusk and at

10 p.m., in which the fighting was severe.

"During the 14th strong reinforcements of our troops were passed to the north bank, the troops crossing by ferry, by pontoon bridges, and by the remains of the permanent bridges. Close co-operation with the French forces was maintained, and the general progress made was good. Although the opposition was vigorous and the state of the roads after the heavy rain made movements slow, one division alone failed to secure the ground it expected to. The 1st Army Corps, after repulsing repeated attacks, captured 600 prisoners and 12 guns; the cavalry also took a number of prisoners. Many of the Germans taken belong to Reserve and Landwehr formations, which fact appears to indicate that the enemy is compelled to draw on the older classes of soldiers to fill the gaps in his ranks.

"There was heavy rain throughout the night of the 14th-15th, and during September 15th the situation of the British forces underwent no essential change, but it became more and more evident that the defensive preparations made by the enemy were more extensive than was at first apparent. In order to counterbalance these, measures were taken by us to economise troops and to secure protection from the hostile artillery fire, which was very fierce, and our men continued to improve their own entrenchments.

Big Guns

"The Germans bombarded our lines nearly all day, using heavy guns, brought no doubt from before Maubeuge, as well as those with the corps. All their counter-attacks, however, failed, although in some places they were repeated six times; one made on the 4th Guards Brigade was repulsed with heavy slaughter. An attempt to advance slightly made by part of our line was unsuccessful as regards gain in ground, but led to withdrawal of part of the enemy's infantry and artillery. Further counter-attacks made during the night were beaten off. Rain came on towards evening and continued intermittently until 9 a.m. on the 16th. Besides adding to the discomfort of the soldiers holding open trenches in the firing line, the wet weather to some extent hampered the motor transport service, which was also hindered by the broken bridges.

"On Wednesday, the 16th, there was little change in the situation opposite the British. The efforts made by the enemy were less active than on the previous day, though their bombardment continued throughout the morning and evening. Our

artillery fire drove the defenders off one of the salients of their position, but they returned in the evening. Forty prisoners were taken by the 3rd Division.

"On Thursday, the 17th, the situation still remained unchanged in its essentials. The German heavy artillery fire was more active than on the previous day. The only infantry attacks made by the enemy were on the extreme right of our position and, as had happened before, were repulsed with heavy loss, chiefly on this occasion by our field artillery.

Slopes and Lines

"In order to convey some idea of the nature of the fighting it may be said that along the greater part of our front the Germans have been driven back from the forward slopes on the north of the river. Their infantry are holding strong lines of trenches amongst and along the edges of the numerous woods which crown these slopes. These trenches are elaborately constructed and cleverly concealed. In many places there are wire entanglements and lengths of rabbit fencing both in the woods and in the open, carefully alined so that they can be swept by rifle fire and machine guns, which are invisible from our side of the valley. The ground in front of the infantry trenches is also as a rule under cross fire from field artillery placed on neighbouring features and under high-angled fire from pieces placed well back behind woods on top of the plateau.

"A feature of this action, as of the previous fights, is the use made by the enemy of their numerous heavy howitzers, with which they are able to direct a long-range fire all over the valley and right across it. Upon these they evidently place great reliance. Where our men are holding the forward edges of the high ground on the north side they are now strongly entrenched. They are well fed, and in spite of the wet weather of the past week are cheerful and confident. The bombardment by both sides has been very heavy, and on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday was practically continuous.

Quick-Firing Artillery

"Nevertheless, in spite of the general din caused by the reports of the immense number of heavy guns in action along our front on Wednesday, the arrival of a French force acting against the German right flank was at once announced on the east of our front some miles away by the continuous roar of their quick-firing artillery with which their attack was opened. So far as the British are concerned the greater part of this week has been

passed in bombardment, in gaining ground by degrees, and in beating back severe counter-attacks with heavy slaughter. Our casualties have been severe, but it is probable that those of the enemy are heavier. The rain has caused a great drop in temperature and there is more than a distinct feeling of autumn in the air, especially in the early mornings.

"On our right and left the French have been fighting fiercely and have also been gradually gaining ground. One village has already during this battle been captured and recaptured twice by each side, and at the time of writing remains in the hands of the Germans. The fighting has been at close quarters and of the most desperate nature, and the streets of the village are filled with the dead of both sides."

The Lesser Things

Amongst minor happenings of interest is the following:

"During a counter-attack by the German 53rd Regiment on portions of the Northampton and Queen's Regiments on Thursday, the 17th, a force of some 400 of the enemy were allowed to approach right up to the trench, occupied by a platoon of the former regiment, owing to the fact that they had held up their hands and made gestures that were interpreted as signs that they wished to surrender. When they were actually on the parapet of the trench held by the Northamptons they opened fire on our men at point blank range.

"Unluckily for the enemy, however, flanking them and only some 400 yards away there happened to be a machine-gun manned by a detachment of the 'Queen's.' This at once opened fire, cutting a lane through their mass, and they fell back to their own trench with great loss. Shortly afterwards they were driven further back with additional loss by a battalion of the Guards which came up in support."

A special order of the day by Sir John French was issued to the troops in these terms:

"Once more I have to express my deep appreciation of the splendid behaviour of officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the army under my command throughout the great battle of the Aisne, which has been in progress since the evening of the 12th inst. The battle of the Marne, which lasted from the morning of the 6th to the evening of the 10th, had hardly ended in the precipitate flight of the enemy when we were brought face to face with a position of extraordinary strength, carefully entrenched and prepared for defence

by an army and a Staff which are thorough adepts in such work.

"Throughout the 13th and 14th that position was most gallantly attacked by the British Forces, and the passage of the Aisne effected. This is the third day the troops have been gallantly holding the position they have gained against the most desperate counter-attacks and a hail of heavy artillery.

"I am unable to find adequate words in which to express the admiration I feel for their magnificent conduct.

"The French armies on our right and left are making good progress, and I feel sure that we have only to hold on with tenacity to the ground we have won for a very short time longer, when the Allies will be again in full pursuit of a beaten enemy.

"The self-sacrificing devotion and splendid spirit of the British Army in France will carry all before it.

"(*Sd.*) J. D. P. FRENCH,
"Field-Marshal.
"Commanding-in-Chief, the
"British Army in the Field."

WHERE RIVERS MEET

Just as the junction of the Ourcq and the Marne at Meaux made Meaux the key of the encounter during the battle of the Marne, so the junction of the Oise and the Aisne at Compiègne made Compiègne of vital importance in the battle of the Aisne. Once across the Aisne the enemy had its right flank protected by the River Oise. It must also be constantly borne in mind that the chief railway line upon which the German Army depended for its communications into Germany runs through the valley of the Oise from Belgium through Namur, Le Cateau, St. Quentin and Noyon. Hence the effort of the French to cut the line along the Oise and the desperate battles in this district. The aim of the Allies was to work up the valley of the River Oise, which guarded the west, or right flank, of the Germans, and to envelop their right wing. The result of several days' fighting would be, perhaps, that the Allies had advanced a degree or so higher up the German flank.

Thus on September 14th the Allies had begun this flanking movement, their extremity being beyond St. Just; four days later this enveloping line had reached Roye; by September 21st it had reached right round to Albert, north of Peronne, a position it still occupied a week later.

This effort of the Allies against the right flank of the Germans was countered by repeated endeavours on the part of the latter to break through the centre of the Allies' line at Vitry and Rheims. At the same time the French at the eastern end of the line tried to get round the German left wing. But here the enemy succeeded in bending the French right wing back (just as the French at the other end of the 100 miles line had forced

the German right wing round), piercing, after repeated efforts, the Toul-Verdun line of fortresses, which guarded the French right flank along the Meuse and advancing to, and occupying, St. Mihiel; this place formed a salient, or projection, which gave the Germans the passage over the Meuse. In other words a door was opened in the Toul-Verdun barrier, and the French right wing was threatened by the German left wing with the same fate which the French left wing was, at the same time, threatening the German right wing. This situation, however, did not develop until the end of September.

To Slaughter Led!

Days passed in this battle, or congeries of battles, with hardly any perceptible change in the main fronts of the opposed armies; indeed between, for example, September 22nd and 29th almost a deadlock was reached in the region between Noyon and the Argonne. We have said that repeated attempts were made by the Germans to pierce the Allies' centre, the neighbourhoods of Soissons, that is to say between the French and British forces, and of Rheims, being time after time chosen for these onslaughts. For instance on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 15th, they tried to break through between Vic-sur-Aisne and Soissons; the following day they advanced three times on the French near Rheims, and on Thursday, the 17th, again attacked the British in the neighbourhood of Soissons, their losses being commensurate with the terrible nature of the attacks. *The Times* Special Correspondent reports that no sacrifice was grudged by the enemy, men being literally thrown away to act as mere dead weight. "They hurled them down on us like a landslide," declared a soldier of the Allies, "poured them out simply." After the attack on the night of Sunday, September 20th, south-east of Craonne 1,000 German wounded abandoned by the enemy were found on the battlefield, "while the trenches were so overflowing with their dead that in certain places the French advance was impeded. It is estimated the Germans lost 7,000 men in this fight alone." The officers sacrificed their men without reason, driving them again and again to the charge as if they were blind men. This was the kind of thing which marked the days of the long struggle.

XII. A HISTORIC TUG-OF-WAR

BEFORE resuming the story of the Aisne battle, or the Battle of the Rivers, as it has been called, owing to the strategic importance of the Aisne, the Oise, the Suippe and the Meuse, a word must be said about the huge 16-in. howitzers of the Germans, which have played a considerable part, not only in reducing fortresses such as Liége, Namur and Antwerp, but also in the defence of the Aisne entrenchments. An artillery officer who returned wounded to Paris from the front gave some interesting details regarding the working and effect of these guns, dubbed by the British soldiers "Black Marias."

The officer in question, while admitting that if well served and employed under proper conditions the 16-in. gun can produce really disastrous effects, observed that the handling and transport are so difficult that these results are rarely obtained. Even thirty-six or forty horses harnessed to a gun are unable to drag these gigantic pieces of ordnance over the French roads soaked by the autumn rains, while the mechanism of the gun is so delicate that it is extremely difficult to replace immediately the losses among the gun team. Again, while effective at a distance the 16-in. is harmless at close range, and at the mercy of a bayonet charge. The officer noticed furthermore that the shells burst nearly all too soon or too late, and often not at all.

AT CLOSE QUARTERS

The French troops quickly grasped the best method of dealing with these monsters. Once they have succeeded in passing the zone commanded by their fire, they bring the handy 75-millimetre gun in action, sweep away the German artillerymen, especially the engineer gun-layers, and then charge. The Paris correspondent of *The Times* gave additional details showing how great is the attacking power of the big howitzers, at their proper range. Facing the British position during the Aisne contest, some of these "Black Marias" were mounted over a canal. "If a motor-car be spied speeding along the road, 'Black Maria' drops a shell behind its stern. The blast caused by the explosion is so great that nothing is left standing within forty or fifty feet, while the hole carved in the road is so large as easily to swallow man, motor and all. 'Black Maria' dropped a

shell the other day among a squad of forty horses who were quietly standing in a village secure from harm. The whole batch was blown to pieces, while of a sergeant-major who was standing near, only the leg and arm were ever found. A general with his staff was watching operations from the shelter of a hay-rick. A motor-car, fortunately empty, stood in the road alongside. Someone—perhaps a Taube—must have noticed the group of officers. 'Black Maria' spoke, and dropped a shell precisely in front of the car. The car completely disappeared—engulfed."

More Dispatches

We now return to the battle. On September 24th the Press Bureau issued another descriptive account (supplementing the narrative quoted in the preceding chapter) of the movements of the British Force and of the French Armies in immediate touch with it. The following passages are taken from this account:

"The enemy is still maintaining himself along the whole front; and in order to do so is throwing into the fight detachments composed of units from very different formations—the Active Army, the Reserve, and the Landwehr—as is shown by the uniforms of the prisoners recently captured. Our progress, although slow, on account of the strength of the defensive positions against which we are pressing, has in certain directions been continuous. But the present battle may well last for some days more before a decision is reached, since, in truth, it now approximates somewhat to siege warfare. The Germans are making use of searchlights, and this fact, coupled with their great strength in heavy artillery, leads to the supposition that they are employing material which may have been collected for the siege of Paris."

* * * *

"On Sunday, the 20th, nothing of importance occurred until the afternoon, when there was a break in the clouds and an interval of feeble sunshine, which, however, was hardly powerful enough to warm the soaking troops. The Germans took advantage of this brief spell of fine weather to make several separate counter-attacks against different points. These were all repulsed with loss to the enemy; but the casualties incurred by us were by no means light. In one section of our firing line the occupants of the trenches were under the impression that they heard a military band in the enemy's lines just before the attack developed. It is now known that the German infantry started their advance with bands playing. The offensive against one or two points was renewed at dusk with no greater success.

The Splendid Infantry

"The brunt of the resistance has naturally fallen upon the infantry. In spite of the fact that they have been drenched to the skin for some days and their trenches have been deep

in mud and water, and in spite of incessant night alarms and of the almost continuous bombardment to which they have been subjected, they have on every occasion been ready for the enemy's infantry when the latter have attempted to assault, and they have beaten them back with great loss. Indeed, the sight of the *Pickelhauben* coming up has been a positive relief after the long trying hours of inaction under shell fire. The object of the great proportion of artillery the Germans employ is to beat down the resistance of their enemy by a concentrated and prolonged fire, and to shatter their nerve with high explosives before the infantry attack is launched. They seem to have relied on doing this with us; but they have not done so, though it has taken them several costly experiments to discover this fact. From the statements of prisoners, indeed, it appears that they have been greatly disappointed by the moral effect produced by their heavy guns, which, despite the actual losses inflicted, has not been at all commensurate with the colossal expenditure of ammunition, which has really been wasted.

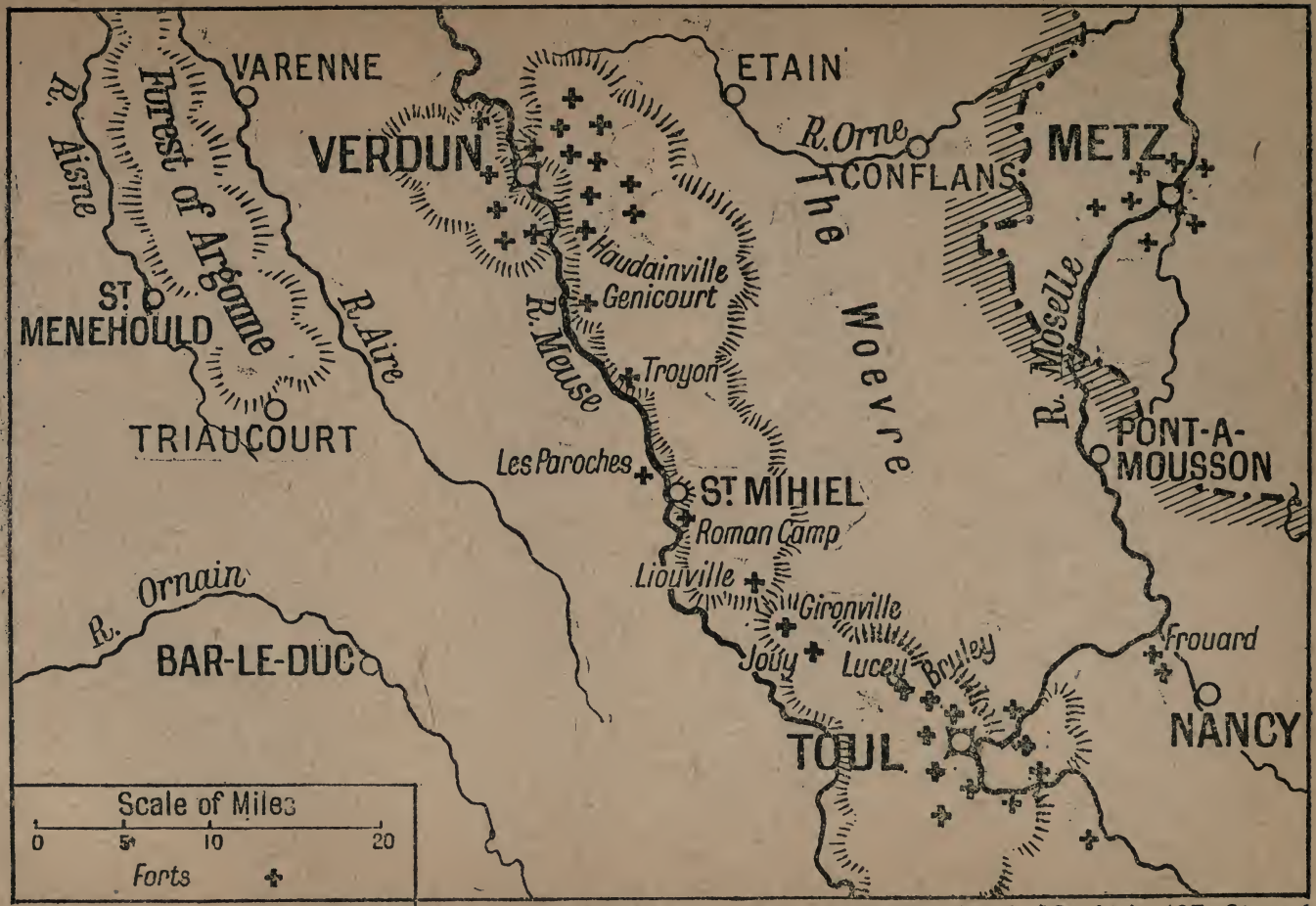
Cannot be Moved

"By this it is not implied that their artillery fire is not good. It is more than good; it is excellent. But the British soldier is a difficult person to impress or depress, even by immense shells filled with high explosives which detonate with terrific violence and form craters large enough to act as graves for five horses. The German howitzer shells are eight to nine inches in calibre, and on impact they send up columns of greasy black smoke. On account of this they are irreverently dubbed 'Coal-boxes,' 'Black Marias,' or 'Jack Johnsons' by the soldiers. Men who take things in this spirit are, it seems, likely to throw out the calculations based on loss of *moral* so carefully framed by the German military philosophers."

* * * *

The prisoners recently captured appreciate the fact that the march on Paris has failed, and that their forces are retreating, but state that the object of this movement is explained by the officers as being to withdraw into closer touch with supports which have stayed too far in the rear. The officers are also endeavouring to encourage the troops by telling them that they will be at home by Christmas. A large number of the men, however, believe that they are beaten. The following is an extract from one document:

"With the English troops we have great difficulties. They have a queer way of causing losses to the enemy. They make good trenches, in which they wait patiently. They carefully measure the ranges for their rifle fire, and they then open a truly hellish fire on the unsuspecting cavalry. This was the reason that we had such heavy losses. . . . According to our officers, the English striking forces



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THE FRENCH BARRIER FORTS AND METZ.

are exhausted. The English people never really wanted war."

From another source:

"The English are very brave and fight to the last man. . . . One of our companies has lost 130 men out of 240."

A German Officer's Letter

The following letter, also referring to the fighting on the Aisne, was printed and circulated to the troops. We do not give it in full:

Letter found on a German Officer of the VIIth Reserve Corps.

Cerny, S. of Laon,
17/9/14.

"My Dear Parents, . . . Our corps has the task of holding the heights south of Cerny in all circumstances till the XV. Corps on our left flank can grip the enemy's flank. On our right are other corps. We are fighting with the English Guards, Highlanders, and Zouaves. The losses on both sides have been enormous. For the most part this is due to the too brilliant French artillery. The English are marvellously trained in making use of the ground. One never sees them, and one is constantly under fire. The French airmen perform wonderful feats. We cannot get rid of them. As soon as an airman has flown over us, ten minutes later we get their shrapnel fire in our position. We have little artillery in our corps; without it we cannot get forward.

"Three days ago our division took possession of these heights, dug itself in, etc. Two days ago, early in the morning, we were attacked by immensely superior English forces (one brigade and two battalions), and were turned out of our positions; the fellows took five guns from us. It was a tremendous hand-to-hand fight. How I escaped myself I am not clear. I then had to bring up supports on foot (my horse was wounded, and the others were too far in rear). Then came up the Guard Jäger Battalion, 4th Jäger, 65th Regiment, Reserve Regiment 13, Landwehr Regiments 13 and 16, and, with the help of the artillery, drove back the fellows out of the position again.

"Our machine-guns did excellent work. The English fell in heaps."

Their Sense of "Honour"

Since certain attempts have been made in this country to pooh-pooh the stories of German atrocities, and to picture the Germans as fair and honourable enemies, the statements in the Despatch, from which we are quoting, concerning their sense of "honour" are of peculiar value:

"After some cases of village fighting which occurred earlier in the war it was reported by some of our officers that the Germans had attempted to approach to close quarters by forcing prisoners to march in front of them. The Germans have recently repeated the same trick on a larger scale against the French, as is shown by the copy of the order printed below. It is therein referred to as a 'ruse'; but if that term be accepted, it is distinctly an illegal ruse.

—Army —September, 1914.
General Staff.
3rd Bureau.
No.

"During a recent night attack the Germans drove a column of French prisoners in front of them.

"This action is to be brought to the notice of all our troops:

"1. In order to put them on their guard against such a dastardly ruse:

"2. In order that every soldier may know how the Germans treat their prisoners. Our troops must not forget that if they allow themselves to be taken prisoners the Germans will not fail to expose them to French bullets.

(Signature of Commander.)

"Further evidence has now been collected of the misuse of the white flag and other signs of surrender during the action on the 17th, when, owing to this, one officer was shot. During the recent fighting also some German ambulance wagons advanced in order to collect the wounded. An order to cease fire was consequently given to our guns, which were firing on this particular section of ground. The German battery commanders at once took advantage of the lull in the action to climb up their observation ladders and on to a haystack to locate our guns, which soon afterwards came under a far more accurate fire than any to which they had been subjected up to that time.

"A British officer who was captured by the Germans and has since escaped, reports that while a prisoner he saw men who had been fighting subsequently put on Red Cross brassards. That the irregular use of the protection afforded by the Geneva Convention is not uncommon is confirmed by the fact that on one occasion men in the uniform of combatant units have been captured wearing the Red Cross brassard hastily slipped over the arm. The excuse given has been that they had been detailed after a fight to look after the wounded. It is reported by a cavalry officer that the driver of a motor-car with a machine gun mounted on it, which he captured, was wearing the Red Cross."

An Irishman's Evidence

The abuse of the White Flag by the Germans is corroborated by an Irish Guardsman, who was present at the fighting on the Aisne on September 14th; he says:

"There were several regiments involved in this affair—a company of the Coldstream Guards, half a company of the Irish Guards, and a lot of Connaughts and Grenadiers. While the fight was going on the Germans in front of us hoisted the white flag, and we all went forward to take them prisoners. As soon as we got into the open there burst out a ring of fire from concealed artillery, and then the Germans seized their rifles and joined in the slaughter. It was awful. We were helpless; caught in a trap; the whole lot of us were practically done in."

This dastardly conduct had its

counterpart in another trick of the enemy, viz., to hold up their arms in token of surrender and then, when the Allies approach to take them prisoners to resume their rifles and begin firing on them. At Soissons, the scene of so many fierce contests during the battle of the Aisne, the Germans tried this trick with fatal results to themselves. Six British field guns had to be saved and Sergeant C. Meades, of the Royal Berks Regiment, wrote in a letter to his wife:

"I stopped and watched the Guards going out to attack the Germans. They drove the Germans back again. Then the Scots Greys and the 12th Lancers made a charge. It was a grand charge. I could see some of the Germans dropping on their knees and holding up their arms. Then as soon as our cavalry got through the Germans picked up their rifles and started firing again. Our cavalry turned about and charged back. It was no use the Germans putting up their hands a second time. Our cavalry cut down every one they came to. I don't think there were ten Germans left out of about two thousand."

A Comparative Calm

On September 28th the Press Bureau issued another descriptive account from Headquarters (supplementing the narrative published on the 24th) of the position. It recorded "a comparative lull all along our front" for four days, and dwelt at some length with the parts played by espionage in the conduct of the war by the Germans. Apart from the more elaborate precautions made in peace time for obtaining information by paid agents, some of the methods adopted, said the Headquarters record, are as follows:

"Men in plain clothes signal to the German lines from points in the hands of the enemy by means of coloured lights at night and puffs of smoke from chimneys by day. Pseudo-labourers working in the fields between the armies have been detected conveying information, and persons in plain clothes have acted as advanced scouts to the German cavalry when advancing. German officers and soldiers in plain clothes or in French or British uniforms have remained in localities evacuated by the Germans in order to furnish them with intelligence. One spy of this kind was found by our troops hidden in a church tower. His presence was only discovered through the erratic movements of the hands of the church clock, which he was using to signal to his friends by means of an improvised semaphore code. Had this man not been seized it is probable that he would have signalled to the German artillery the time of arrival and the exact location of the headquarters and staff of the force. High explosive shells would then have mysteriously dropped on to the building. Women spies have also been caught, and secret agents have been

found at rail-heads observing entrainments and detrainments."

As in Manchuria

The French official explanation of the long-drawn-out battle, issued from Paris, was that it "assumes, on a large part of the front, the character of a fortress war, analogous to the operations in Manchuria. It may be added that the exceptional power of the artillery material, both of the heavy German artillery and the French 75-millimetre guns, imparts special value to the temporary fortifications which the two adversaries have established. It is then a question of carrying successive lines of entrenchments, all of which are guarded by accessory defences, notably barbed wire entanglements, with machine-guns '*en cannoniere*,' In these circumstances progress can only be slow. It happens very frequently that attacks advance us only 500 metres to a kilometre a day." Briefly, it was a dogged stand with short advances. A number of quite separate engagements would be going on at the same time without one part of the line having much knowledge of what was happening elsewhere or whether progress was being made or not. "A battery," wrote Sir Alfred Sharpe, the Special Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, "may be firing at a range of five or six miles.

"It may be in such a position, with intervening hills over which the shells pass, that those firing cannot even see what they are firing at, the exact spot and direction having been previously ascertained, the result of the bombardment being communicated by telephoning or by signalling from elsewhere. In some cases the howitzers fire from a point far in the rear, their shells passing over more advanced batteries."

Splendid Flying Men

From the beginning of the war, splendid reconnaissance work has been done by the British and French aviators and their services were invaluable during the Battle of the Aisne. A letter from a member of the Royal Flying Corps attached to the British Expeditionary Force, dated from the Front, September 26th, and published in the *Daily Mail* of October 7th, gives an admirable idea of their daily experiences.

Describing a typical day he writes: "At six o'clock you are just finishing breakfast. In less than an hour you are up in the air 20 odd miles away with a battle going on under your very nose—hundreds of thousands of men in various positions pegging away at each other from their various trenches (a good many of them pegging away at you).

"It looks so funny from the air, because you can see it all and both sides, whereas down below they can't see what they're firing at in a good many cases; it is merely scientific slaughter. A battery will perhaps know that some of the enemy are entrenched in a certain area. It will train its guns on the area without

even perhaps seeing if their guns have effect. For instance, the other day I saw guns dropping shell after shell in a certain area and there wasn't a man within miles of it."

In a second letter, dated September 30th, the same writer describes "Archibald," the nick-name given to the special German anti-air-craft gun, "which fires a certain kind of shrapnel shell, which bursts at a certain height. As soon as they find your height they let off their shells about seven or eight at a time, which burst all round you. Each shell is loaded with round bullets about the size of a marble, and these shoot about when the shell explodes."

From Day to Day

There is no necessity, even if it were possible, to detail the situation from day to day of the battle which began by being the Battle of the Aisne, since the changes were but slight. Sir John French in his Despatch dealing with the battle dated October 8th writes:

"Attack and counter-attack occurred at all hours of the night and day throughout the whole position, demanding extreme vigilance and permitting only a minimum of rest. The fact that between September 12th to the date of this despatch the total numbers of killed, wounded, and missing reached figures amounting to 561 officers and 12,980 men proves the severity of the struggle. The tax on the endurance of the troops was further increased by the heavy rain and cold which prevailed for some ten or twelve days of this trying time.

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

The Allies never slackened in their endeavour to turn von Kluck's right flank, to elbow him off his communciations with Belgium, and von Kluck continued to do his utmost to foil their efforts. Move was met by counter-move. On Tuesday, October 6th, however, the French official message contained significant news. It stated that large masses of cavalry, acting as a screen for new forces of artillery and infantry behind them, had appeared in the neighbourhood of Lille and Armentières. This news meant that the enemy was endeavouring to bring further forces upon the flank of the existing French line, that is upon, if not behind, its western extreme.

Von Kluck Active

In other words it was now von Kluck who was attempting to lengthen still further the extension of this new great front north of the Oise which, beginning at Compiègne, had crept up through Noyon, St. Quentin, Péronne, Arras, northwards until now it had reached Armentières on the Belgian frontier, a distance of some 70 miles. The French official communiqué of October 6th, to which

we have referred, said: "On our left wing the battle continues with great violence. The opposed fronts extend as far as the regions of Lens and La Bassée, and are prolonged by masses of cavalry which are in contact as far as the region of Armentières."

On the same day the Press Bureau issued a report to a like effect: "North of the Oise and at Lens there is hard fighting." At the same time the Germans made a determined attack on Antwerp with the hope of effecting the release of large numbers of troops held to their lines of communication through Belgium (and always liable to sorties by the Belgian Army at Antwerp) and, secondly, of completely occupying Belgium with the fall of its last political and government centre. Meanwhile, the enemy's attempt to force the Meuse at St. Mihiel, referred to in the previous chapter, had not succeeded and for the moment the attempt to invest Verdun on the French right flank was abandoned.

XIII. THE FALL OF ANTWERP

THE siege of Antwerp, one of the most famous and beautiful cities in Europe, the goal of innumerable ambitions and the victim of many wars, began on Monday, September 28th. Sacked in turn by Spanish and French, by Catholics and Protestants, occupied during the centuries by Spanish, French and Austrians, besieged by both French and British forces, its latest, and not least tragic, fate was to be bombarded by the Germans and to fall into the hands of the modern Huns. Believed to be almost impregnable, its defences were constructed by the most renowned engineer in Europe, General Brialmont. Nothing which concrete and iron could do to keep out the enemy had been left undone, though it is doubtful whether the armament of the fortress had been kept up to date.

THE PLAN OF DEFENCE

The city was protected by three groups of works, described by Mr. Hilaire Belloc in " Land and Water " thus : " First, immediately round its densely-inhabited portion the old continuous ditch or enceinte . . . next, outside the suburb at ranges varying ing from 3,000 to 4,000 yards to the heart of the city, you have the ring of 'old forts,' the original works by which the modern city was defended. Strictly speaking, the scheme is not a ring, but three-quarters of a circle reposing upon the Scheldt, most of the country behind or to the west of which is not available for siege operations, because it can be flooded, and because the last portion of it is foreign territory and Dutch. Finally, a third set of defences, at an average of about ten to fifteen thousand yards from the centre of the city, consisting in a chain of modern forts, completes the scheme." The river Nethe, a tributary of the Scheldt, runs eastwards between the inner and outer ring of the city's forts ; the village of Lierre is on the river ; Lierre fort, Wavre St. Catherine, Waelhem, and the rest of the outer forts, are on the further side of the Nethe, so that when a breach in this outer ring was effected by the enemy, they had still to get across the river in the rear, the bridges across which had, of course, been destroyed by the Belgian garrison after it retreated across the stream.

THE OUTER FORTS

On Tuesday, September 29th, the German fire was chiefly concentrated

on two of the outermost forts, Fort de Waelhem and Fort de Wavre St. Catherine, the eleven-inch howitzers being employed. The following day the attack extended to other forts in the outer ring, notably Lierre. Upon Thursday evening those forts were still replying, but the next day, October 2nd, a breach in the outer ring was so far effected that the besieging army was able to reach the River Nethe behind it, though, owing to the splendid courage of the Belgian soldiers, it was not until 4 a.m. of the morning of October 6th that the enemy succeeded in crossing the river and making good their footing between Lierre and Duffel. Thrice during that night small detachments had got across and were driven back or wiped out by the Belgians. From the 2nd to the 6th this effort to cross the river went on. On the 4th the Germans succeeded in getting a pontoon completed, and came down in solid masses to cross it. As they came, every Belgian gun that could be turned on the spot was concentrated on them, and they were blown away blocks at a time; nevertheless, the masses of men still came on. At last the bridge was shattered to bits, and the enemy fell back.

Men and "Black Marias"

The attacking force was estimated at 125,000 men at this date, well provided with artillery, large numbers of field guns, some heavy pieces of 11-inch, and one of the famous 16-inch "Black Marias." This force threw its whole weight upon the line of the River Nethe, from the confluence of the Grand Nethe and Petit Nethe at Lierre, to the junction with the Rubel near Rumbot, and, as already stated, crossed the Nethe on the 6th. On the 7th the Press Bureau issued the following significant statement: "The Germans attacking Antwerp have pushed forward their positions against considerable resistance by the garrison." On the same day the Belgian Government removed to Ostend, the King still remaining with his soldiers, whom from the first he had led and inspired.

It was on Sunday, October 4th, that the British reinforcements, consisting of three marine and naval Brigades, with heavy guns, began to arrive; by nightfall our men were entrenched in front of the bridge which spanned the Nethe. Bearing the brunt of the German attack, they held these trenches until Tuesday morning. The following statement, issued by the Secretary of the Admiralty on October 11th, covers the whole movements of the British force from the time of its arrival:

"In response to an appeal by the Belgian Government, a marine brigade and two naval brigades, together with some heavy naval guns, manned by a detachment of the Royal Navy, the whole under the command of General Paris, R.M.A., were sent by his Majesty's Government to participate in the defence of Antwerp during the last week of the attack.

On the Nethe

"Up till the night of Monday last, October 5th, the Belgian army and the marine brigade successfully defended the line of the Nethe River. But early on Tuesday morning the Belgian forces on the right of the marines were forced by a heavy German attack, covered by very powerful artillery, to retire, and in consequence the whole of the defence was withdrawn to the inner line of forts, the intervals between which had been strongly fortified. The ground which had been lost enabled the enemy to plant his batteries to bombard the city. The inner line of defences was maintained during Wednesday and Thursday, while the city endured a ruthless bombardment. The behaviour of the Royal Marines and naval brigades in the trenches and in the field was praiseworthy in a high degree, and remarkable in units so newly formed, and, owing to the protection of the entrenchments, the losses, in spite of the severity of the fire, are probably less than 300 out of a total force of 8,000. The defence could have been maintained for a longer period, but not long enough to allow of adequate forces being sent for their relief without prejudice to the main strategic situation.

The Brave Belgians

"The enemy also began on Thursday to press strongly on the line of communications near Lokeren. The Belgian forces defending this point fought with great determination, but were gradually pressed back by numbers. In these circumstances the Belgians and British military authorities in Antwerp decided to evacuate the city. The British offered to cover the retreat, but General de Guise desired that they should leave before the last division of the Belgian army.

"After a long night march to St. Gilles the three naval brigades entrained. Two out of the three have arrived safely at Ostend, but owing to circumstances which are not yet fully known, the greater part of the 1st Naval Brigade was cut off by the German attack north of Lokeren, and 2,000 officers and men entered Dutch territory in the neighbourhood of Hulst and laid down their arms, in accordance with the laws of neutrality. The retreat of the Belgian army has been successfully accomplished. The naval armoured trains and heavy guns were all brought away.

"The naval aviation park having completed the attack on Düsseldorf and Cologne already reported, has returned safely to the base protected by its armoured cars. The retreat from Ghent onwards of the naval Division and of the Belgian army was covered by strong British reinforcements.

"Vast numbers of the non-combatant population of Antwerp, men, women, and children, are streaming in flight in scores of thousands westwards from the ruined and burning city."

A Trying Time

The British troops in the line of trenches nearest to the river Nethe had a most trying time on Monday, October 5th, exposed as they were in wide shallow trenches to a continuous and searching shrapnel fire with never a chance to use their rifles. After a time the men retired to a new line less exposed and better constructed half a mile back from the river. This line they held until the following morning, when they, together with the Belgian soldiers, retired behind the inner line of forts. A British Reservist attached to H.M.S. "Pembroke," who was in the trenches, describes the Belgian fort guns as being "outranged and outmetalled;" the "huge German projectiles crashed through walls and destroyed fortifications as if they had been made of papier-maché."

Once within the inner ring of forts the British guns began to come into action, and realising that their prey was escaping from them, the Germans throughout the 6th made repeated and determined efforts to break across the Schelde along the line from Termonde to Wetteren, but were constantly repulsed by the Belgians. The following day the exodus from Antwerp began in earnest, and all Wednesday afternoon and during Thursday morning the Civic Guard went from house to house telling the inhabitants to flee. "I walked out," says *The Times* Special Correspondent, "on the main road to the Dutch frontier as far as Wilmansdonck. For a month past I have grown accustomed to the sight of streams of refugees trailing over all the roads of Belgium until the queer illusion has grown up that they are always the same refugees. They look so pitiably alike. But all the scenes on all the roads for weeks past must be added together and multiplied twenty-fold to resemble the spectacle of the roads to Holland during the last two days. Hardly any migration in the history of the Israelites, Kalmucks, or Tartars can have equalled it.

"Two relieving features were the extreme kindness of the Dutch people at the frontier and the beautiful weather. These reduced the mortality to a minimum. But I saw terrible scenes, such as a woman in a wheelbarrow in a virulent stage of scarlet-fever, another with a child just born, and many aged and ill borne by frail members of their families quite unfit for the task."

Across the Schelde

On Wednesday, October 7th, the enemy at last succeeded in their effort to effect the passage of the Schelde at Termonde, Schoonærde and Wetteren, and at midnight the bombardment of the city began, the German summons to surrender having been disdainfully rejected by General de Guise. It was on Thursday the stampede of the population increased in volume and intensity with every hour. *The Times* correspondent above quoted re-entering the city at

noon on that day, found it "almost empty." Besides the exodus by the roads to Holland "I had seen a crowd estimated at 150,000 blocking the ferry and the pontoon for the railway to St. Nicholas and Ghent earlier in the day. These all disappeared, the last trains being gone and arrangements were made for blowing up the pontoon bridge.

"It was an extraordinary experience walking through the deserted streets. All the windows were shuttered, and many places along the roads were littered with the debris of shell-fire. Occasional figures were hurrying along under the shelter of the walls while shells still broke around. I saw a corner knocked off a house a hundred yards from the Cathedral. I saw a shell smash through the sheds on the water front, where the Harwich boat starts. I saw shells plough up the pavement of the street a little way in front of me, I saw a factory chimney break and crumble, crashing on other roofs fifty yards away.

"German shells could reach every corner of the city, and the chief characteristic of the bombardment was the haphazard way the fire was directed on all parts of Antwerp, and not concentrated anywhere, the object seeming to be rather to terrorize than to destroy. So until Thursday night no great damage was caused.

The River Spectacle

"No less wonderful than the scene on the roads or in the city was the spectacle on the river, where all day Thursday craft of every description were slipping down stream loaded with human beings until, as dusk fell, chiefly by the light of the burning oil tanks, I saw the Civic Guard sink half a dozen lighters, blocking the entrance to the inner basins of the docks. I myself boarded one of the last batch of lighters passing out, where, in company with a party of refugees and another correspondent, amid a cargo of gravel, corn, and poultry, and lying in mid-stream, I watched the indescribable scenes of Thursday night.

"The oil tanks still burned fiercely with dense masses of black smoke to the south of the city. As night fell other fires arose, some from shells, but most of them purposely started by the Belgians, destroying materials likely to be serviceable to the enemy. We could count some dozen or fifteen fires on the south-east side of the city. The glare of all was reflected on the overhanging clouds of black smoke against which the flash of exploding shells flickered constantly like lightning—'The lightning of the footsteps in the sky.' Much the heaviest cannonade I have heard in all the fighting in Belgium went on from ten o'clock till midnight on Thursday night, and the circumstances of the night and the flaring flames made a picture defying description."

During Thursday night the defence was discontinued, and the Allies withdrew from the city. Throughout the day the sufferings of the flying population were indescribable. Here

THE FORTIFICATIONS OF ANTWERP.

is another glimpse of the terror inspired by the approach of the representatives of German "Kultur."

A Stream of Suffering

"From this moment onwards there was no cessation in the stream of wretchedness. We were assured that 25,000 fugitives from German ferocity had passed along one road, and that not the main road from Antwerp to Holland, and I can well believe it. For many hours I watched the pitiful procession. Every conceivable species of conveyances was utilized for this Belgian exodus. Roads were encumbered with cattle, Belgian cows and calves, so different in appearance from the black and white Dutch cows one sees in every pasture here, were present in droves. It is said that 200,000 cattle have thus entered Holland, and these are at least a source of milk supply for the homeless wanderers. Intermingled with them were people of both sexes and all ages afoot.

"Large country wagons were loaded with little children, much as one sees them going to a school treat in England; but, young as the children were, they realized the tragic character of the occasion, and journeyed in unchildlike silence. Many carts were drawn by donkeys, and others by dogs. In some all the household possessions had been hastily piled. One saw fowls, puppies, and canaries, jostling bandboxes, and bundles of clothing. Blankets and bedding were conspicuous among the possessions of the fugitives, who were totally ignorant of where their next night's lodging would be."

A Crescendo of Horror

The crescendo of horror reached its climax between the Thursday and Friday mornings, when the aspect of the doomed city resembled a scene from the Inferno of Dante. A heavy black pall of smoke "resembling some portentous awful eclipse," obscured the light, the darkness being emphasized by the flames from the burning buildings, and the bursting of the enemy's incendiary shells. To the thunder of the German guns and the shrieking of their bursting shells was added the detonations of the Belgians, as they blew up anything and everything likely to be of use to the besiegers, while the crash of falling masonry and the cries of the injured were punctuated by bombs exploding from aeroplanes, the crackle of musketry, and the rip of machine guns. "All over the southern section of the city," wrote the *Daily News* correspondent on the Thursday, "shells struck mansion, villa, and cottage indiscriminately, and the bright flashes of the explosion lit the sky.

"Then the fortress guns, the field batteries and the armoured trains opened out in one loud chorus, and the din became terrific, while the reflection in the heavens was seemingly one huge tossing flame. From the roof of my hotel the spectacle was an amazing one. The nerve-wracking

screech of the shells, the roof-tops of the city alternately dimmed, then illuminated by some sudden red light which left the darkness blacker than before, and then the tearing out of roof or wall by the explosion, made a picture which fell in no way short of Inferno."

"A Desolate Ruin"

At 12.30 on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Lucien Arthur Jones, the *Daily Chronicle* correspondent, when the bombardment had lasted over twelve hours ascended to the roof of the cathedral, and from that point of vantage surveyed the city. "All the southern portion of Antwerp appeared to be a desolate ruin. Whole streets were ablaze, and the flames were rising in the air to a height of twenty and thirty feet. It was a scene of appalling grandeur, but I could not help thinking of the harrowing scenes that were taking place almost as it were at my feet." The great oil tanks had been set on fire by four bombs from a German Taube, and a huge thick volume of black smoke was ascending 200 feet in the air: "In all directions fire and flame and oil-laden smoke! It was like a bit of Gustave Dore's idea of the infernal regions."

At dawn on Thursday immense crowds of men, women and children gathered along the quayside and at the railway stations in the hope of escaping. "In the dimness of breaking day," says Mr. L. A. Jones, "this gathering of 'les miserables' presented, as it seemed to me, the tragedy of Belgium in all its horror. I shall never forget the sight. Words fail to convey anything but a feeble picture of these depths of misery and despair. There the people stood in dumb and patient ranks, drawn to the quayside by an announcement that two boats would leave at eleven o'clock for Ostend. And Ostend looks across to England, where lie the people's hopes. There were fully 40,000 of them assembled on the long quay, and all of them were inspired by the sure and certain hope that they would be among the lucky ones who would get on board one of the boats. Alas! for their hopes. The two boats did not sail, and when they realised this a low wail of anguish rose from the disappointed multitude." Family parties made up the largest proportion of this vast crowd, husbands and wives with their groups of scared children, old folk, grandmothers and grandfathers of the family, and "these in their shaking frailty and the terror which they could not withstand, were the most pitiable objects in the great gathering of stricken townsfolk."

A Fantastic Sight

On Thursday night the city presented a fantastic appearance, the glare from the fires that had burst out in all directions being visible for many miles. The bombardment continued furiously throughout the night, shells bursting in every direction at the rate of thirty per minute.

Throughout the night the Belgian soldiers passed in retreat through the city, the last contingent leaving at 6 a.m. on Friday morning. At 8 a.m. a shell struck the Town Hall, and a quarter of an hour later another shell shattered the upper storey, breaking every window in the place. At 9 a.m. the bombardment suddenly ceased; the city had capitulated, and at 10.30 proclamations were posted up on the walls of the town urging the citizens to surrender any arms in their possession. When the enemy entered he found a deserted city, the population had fled from the Germans as from a pestilence. On Wednesday afternoon there were probably 400,000 or 500,000 people still in Antwerp. By Thursday at noon all but a few hundreds had departed. One hundred thousand fled, it is estimated, by the ferry, and trains and highways to St. Nicholas, Lokeren, Ghent, Bruges and Ostend, and not less than 250,000, probably many more, pushed out by the roads by Wilmansdonck and Eeckeren to the Dutch frontier. Nothing could exceed the kindness of the Dutch people, officially or individually.

A Piteous Exodus

The Times correspondent thus vividly portrays this amazing and piteous exodus:

"Moving at a foot's pace went every conceivable kind of vehicle: great timber wagons, heaped with household goods topped with mattresses and bedding, drawn by one or two slow-moving stout Flemish horses, many of the wagons having, piled upon the bedding, as many as thirty people of all ages; carts of lesser degree of every kind from the delivery vans of fashionable shops to farm vehicles and wagons from the docks; private carriages and hired cabs; occasional motor-cars, doomed to the same pace as the farm team; dog-carts drawn by anything from one to four of these plucky Belgian dogs, the prevailing type of which looks almost like pure dingo; hand-trucks, push-carts, wheel-barrows, perambulators, and bicycles; everything loaded as it had never been loaded before, and all alike creeping along in one solid unending mass, converting the long white roads into dark ribands, twenty miles long, of animals and humanity. A happy thing it is that this is a flat country. Happier still that the weather has been perfect.

The Foot Passengers

"Between and around and filling all the gaps among these vehicles went the foot passengers, each also loaded with bundles and burdens of every kind, clothes and household goods, string bags filled with great round loaves of bread and other provisions for the road, children's toys, and whatever possessions were most prized. Men and women, young and old, hale and infirm, lame men limping, blind led by little children, countless women with babies in their arms, many children carrying others

not much smaller than themselves; frail and delicate girls staggering under burdens that a strong man might shrink from carrying a mile; well-dressed women with dressing bags in one hand and a pet dog led with the other; aged men bending double over their crutched sticks.

"Mixed up with the vehicles and the people were cattle, black and white Flemish cows, singly or in bunches of three or four tied abreast with ropes, lounging with swinging heads amid the throng. Now and again one saw goats. Innumerable dogs ran in and out of the crowd, trying in bewilderment to keep in touch with their masters. On carts were crates of poultry and chickens, and baskets containing cats. Men, women, and children carried cages with parrots, canaries, and other birds; and, peeping out of bundles and string bags—generally carried by the elder members of the families—were Teddy bears, golliwogs, and children's rocking-horses. It was impossible not to be touched by the tenderness which made these wretched folk, already overburdened, struggle to take with them their pets and their children's playthings."

A Saturday Parade

Though a heavy German force had entered Antwerp on Friday night, the bulk of the army did not enter until late on Saturday afternoon, when 60,000 men passed in review before General von Schutz, the military Governor of Antwerp, and Admiral von Schroeder, who, surrounded by a glittering staff, sat on their horses in front of the Royal Palace in the Place de Meir. "For five hours," says Mr. E. Alexander Powell, correspondent of the *New York World*, in a remarkable description of the German entry, reprinted in *The Times*, "the mighty host poured through the streets of the deserted city, while the houses shook to the thunder of their tread. Company after company, regiment after regiment, brigade after brigade, swept past until the eye grew weary of watching the ranks of grey under the slanting lines of steel. As they marched they sang, the canyon formed by high buildings along the Place de Meir echoing to their voices roaring out the 'Wacht am Rhein' and 'A Mighty Fortress is our God.'

"Each regiment was headed by its field music and colours, and when darkness fell and the street lamps were lighted the shrill music of fifes and rattle of drums and the tramp of marching feet reminded me of a torch-light election parade. Hard on the heels of the infantry rumbled artillery, battery after battery, until one wondered where Krupp found time or steel to make them. These were the forces that had been almost in constant action for the last two weeks and that for thirty-six hours had poured death and destruction into the city, yet the horses were well groomed and the harness well polished. Behind the field batteries rumbled quick-firers, and then, heralded by a blare

of trumpets and the crash of kettle-drums, came the cavalry, cuirassiers in helmets and breastplates of burnished steel, hussars in befrogged jackets and fur busbies, and finally the Uhlans, riding amid forests of lances under a cloud of fluttering pennons.

Uhlans and Bluejackets

"But this was not all, nor nearly all. For after the Uhlans came bluejackets of the naval division, broad-shouldered bewhiskered fellows with caps worn rakishly and the roll of the sea in their gait. Then Bavarian infantry in dark blue, Saxon infantry in light blue, and Austrians in uniforms of beautiful silver grey, and, last of all, a detachment of gendarmes in silver and bottle-green."

Before the actual military occupation of Antwerp, says Mr. Powell, half a dozen motor-cars, filled with armed men wearing grey uniforms and spiked helmets, entered the Porte de Malines and drew up before the Hôtel de Ville. The doorkeeper, in the blue and silver livery of the municipality, cautiously opened the door in response to the summons of a young officer in a voluminous grey cloak. "I have a message to deliver to the Communal Council," said the young man pleasantly. "The Communal Councillors are at dinner and cannot be disturbed," was the doorkeeper's reply. "If monsieur will have the kindness to take a seat until they finish?" So the young man in the spiked helmet seated himself on a wooden bench and the other men in spiked helmets ranged themselves in a row across the hall.

The Opened Door!

"After a quarter of an hour's delay the door of the dining-room opened and a portly Councillor appeared, wiping his moustache. 'You have a message you wish to deliver?' he inquired. 'The message I am instructed to give you, Sir,' said the young man, clicking his heels sharply together and bowing from the waist, 'is that Antwerp is now a German city, and you are requested by the General Commanding his Imperial Majesty's Forces so to inform your townspeople, and to assure them that they will not be molested so long as they display no hostility toward our troops.'

"The Burgomaster then went out to the motor-car to obtain the best terms he could. General von Schutz informed him that, if the outlying forts were immediately surrendered, no money indemnity would be demanded from the city, though all the merchandise in the warehouses would be confiscated."

A correspondent who visited Antwerp after the German occupation was struck by the comparatively small amount of damage done, his general impression being that little of the town was destroyed. The city itself he described as "dead." Blinds were down in private houses, and where there were no blinds the houses had their shutters closed.

XIV. THE FIGHT FOR THE CHANNEL

The fall of Antwerp was immediately followed by an attempt on the part of the enemy to move along the sea coast and occupy successively Ostend, Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne in order to command the North Sea and the Straits of Dover. To effect this purpose they used the large army released by the fall of Antwerp and very strongly reinforced. Strategically no object was to be gained by this attempt; the occupation of Dunkirk and Calais, even if achieved, would be as useless from a military point of view as was the occupation of Bruges and Ostend. Ostend, Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne do not command the Straits of Dover and the English Channel. The British Fleet commands these and would have to be destroyed before the Belgian and French coast ports could be of any use to the Germans. The policy of the enemy was political not military. They desired to frighten this country by their proximity to our coast and to cheer Berlin with the news of such proximity. Calais was to "make up" for Paris.

A Line to the Sea

When Antwerp fell, the left wing of the Allies ran roughly from just east of Arras to the sea near Ostend, a distance of some eighty miles. "Nearly the whole of this line," writes Mr. Belloc, "traverses a plain most of which is dead level. The exception is in a range of slight heights running in a dwindling crescent south of Ypres. From Lens northwards to above Armentiéres you are in the coal district—a mass of dirty lanes and a gridiron of railways and canals. But from the north of this to the sea the complexity of such country ceases and is replaced, especially as the sea-coast is approached, by numerous very slow watercourses, both canalised and natural. Almost every field has its wet ditch." The chief towns along the almost straight line from Lille to Ostend are Ypres, Dixmude and Nieuport, and the contests around and in these towns were of the fiercest description. Dixmude and Nieuport are on the River Yser which, canalised, empties into the North Sea at Nieuport-Bains. It, too, figures prominently in the despatches relating to this period.

Antwerp was occupied by the Germans on October 10th. The German troops at once began to

march westwards; on the evening of the 14th they were reported in the neighbourhood of Bruges and Thielt; on the 15th they were at Blankenberghe, and at 10.20 on that morning entered Ostend, thus emerging on the shores of the North Sea. They now began their march along the coast, and on October 19th the French communiqué reported that the Belgian Army had repulsed attacks between Nieuport and Dixmude.

An Attack in Force

On the night of October 16th, the Germans made an attack in force on the position of the French at the latter town. The assault, said *The Times* correspondent, began about midnight. Large numbers of infantry advanced against the trenches outside the town:

"The troops holding them were outnumbered and were compelled to retire on the town, where they held on grimly in the outskirts. Reinforcements had been sent for in the meanwhile. They arrived about dawn, a counter-attack was delivered, and with the help of artillery fire the Germans were driven back and the trenches re-won."

Late on the night of October 21st, the Press Bureau issued the following inspiring statement:

"Throughout yesterday the enemy made vigorous counter-attacks against the Allies' front, but were beaten back, suffering considerable losses. The Belgian Army in particular distinguished itself by its spirited and brave defence of its position.

"In regard to the last part of the above announcement by the War Office, the Press Bureau has received from an authentic source the following description of the Belgian Army's work, which will be read with pride, both by the Belgians who have had to flee from their native land and by those Allies amongst whom they are now finding temporary rest and shelter.

"For the last four days the Belgian Army have been in their trenches holding a line of some 30 kilometres, with the greatest determination, against heavy odds. On several occasions they have made brave and successful attacks against the German force attacking the position they held, and have shown the soldierlike qualities that have distinguished the Belgian Army during the long period they have been fighting against superior forces of the enemy in their own country."

On the same day came the announcement by the Secretary of the Admiralty that:

"The monitors 'Severn,' Commander Eric J. A. Fullerton; 'Humber,' Commander Arthur L. Snagge; and 'Mersey,' Lieutenant-Commander Robert A. Wilson, have recently been engaged in operations on the Belgian coast, firing on the right flank of the German Army.

"Owing to their light draught they have been able to contribute materially to the success of the operations in this district, and they have already abundantly justified their acquisition on the outbreak of war.

"In addition, detachments with machine guns have been landed from these vessels to assist in the defence of Nieuport, where they performed meritorious service."

More Details

The following day the Admiralty supplemented the foregoing with further details:

"On the 18th instant, requests for naval assistance were made to the Admiralty by the Allied Commanders. In consequence a naval flotilla, mounting a large number of powerful long-range guns, came into action at daybreak on the 19th, off the Belgian coast, supporting the left of the Belgian Army and firing against the right of the German attack which they were, by their position, able to enfilade. The Germans replied with shells from their heavy guns, but owing to the superior range of the British Marine Artillery practically no damage has been done. The three monitors, which were building in British ports for Brazil and were acquired on the outbreak of war, have proved particularly well-suited to this class of operation. A heavy bombardment of the German flank has been maintained without intermission, since the morning of the 19th and is being continued to-day. Observation is arranged from the shore by means of naval balloons, and all reports indicate that substantial losses have been inflicted upon the enemy and that the fire is well-directed and effective against his batteries and heavy guns. Yesterday a considerable explosion, probably of an ammunition wagon, followed upon a naval shot. The naval losses so far have been very small considering the damage done and the important assistance rendered to the Belgian left flank. All reports received by the Admiralty show the courage and determination with which the Belgian Army, assisted by the King in person, is defending the last few miles of Belgian soil. The naval operations are under the command of Rear-Admiral the Hon. Horace L. A. Hood, C.S. M.V.O., D.S.O."

England Expects!

On Trafalgar Day the British squadron bombarding the German positions between Nieuport and Middelkerke was in continuous action for twelve hours. The action began at six in the morning when the squadron steaming some two miles off the shore shelled the enemy's trenches situated three miles inland. The sailors remained at their posts until six in the evening. The firing was rapid and incessant says Reuter's Special Correspondent at Dover, one British vessel firing no fewer than 1,000 lyddite and shrapnel shells.

"The fire of the squadron caused the greatest execution in the German trenches and batteries among the dunes, and between them the Allies' vessels destroyed a German battery of field artillery, dispersed a German bridging train collected to force the passage of the Yser, blew up an

ammunition column, killed General von Tripp and the whole of his staff to the west of Westende, and by the fierceness of their fire compelled the enemy to evacuate its position before Nieuport. Some of the guns discharged 14 shots a minute. The damage done to the enemy was clearly discernible from the vessels.

"An attempt on the part of the enemy to get their range by sending up an aeroplane which dropped smoke balls was ineffective. At the end of the day the whole coast for a distance of four miles from Nieuport to Westende had been completely evacuated and was a dense mass of black smoke and flame. It was afterwards reported that in the action the Germans lost at least 4,000 killed and wounded."

Persistently Attacked

Throughout the day our ships were persistently attacked by an enemy submarine, and torpedoes were fired without success at the "Wildfire" and "Myrmidon." Other British vessels again attacked the submarine. In the afternoon a British destroyer steaming straight into Ostend from the sea on a reconnoitring tour approached the Digue and was immediately fired on by three German machine guns. The destroyer, reports Mr. M. D. Donohoe, the Special Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, replied, putting three shells through the walls and windows of the Hotel Majestic on the sea-front which happened to be the headquarters of the German General Staff. "At the luncheon hour the officers were seated at a table when a single shell penetrated the dining-room, killing three officers and wounding others. Because of this incident, which is justifiable enough in war time, the Germans are showing themselves unusually vindictive, and have promised to shoot every English civilian falling into their hands."

Meanwhile the efforts made by the enemy to cross the Yser were of incredible violence, both artillery and infantry being incessantly in action. Furious attacks by day were followed by furious attacks by night. The losses were on a scale commensurate with the struggle. A despatch published in the *Daily Mail* of October 27th, stated there were 2,500 German bodies in the Yser Canal after the fighting in the night. Many of them had been drowned, others bayoneted.

Dark till Dawn

"The night," we read, "was a hell. From dark till dawn at almost every point of the line, man opposed man—sometimes at a few hundred yards distance, but more often in close grips, face to face. Men even wrestled and died by drowning each other in the canal's waters. The Germans had had orders to get through that night, cost what it might. An officer of theirs who was captured admitted this was so. The 'delay' of more than a week in crossing this waterway had incensed the autocratic military mind of

Germany. 'It must be crossed to-night if it costs thousands of men.' That in effect was the order given, though the officer did not say this. And the German soldiers, all credit to them, did their best. Probably 5,000 of them gave their lives that night. They could not give more. Yet they failed. Thank God for that."

Though eventually the enemy crossed the Yser between Nieuport and Dixmude they were unable to do more than merely hold the south bank, the Allies maintaining their line between the coast and Dixmude. Nowhere along the Yser did the Germans attack with more vigour that at Ypres, the centre of the line in Flanders. They numbered 250,000 troops, and for five critical days were held in check by the British: over and over again masses of the German infantry advanced within a few hundred yards: "There they halted and poured in a volley. They had no relish for a bayonet charge. Over and over again men leapt from the trenches and went at them with the bayonet. They fled, firing their rifles over their shoulders as they ran. Many hundreds were captured, and thousands were mown down with shell, with rifle, and machine gun fire. Still their shell and shrapnel rained upon our trenches. Fresh infantry were brought up.

"The situation became critical; it seemed as if the defence of our gallant men must be overborne by sheer weight of numbers. Still they held on steadily. Friday came and with it much-needed reinforcements. The position was saved, the enemy was thrown back 15 miles. Such briefly is the story of the five days' battle at Ypres."

Among the Dunes

On October 26th, *The Times* published a message from its Special Correspondent in West Flanders dated October 20th, which gave an admirable account of the fighting among the dunes: from his graphic story we take the following passages:

"For three days the cannon had boomed and battered over the sand-dunes and along the marshes of the Yser, agonizing to hear. It became intolerable to sit and listen hour after hour to the guns without knowing what was going on. At last on the fourth day, in company with a friend, I managed to get up the coast to Nieuport-Bains, where the Yser flows into the sea, and there at midday we found ourselves right at the edge of the battle.

"Both these villages had been occupied by the Belgian infantry the day before we arrived. The Belgians were trying to push up the coast and drive the Germans inland, supported by the guns of a British squadron firing off the coast. When we reached the river at midday fighting was going on between the two villages, and the guns of the warships and the guns of the Belgian field batteries were throwing their shells among the attacking Germans.'

A Good View

The correspondent gets permission to observe the battle from the top floor skylight window of a hotel:

"From our post on the roof the whole battle area between Nieuport and the coast was spread out before us, a terrible and wonderful sight. To the left was the sea, with the dark hulls of the warships spitting fire and smoke. Immediately to our right in a little birch wood a hundred yards away were the Belgian batteries firing across the river. We could see red flashes from the guns dart through the trees which hid them, and the reports would come crashing out, to shake the house to its foundations. In front of the birch wood and the guns runs the railway line into Nieuport, which is hidden from us, save for its church tower, by a grove of trees. Beyond the railway line is the river, a broad grey ribbon of water with slimy banks which dwindled out of sight in the direction of Nieuport, near which appears to be a bridge of boats. Across the river there are the marshes. They are bounded to our view on the right by a scattered line of buildings which marks the road from Nieuport to Lombaertzyde. Lombaertzyde itself lies in the centre of the picture little more than half a mile away. To the left of it, and partially hidden by the dunes and banks which curve round from the coast, is Westende.

Fire and Smoke

"Westende as we now see it is a perfect hell of fire and smoke. The Germans captured it in the morning, and since then cruisers and destroyers have been firing shell after shell into it and beyond. Through our glasses we can see that some of the nearer buildings are roofless already; an angry fringe of little red tongues flickers round the gables. In the back-ground of drifting smoke the dark forms of the church tower and the windmill stand up half veiled amid the ruin. Between Westende and Lombaertzyde all the sky is flecked with bursting shells. That is where the fighting is going on. The white balls which burst in clusters are the shrapnel from the Belgian guns which are roaring from among the trees close by us. Now and again a great splash of black smoke spurts up among the houses. Each of these splashes marks the bursting of a shell from one of the warships out at sea.

"Somewhere near that inferno, at Lombaertzyde, perhaps like ourselves on the top of a house, is perched a watcher marking where the shells from the warships are falling. With him sits a telephonist, his instrument to his mouth. Each time a shell bursts or the enemy makes a move visible to the watcher he glances at his map and gives a message. The telephonist transmits it to headquarters, whence it is repeated again by telephone to the wireless station in the rear. The wireless operator notes it and flashes it out to the ships. Thus, a few minutes after he has fired his shot, the gunner out at sea

receives news of where his shell has fallen, regulates his aim, and fires again at his invisible foe. This is modern war."

At the Yser

We have said the enemy crossed the Yser between Nieuport and Dixmude; on the afternoon of Sunday, October 25th, they were driven across again by the French infantry and the British monitors, sustaining heavy losses. It should be understood that the Yser is not an ordinary river over which engineers can throw a single pontoon bridge. It is divided into three main channels between Nieuport and Dixmude which must all be bridged successively before the enemy can claim to have secured the opposite bank. The defence of the Yser adds fresh laurels to the imperishable renown of the Belgian Army. Confronted it is reported by at least two army corps, they held their position on the Yser for two weeks, fighting without respite day and night. In nine days' fighting their losses amounted to about 10,000 dead and wounded, the German losses being much heavier. The Belgian infantry were in the trenches almost without repose for ten days with nothing to drink but the canal water, and little opportunity to prepare a hot meal. Since the war began no fiercer onslaughts have been made than those the Belgian soldiers after weeks of fighting were called upon to resist. They never fought with greater verve and brilliance.

Writing in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, Colonel Morath, the German military writer, declared the battle between Lille and Dunkirk to be the greatest in the war; "the battle," he said, "is for us a question of life or death, because on the issue of this encounter will depend the fate of the German operations in France."

The Kaiser's Order

The *Times* correspondent at Copenhagen, in a message dated October 26th, said: "It is stated from Berlin that the Kaiser has categorically commanded that Calais shall be taken, quite irrespective of expenditure of life and material." The expenditure of life was so colossal that masses of German dead were left unburied on the ground and both banks of the Yser were lined with corpses, while down the red waters of the river floated bodies of men and horses and all kinds of war equipment. The reinforcements of the enemy included lads fresh from school and spectacled patriarchs of seventy years. "Five days ago I was at school, sir," said a terror-stricken German boy of fifteen taken prisoner at Dixmude.

Mr. George Renwick, the *Daily Chronicle* special correspondent, in a message dated "North of the River Lys, Monday afternoon" (October 26th), said: "The attempted forward movement by the Germans in Belgium has completely failed. That much is sure. All along the line the Allies have held their positions; at certain parts they have pushed

forward, and as I write this are stated to be still advancing. I hear, from a reliable source, however, that it is likely another attack will be delivered by the Germans on the Belgian front. The tired troops of the Kaiser are said to have been strongly reinforced, and the Imperial order has gone forth that another attempt to batter down the Allies' line is to be made. . . . All reports agree that the enemy's losses have been on a colossal scale."

Belgians and Indians

This correspondent told a stirring story of the fighting of Belgians and Indians in the Flanders battle:

"The Germans had thrown enormous masses of troops against this particular part of the line. They encountered the Belgians entrenched and ready, and a stubborn encounter began. Hour after hour it went on. The foe, too, could make no headway against the gallant Belgians. So reinforcements were poured to the assistance of the attacking troops. Gradually it appeared as though numbers would tell. 'Hold on for twenty-four hours and you will have reinforcements. But hold on.' Such were the orders to the brave little Belgian force. So it settled down to do some dogged stone-walling. Twenty-four hours passed; then thirty; at the thirty-fifth the Belgians were still battling bravely. The fortieth found them still in their original positions. When forty-five had passed the Germans were beginning to despair, but just then heavy support reached them. The force of the attack was doubled, and the Belgians had to give way a little, after forty-eight hours of continuous fighting. The Germans pressed forward to encounter, not retiring Belgians, but oncoming, swarthy figures. Before they could recover from their surprise, those dusky soldiers were amongst them. There was a short, sharp encounter, and then a rapid German retreat. Fright and the deadly Indian bayonets turned that retreat into nothing more dignified than a scamper to cover. Yet on came that soldiery which, till then, the Germans had regarded as a myth. The retiring troops were simply dug out of the trenches in which they had taken shelter and driven backwards farther still by the well-aimed bullets and the relentless steel of the East's finest fighters. Where the Germans had hoped to break the line the Indians turned the tide of battle, and behind them followed the Belgians. Ten thousand dead, it is declared, was what the Germans left behind them in that retreat."

Progress!

At midnight on Tuesday, October 27th, the French official communiqué reported "progress on our part in the region to the south of Dixmude." An earlier official statement announced continual progress between Ypres and Roulers, so that it was evident the enemy had been pushed back along the whole of that section of the line between Dixmude and Ypres.

On the same day it was reported from Amsterdam that at some points on the Yser Canal the enemy were using the bodies of their dead to form bridges across, but had failed to reach the opposite side.

On Friday, October 30th, it was announced that in the latest naval operations associated with the battle on the line from Nieuport to Dixmude, French torpedo-gunboats and destroyers bombarded the right wing of the German army in concert with the British ships. On Sunday, November 1st, the Belgian army opened the sluices of the River Yser between Nieuport and Dixmude, drowned great numbers of the enemy, and compelled the German force, which at enormous sacrifice had again crossed the Yser, once more to withdraw.

"It was a terrible sight," said an officer to Mr. George Renwick, to see the Germans caught in their entrenchments when the flood came rushing in upon them: "in a flood of fire and water, in a perfect tornado of terror . . . trench after trench was taken, and a deep wedge was driven into the German positions."

The loss of the enemy in dead and wounded in Flanders was, at this date, estimated at 125,000, and the total number of his forces in Belgium at 550,000.

On Tuesday, November 3rd, the enemy was still continuing his violent offensive on the whole line from the Belgian coast into northern France, especially between Dixmude and the River Lys, but the Allies, far from being beaten back, "slightly advanced" their line. The presence of the Kaiser with the German forces near Ypres emphasised the importance of the struggle to the enemy. In the unsuccessful attack which he in person superintended the London Scottish covered themselves with glory. Generally, though the Germans were assuming the offensive more strongly than ever, the Allies were confident of victory; the flooding of the country was proceeding, and the enemy being steadily pushed back; whilst the Belgians, after three months' fighting, were battling like men inspired. On the same day the *Times* correspondent wrote that "reports of German dispiritedness and fatigue" were "too numerous to be disregarded."

XV. BRITANNIA RULES THE WAVES

ALL the desperate and gallant fighting described in the preceding chapters, illustrating the splendid qualities of the Army, has been based really on the sea-guard of the Navy. The presence of the troops at the front, their reinforcements and all their necessary supplies have depended on the security of sea communications. Within a week of the outbreak of war, the German mercantile flag disappeared from the seas, while our own food and raw materials continued to arrive from every part of the globe. Never had the world seen the like.

The Home Fleets had been mobilised as a test in July. The First Fleet had always full complements, and the Second and Third Fleets had been completed to full strength. Few of the men had returned to their homes when war became imminent. Those who had gone were immediately recalled, and so the Grand Fleet, commanded by Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, was constituted. Almost unperceived, it slipped away from Portland and for weeks was not heard of again, though many ships emerged into light in the fighting incidents which we shall describe.

But before we enter upon description, it is well to make clear the point that, by what has been called "noiseless pressure," the Fleet was securing for us the fruits of a victory. Not only was our trade maintained, but behind the secure shield of the Navy we created a new army, and called other forces from India and the Dominions to our aid. Never had there been such a great revelation of Sea Power, and wherever throughout the world we have fired a shot, be it in Samoa, in the Bismarck Archipelago, in New Guinea, or in the German Colonies elsewhere, even to the ends of the earth, it has all been done under the guard of the ships of the Grand Fleet keeping watch and ward over the waters of the North Sea.

THE MODERN NELSON

The Navy knows much of Sir John Jellicoe, and trusts him, but the public had hardly heard of him. That is because he is never theatrical, never seeks the limelight glare, never does anything but his duty. Sir John Jellicoe is the Nelson of the time—really a Nelson-like man—brought forward long ago for the critical hour

by Lord Fisher, the St. Vincent of the time. One made the victory, and the other achieves it. Jellicoe sticks to his guns, for he is a great gunnery officer, and never fires broadsides in the papers. He is the embodiment of the "Silent Navy." He was first noted for his gunnery efficiency, and has come onward, gaining high credit at every step, to assume command just at the right hour. His principle is to keep quiet, to hold everything ready, to grasp all sea communications, to encourage and support the enterprise of his officers, and when the hour comes, to hit first, and to go on hitting. This is the great principle of Lord Fisher, and Jellicoe is the living exponent of it. He showed his cool courage when he rescued a man from drowning, and again when he himself went down in the "Victoria," then a young officer, and was rescued among the very few.

He displayed the same courage in action, when he was badly wounded in the relief of the Peking Legations. His first triumph in the war was when he bottled up the German Fleet. His next, we hope, will be when he begins the hitting on a large scale.

The First Blow

The veil which had shrouded the Fleet after its departure from Portland Roads was first lifted, after a fortnight, by news that on the morning of August 5th, the Third Destroyer Flotilla, with the parent vessel "Amphion," a light cruiser of 3,440 tons, carrying ten 4-in. and several smaller guns, had sighted a suspicious merchant vessel, which proved to be the "Königin Luise," of 2,163 gross tonnage, and a speed of twenty knots, a passenger ship of the Hamburg-Amerika Line, engaged in what proved to be the mine-laying of which so much has since been heard. When challenged, the stranger refused to stop, and when a shot was fired across her bows she used her speed in an effort to get away. She had dropped a line of mines about thirty miles from the Suffolk coast, in the track of coastwise commerce. The destroyers took up the chase, but a stern chase is always a long chase, and for many sea miles the destroyers pursued, getting into range when about thirty miles from Antwerp. Their marksmanship was splendid. One shot blew away the mine-layer's bridge, another did damage forward, and the third tore off her propeller. The "Lance," which was quite new, was instrumental in completing the destruction, and the "Lark" and "Linnet" used their guns effectively. The same evening the destroyers brought to Harwich twenty-eight wounded German seamen, of whom four died.

The "Amphion" Lost

The next morning came the first British disaster. The "Amphion" (Capt. C. H. Fox), returning from her cruise with the destroyers, touched a mine, said to have been of the double sort, connected by a chain

and doubtless laid by the "Königin Luise." The bow of the cruiser is said to have come in contact with the chain, and thus to have drawn up a mine on either side of her. A sheet of flame suddenly leapt up and enveloped the bridge, rendering the captain insensible. But he soon recovered and ran to stop the engines. By this time the bows of the vessel were flaming like a furnace, and it was impossible to reach the bridge or flood the fore magazine. The ship's back seemed to be broken, and she was already settling down by the bows. But there was not the slightest confusion. The men fell in as if on parade with the utmost composure. It was a splendid example of the discipline and courage of the sea. The wounded were removed away from the fore part of the ship, the destroyers closed round, and twenty minutes after the mine was struck, the officers and men had left the "Amphion." Hardly had they done so when a tremendous explosion occurred on board, the fore magazine blowing up, with the singular result that a shell fell in one of the rescuing boats, and killed two bluejackets and a rescued German sailor. Very shortly afterwards the "Amphion" went down. Captain Fox, who was received by the King at Buckingham Palace, and immediately appointed to the destroyer leader "Faulknor," which replaced the lost cruiser, spoke in the highest terms of the coolness and seamanlike skill of the officers and men of the sunken vessel.

A German Submarine Destroyed

During this time the Fleet was ready for action, and its cruisers and flotillas were continually sweeping the sea. The German High Sea Fleet, belying its name, was keeping snugly in port, but mine-layers were busy under false colours, and disasters to British and neutral vessels began to occur. Meanwhile the First Light Cruiser Squadron, Commodore W. E. Goodenough, was attacked by German submarines on August 9th. No damage was done to any of our vessels, but U15, a submarine built at Danzig, carrying about twelve officers and men, was sunk by the cruiser "Birmingham," Captain A. A. M. Duff, and the First Lord communicated the fact to the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, saying the city would learn with pride that the success was achieved by the cruiser named after it. This was the first recorded encounter of a large vessel with a submarine in actual warfare.

The details of the event have not been officially described, but a correspondent of the *Scotsman* gave an account, which possessed an appearance of realism. He said the boats approached showing only their periscopes, and that the "Birmingham" fired at the thin line of the periscope of U15 and shattered it, blinding the doomed submarine. Such a thing is possible, yet it is doubtful whether it really occurred. But the submarine received doubtless some damage, and came to the surface.

THE NORTH SEA MAP.

As the dark mass of her conning-tower showed, the guns of the "Birmingham" covered it, and in a moment, according to this account, the second shot of the fight was fired. The guns, no doubt, spoke to the submarine, but she is stated to have been sunk by ramming. The effect of the action upon the *moral* of the enemy, so far as the submarine service is concerned, was supposed to be considerable, but, as subsequent events proved, did not diminish the eagerness of German submarine officers to attack.

The Army Landed

But nothing stopped the transport of our troops to the Continent. Very few people were aware of what was in progress, except those immediately concerned. Sir John Jellicoe knew the situation, and enabled the Admiralty to tell the military authorities that the passage of troops and supplies would be safe. Our ships and destroyers were ready, and seaplanes and airships of the Naval Air Service patrolled eastward of the Straits of Dover, the airships continuing their watch twelve hours continuously. Seaplanes based on Ostend were watching and no vessel could approach from the east unperceived.

Sir John French crossed to France in the light cruiser "Sentinel," but no particulars were published of the number and classes of warships and transports engaged. Southampton was the chief port of embarkation, as it has been since for the dispatch of reinforcements and stores, and the base for the recovery and distribution of the wounded. The organization and management on both the naval and military sides were flawless. The army could not have left the country, wherever it had to fight, without the guardianship of the Navy, and it has been picturesquely said that the seaman carries his comrade the soldier on his back. The military machinery would have worked in vain if the Grand Fleet had not been at sea, with its gallant Naval Air Service scouting, taking charge of all British interests afloat, and it is true also that, however long the war may continue, the Navy will be the vital line upon which it will depend. It has been the Navy that has enabled the land base of the troops on the Continent to be shifted from port to port in France and Belgium to correspond with the movements of the armies.

The Hidden Danger

But it is true, nevertheless, that the mine-laying activity of the Germans in the North Sea had disastrous, though really unimportant results. A good many trawlers and drifters were lost, and it was assumed that the Germans had laid a line of mines extending from the Suffolk to the Yorkshire coast, and from thirty to fifty miles from the shore. The Wilson liner "Runo," bound from Hull to Archangel, was lost, and the Germans captured fifteen of our trawlers, and used them afterwards with other fishing boats in the work of

mine-laying. But a stricter method of patrol was instituted, and very soon the Admiralty were able to give assurance of safe passage; so that food and other supplies from Denmark, Norway and other ports began to come in almost as freely as during time of peace. The most serious loss to the Navy from the effect of the German mines was the sinking of the old gunboat "Speedy" of 810 tons on September 3rd. She had been engaged in fishery protection duties.

The "Pathfinder" Sunk

After the loss of the "Speedy," came, on September 5th, that of the "Pathfinder," a cruiser-scout of 2,940 tons, completed in 1905, and carrying nine 4-inch guns, acting as parent ship of a destroyer flotilla. She was commanded by Captain Francis Martin Leake, an officer whose ancestors had served for many generations in the Navy, one of them being Sir John Leake, a distinguished Admiral in the time of Queen Anne. Happily Captain Leake was saved among the wounded, but about 250 officers and men were lost. The disaster occurred near St. Abb's Head, and was at first supposed to be due to a mine, but afterwards it was announced that the loss was caused by a torpedo discharged by a submarine boat. The incident was seen from the shore, the clear atmospheric conditions affording even opportunity of witnessing the movements of the war vessels twenty miles seaward. Several people reported having seen the disaster through telescopes. The station officer at St. Abb's signalling station telephoned to the lifeboat officials to have the motor lifeboat launched. This was done, and following in the lifeboat's wake were a number of steam and motor fishing boats. On nearing the spot where the "Pathfinder" had been blown up an enormous stretch of wreckage was seen. In fact the water was densely strewn for about a mile and a half with wreckage of every conceivable description. The "Pathfinder" had been practically blown to pieces. Within about four minutes all trace of her was lost, save the wreckage of her hull and her fittings strewn over the waters. The incident was a vivid illustration of the suddenness with which disaster occurs at sea.

An Opportunity Lost

When the war broke out the Germans had in the Mediterranean the splendid battle-cruiser "Goeben," completed only in 1912 at Hamburg, a vessel with 22,640 tons displacement, heavily protected, and carrying ten 11-in., twelve 5·9-in., and some smaller guns. She had attained a speed of 28·6 knots in her trials. With her was the "Breslau," a cruiser of 4,500 tons, completed at Stettin in 1912, and carrying twelve 4·1-in. guns. Her trial speed was 27·5 knots. These ships bombarded Bona and Philippeville on August 4th, and then took refuge at Messina, in Italian territorial waters. There were high hopes of capturing them, but the British and

French ships in the vicinity could not attack them in a neutral roadstead, and taking advantage of their speed, they slipped out, eluded the vessels watching them, and ran to the Dardanelles. This was a sad disappointment and unfortunately the opportunity of adding these vessels to the British or French fleet was lost. Both cruisers remained in the Dardanelles, and were sold to the Turks, and they now fly the crescent flag. A sum of some £2,000,000 was to be paid, which is probably now being devoted to the building of German submarines. The officers and men, to the number of about 1,400, returned overland to Germany, but some officers and a nucleus of men remained in the ships under the Turkish flag. The Germans did not therefore lose very heavily.

XVI. AT HELIGOLAND AND ELSEWHERE

Come, all ye jolly sailors bold,
Whose hearts are cast in honour's mould,
While English glory I unfold,
  Huzza for the Arethusa!
  Her men are staunch
  To their fav'rite launch,
And when the foe shall meet our fire,
Sooner than strike we'll all expire
  On board of the Arethusa.

And, now we've driven the foe ashore,
Never to fight with Britons more,
  Let each fill his glass
  To his fav'rite lass;
A health to our captain and officers true,
And all that belong to the jovial crew
  On board of the Arethusa.

ALTHOUGH the German Fleet clung to the safety of its harbours, there began to appear, about the middle of August, "a certain liveliness" in the North Sea. Some German cruisers, destroyers and submarines ventured out, and, on August 18th, certain boats of our First Destroyer Flotilla were in action with one of the enemy's cruisers. For about twenty minutes shells were flying all round our boats, without ever a hit being made, but the flotilla had better luck, for two 4-in. shells struck the enemy, and put one of her guns out of action, necessitating her being sent into dock.

TAKING THEIR MEASURE

At this time our daring young officers were taking the measure and testing the quality of the enemy, and many plans were discussed for dealing a blow at the enemy. Three hours after the outbreak of war two submarines, E6 and E8, were actually exploring the Bight of Heligoland, and continued observations of these and other submarines were the basis for the plans for a great attack. On Friday, August 28th—now a red-letter day in the naval calendar—the well-conceived stroke was most successfully delivered, which placed in a brilliant light the splendid daring and wonderful seamanlike skill of British officers. The Admiralty described the operations as a "scooping movement," effected by a strong force of destroyers, headed by the light cruiser "Arethusa" (Captain Reginald G. Tyrwhitt, Commander of flotillas), a vessel of a new and remarkably swift and powerful class, a sort of super-destroyer of 3,750 tons, steaming at 29 knots, carrying two 6-in. and eight 4-in. guns.

A BLOW IN THE BIGHT

The object was to cut off the

German light craft which were cruising off Wilhelmshaven, in the Bight of Heligoland, in order that they might be engaged in the open sea. The "Arethusa" led the destroyers in, and was first attacked by two German cruisers, the firing lasting for 35 minutes, opening at a range of 3,000 yards. She sustained considerable damage and casualties, but drove off the two German cruisers, one of which was seriously injured by her 6-in. guns. The Germans were lured out, as had been intended by the destroyers which, as an officer said who was present, "put up the quarry in its lair." For that very reason, he wrote, the fight "did us of the destroyers more good than it did our big fellows, for my humble opinion, based on limited observation, is that no ship is really herself until she has been under fire. The second time she goes into action you may judge her character; she is not likely to do normally well the first time. We all need to be stiffened, and then given a week or two to take it all in. After that we are 'set.' A ship will always do better in her second action."

The enemy's cruisers were the "Mainz" and "Köln," each of about 4,250 tons, completed in 1910, and carrying twelve 4·1-in. and four 2·1-in. guns. The only advantage possessed by the "Arethusa" was that her two big guns were of 6-in. calibre. There was also the German cruiser "Ariadne," an older vessel (1901) of 2,618 tons, carrying ten 4·1-in. guns. After the first encounter, the "Ariadne" and her companions withdrew, and then, in company with the "Fearless," the Light Cruiser Squadron went in and sank the "Mainz."

A Homely Illustration

A lieutenant who was in one of the destroyers gave a lively account of the action:

"Have you ever noticed a dog rush in on a flock of sheep and scatter them. It goes for the nearest and barks, and it goes so much faster than the flock that it bunches up with its companions; the dog then barks at another, and the sheep spread out fanwise, so that all round in front of the dog there is a semicircle of sheep and behind him none. That was much what we did at 7 a.m., the 28th. The sheep were the German torpedo craft, who fell back just on the limits of range and tried to lure us within fire of the Heligoland forts. *Pas si bête!* But a cruiser came out and engaged our 'Arethusa'; they had a real heart-to-heart talk while we looked on, and a few of us tried to shoot at the enemy too, though it was beyond our distance. We were getting nearer and nearer Heligoland all the time; there was a thick mist, and I expected every minute to find the forts on the island bombarding us; so 'Arethusa' presently drew off, after landing at least one good shell on the enemy."

Going Merrily!

The fight continued with much manœuvring, and the "saucy Are-

thusa" suffered rather severely, some of her guns being disabled, and her speed reduced to 10 knots, and she might have fared badly if the Battle-Cruiser Squadron had not arrived and driven off the "Mainz," "Köln" and "Ariadne" in a sinking condition. But before this happened the "Arethusa" and "Fearless" had rendered splendid service in supporting and protecting the destroyers, one of which belonging to the submarines had been chased away. Then the destroyers found the "Arethusa," but in a "bunched up" state, in which they came under the fire of one of the German cruisers. "You would have supposed our captain had done this sort of thing all his life," says the officer we have quoted; "he gives me the impression of a Nelson officer who has lived in a state of suspended animation since, but yet has kept pace with the times, and is nowise perturbed at finding his frigate a destroyer. We went full speed ahead at once at the first salvo to string the bunch out, and thus offer less target, and the commodore from the 'Arethusa' made a signal to us to attack with torpedoes."

The destroyers approached the enemy and fired their torpedoes in succession. The "Fearless," a light cruiser attached to the First Flotilla, then came up and engaged the "Mainz," and the destroyers joined her. The narrived the Battle-Cruiser Squadron and other cruisers. The situation had become critical, and the big cruisers put in effective blows, escaping submarine attack by high speed and the use of the helm.

A Great Sight

Says our officer: "To see a real big four-funneler spouting flame, which flame denoted shells starting, and those shells not aimed at us but for us, was the most cheerful thing possible. Even as Kipling's infantryman under heavy fire cries, 'The guns, thank Gawd, the guns,' when his own artillery had come into action over his head, so did I feel as those 'Big Brothers' came careering across.

"Once we were in safety I hated it; we had just been having our own imaginations stimulated on the subject of shells striking us, and now a few minutes later to see another ship not three miles away reduced to a piteous mass of unrecognisability, wreathed in black fumes from which flared out angry gusts of fire, like Vesuvius in eruption, as an unending stream of hundred pound shells burst on board; it just pointed the moral and showed us what might have been! The 'Mainz' was immensely gallant. The last I saw of her, absolutely wrecked alow and aloft, her whole midships a fuming inferno, she had one gun forward and one aft still spitting forth fury and defiance, 'like a wild cat mad with wounds.' Our own four-funneled friend recommenced at this juncture with a couple of salvoes, but rather half-heartedly; there straight ahead of

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THE HELIGOLAND BIGHT MAP.

us in lordly procession, like elephants walking through a pack of ' pi-dogs,' came the ' Lion,' ' Queen Mary,' ' Invincible,' and ' New Zealand,' our battle-cruisers. Great and grim and uncouth as some antediluvian monsters, how solid they looked, how utterly earth-quaking !

" We pointed out our greatest aggressor to them, whom they could not see from where they were, and they passed down the field of battle with the little destroyers on their left and the destroyed on their right, and we went west while they went east, and turned north between the poor four-funneler and her home, and just a little later we heard the thunder of their guns for a space, then all silence, and we knew.

" The ' Mainz ' and ' Köln ' sank, also the ' Ariadne ' and two destroyers. Others only saved themselves by scattered flight. Individual destroyers did not shrink from attacking the enemy's cruisers ; and two of them, the ' Laurel ' and ' Liberty ' were knocked about a good deal.

A Dramatic Incident

" The destroyers exposed themselves in endeavouring to save the drowning German sailors, and the ' Defender ' was actually driven off by another German cruiser while engaged in this work. In this event happened the most romantic, dramatic, and piquant episode that modern war can ever show. The ' Defender,' having sunk an enemy, lowered a whaler to pick up her swimming survivors ; before the whaler got back an enemy's cruiser came up and chased the ' Defender,' and thus she abandoned her whaler. Imagine their feelings ; alone in an open boat without food, twenty-five miles from the nearest land, and that land the enemy's fortress, with nothing but fog and foes around them. Suddenly a swirl alongside, and up, if you please, pops his Britannic Majesty's submarine ' E4,' opens his conning tower, takes them all on board, shuts up again, dives, and brings them home 250 miles ! Is not that magnificent ? No novel would dare face the critics with an episode like that in it, except, perhaps, Jules Verne; and all true!" But "E4" could not accommodate the whole of the thirty Germans picked up, and many of them were allowed to return to Germany in the " Defender's " whaler in charge of an unwounded German lieutenant. The German authorities admitted that " the British, without stopping to consider their own danger, sent out lifeboats in order to save our men." Gallant Lieut.-Commander E. W. Keir was the hero of this splendid episode, and with many of his comrades he was mentioned very honourably in dispatches.

" Fortunate and Fruitful "

The complements of the " Mainz," " Köln " and " Ariadne " and of the two destroyers known to have been sunk, aggregated about 1,200 officers and men, all of whom, with the exception of these thirty and about 300

wounded and unwounded prisoners, perished. Besides this there was the loss, which must have been severe, on board the German torpedo boats and other cruisers which did not sink during the action. The total British casualties amounted to eighty-eight killed and wounded, among whom, however, were included two officers of exceptional merit, Lieut.-Com. Nigel K. W. Barttelot and Lieut. Eric W. P. Westmacott. All the British ships were fit for service in a week or ten days. "The success of the operation," as the Admiralty announced, "was due in the first instance to the information brought by the submarine officers, who had during the past three weeks shown extraordinary daring and enterprise in penetrating the enemy's waters." The commanding British officers engaged were Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty, Rear-Admirals A. G. H. W. Moore and A. H. Christian, and Commodores Roger J. B. Keyes, Reginald G. Tyrwhitt, and William E. Goodenough. In honour of the occasion the Admiralty ordered that, in a conspicuous place in the "Arethusa," upon a brass plate, should be placed the adapted verses from an old ballad describing the conflict of the "Saucy Arethusa," with the French frigate "Belle Poule," June 17th, 1778; also that the words "Heligoland, August 28th, 1914," should appear in gold lettering in the other vessels engaged.

Waiting on Events

After this brilliant action, no great events were recorded for some weeks. Strong squadrons and flotillas of the British Fleet swept through the North Sea and right up to the German coast without encountering any opposition. Sir John Jellicoe was in command, and a reconnaissance in force was made by the Fleet, the services of mine sweepers being employed. The Germans continued to follow a passive defence policy, and their torpedo craft of various kinds were less active after the affair in the Heligoland Bight. As regards the mines laid by the Germans, it was pointed out unofficially that the autumn and winter gales would probably sweep most of them over to the German and Dutch coasts. Up to this time the wear-and-tear warfare had worked out entirely to our advantage from the point of view of material, while in regard to the personnel there was the assurance of Mr. Churchill, given in a speech at the London Opera House, that under the strain put upon them of continual watching and constant attention to their duty under war conditions, the health of the Fleet was much better after the declaration of war than in time of peace, that the percentage of sickness had been lower, and that there was no reason why we should not keep up the same process of naval control, and the same exercise of sea power on which we had lived and were living, for what was almost an indefinite period. "By one of those dispensations of Providence," said the First Lord, "which appeal to the German

Emperor, the nose of the bulldog has been slanted backwards, so that it can breathe with comfort without letting go."

The "Hela" Sunk

Shortly afterwards the Germans suffered another loss. A brilliant young officer, Lieut.-Commander Max K. Horton, in command of the submarine "E 9," penetrated to the very Bight of Heligoland, and on the morning of September 13th sank the cruiser "Hela." "E 9" is one of the latest British submarines and was only delivered by Messrs. Vickers early this year. The "Hela" was of 2,000 tons displacement, originally designed for twenty and a half knots. With an armament of four 3·4-in. and six 4-pounder guns and three torpedo tubes, she was weaker than the "Ariadne," of 2,645 tons, which was sunk in the Heligoland affair. Her complement numbered 168 officers and men.

Fortune smiled upon Lieut.-Commander Horton, for it was he, in the same boat, about a month later, this time off the mouth of the Ems, sank the German destroyer S 126.

The Germans lost yet another cruiser by the stranding and blowing up of the "Magdeburg" in the Gulf of Finland on August 27th, in action with the Russian cruisers "Bogatyr" and "Pallada." The German account of this affair was that the "Magdeburg" ran ashore in a fog on the Island of Odensholm, at the entrance of the Gulf of Finland. Owing to the thick weather, the other warships in the vicinity were unable to render assistance. All efforts to refloat the vessel having failed, the captain decided to sacrifice her, as a superior Russian naval force was preparing to attack. Under heavy fire from the Russian Fleet, the majority of the cruiser's crew were saved by torpedo boat "V 26." Seventeen men were killed and twenty-one wounded. Eighty-five were missing, including the captain. The "Magdeburg" was blown up. The Russian account stated that the "Magdeburg" ran aground in a fog. In the morning, when the fog lifted, the two Russian cruisers were sent to look for her, and opened fire. The German cruiser replied, but soon had to cease firing. Russian shells destroyed the funnels and caused an explosion, which shattered the bows as far as the captain's bridge. Some of the officers and crew were taken prisoners.

XVII. LOSSES AND GAINS AT SEA

WAR is never made without loss, and it was on the morning of September 22nd that a really serious loss fell upon the British Navy, when the armoured cruisers "Aboukir," "Cressy" and "Hogue" were sunk by torpedoes discharged by a German submarine some twenty miles from the Dutch coast. The cruisers were vessels of 12,000 tons, each carrying two 9·2 in., twelve 6-in., and some smaller guns, and they were commanded, in the order in which they are named, by Captains John E. Drummond, Robert W. Johnson and Wilmot S. Nicholson. They were completed in 1901–2, and were obsolescent, so that the loss of nearly sixty officers and 1,400 men who went down with them was far more serious than the loss of the vessels themselves. Their assailant was the submarine "U 9," a vessel not of the newest class, commanded by Lieut.-Commander Otto Weddigen, who, in an account he gave of the affair, said his task was not really difficult.

The cruisers were engaged in patrolling work as an essential part of the arrangements by which the control of the seas and the safety of the country are maintained, and, as the Admiralty said, the lives lost were "as usefully, as necessarily and as gloriously devoted to the requirements of the service as if the loss had been incurred in a general action." Some suspicious fishing craft were in the vicinity, and it was supposed that they concealed the approach of the submarine.

HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

The "Aboukir" was struck about 6.25 a.m. on the starboard beam, heeling over and turning turtle, to sink in about 35 minutes. As soon as her damage was seen, the "Cressy" and "Hogue" closed in to render assistance, getting out their boats, and throwing overboard all mess-stools and tables and other wooden objects to enable the men in the water to keep afloat, closing watertight doors, scuttles and deadlights. Strict discipline prevailed, and just as some of the "Aboukir's" boats were approaching the other ships, the "Hogue" was struck by a torpedo, apparently near the after 9·2-in. magazine, for a second heavy explosion immediately followed the first. The ship heeled rapidly and finally turned keel up, and then

sank at 7.55 a.m. Meanwhile, the "Cressy" had been struck on the starboard side, and a second torpedo completed her destruction. She sank as her sisters had done, but a large number of men were saved by throwing a target overboard.

It was believed at the time of the disaster that more submarines than one were engaged, but doubt has since been thrown upon this. Mr. Albert Dougherty, chief gunner of the "Cressy," gave an excellent account of the disaster in the *Daily Chronicle*.

An Eye-Witness

"The water," he said, "was fairly rough and the ships were steaming slowly in line. Suddenly I heard a great crash, and saw the middle ship, the 'Aboukir,' heeling over and going down rapidly. Those aboard the 'Cressy' came to the conclusion that she had been struck by a torpedo, and kept a sharp look-out for these missiles while steaming to her assistance. The 'Hogue' was closing up towards the sinking ship with the object of assisting the crew, who were dropping into the water, when a second crash was heard. The 'Hogue' also had been torpedoed. The 'Cressy' closed to both ships to save as many of their men as possible." Mr. Dougherty continued:

> The brave fellows calmly awaited our approach. We drew near, and at that moment someone shouted to me, "Look out, sir, there's a submarine on our port beam!" I saw her. She was about 400 yards away and only her periscope showed above the waves. I took careful aim at her with a 12-pounder. The shot went over by about 2 yards, and that gave me the range. I fired again and hit the periscope, and she disappeared. Up she came again, and this time part of her conning tower was visible. So I fired my third shot and smashed in the top of her conning-tower. The men standing by shouted, "She's hit, sir," and then let out a great cheer as the submarine sank; and while she was going down two German sailors floated up from her, both swimming hard.
>
> After that we shot at a trawler flying a Dutch flag which was a thousand yards away, and evidently a German boat in disguise, directing the operations. She must have covered the approach of the enemy's submarines, and we trained our guns on her, hit her with the first shot and set her on fire. I do not know what her ultimate fate was. By this time we had already been struck by one torpedo, but the damage was not in a vital spot, and we should have kept afloat all right. We saw another submarine on our starboard side, and we made a desperate effort to get her, but we failed, and her torpedo got home in our engine room. Then the "Cressy" began to turn over, and this I will

say for the men, they acted like British sailors, and those who died, died as Britons should. Captain Johnson was on the bridge, and in these critical minutes he spoke some words of advice to the crew. "Keep cool, my lads, keep cool," he said in a steady voice. "Pick up a spar, my lads, and put it under your arm. That'll help you to keep afloat until the destroyers pick you up." That was the last I saw of Captain Johnson. He was one of the best—and loved by all his men. We were first torpedoed at seven o'clock, and one torpedo actually passed under our stern. They were discharging torpedoes at us while the water was thick with drowning men. We sank at 7.45, and when I dropped into the sea, clinging to a bit of wood, there were men all around me, and their spirit was splendid. We shouted cheery messages to one another, and I remember a seaman calling to me, "It's a long way to Tipperary this way," and I cried back, "It is, if you're going to swim!"

Afloat for Four Hours

Mr. Dougherty was afloat in the sea for four hours, and then the destroyers hove in sight. Numbers of men were near, all holding to pieces of spar, according to the captain's instructions, and the gunner yelled to them, "Buck up, they're coming for us."

The "Lowestoft" and a division of destroyers, trawlers and boats saved a considerable number.

The Admiralty made comments on the loss of these vessels, in which it was said that the "Hogue" and "Cressy" were sunk because they proceeded to the assistance of their consort, thus presenting an easy target to further submarine attacks. The natural promptings of humanity led to heavy losses "which would have been avoided by a strict adherence to military considerations." Modern naval war was presenting us with so many new and strange situations that an error of judgment of this character was pardonable. But it was necessary to point out for future guidance that the conditions which prevail when one vessel of a squadron is injured in a minefield or is exposed to submarine attack, are analogous to those which occur in an action, and that the rule of leaving disabled ships to their own resources is applicable, so far at any rate as large vessels are concerned. No act of humanity, whether to friend or foe, should lead to a neglect of the proper precautions and dispositions of war, and no measures should be taken to save life which prejudiced the military situation. Small craft of all kinds should, however, be directed by wireless to close on the damaged ship with all speed.

The Commerce Destroyer

Great efforts were made from the beginning of the war to run down

THE AIR MENACE: GERMAN ZEPPELIN STATIONS.

the German cruisers and auxiliaries which had escaped to sea. The "Highflyer" sank the big German converted liner "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse" at the close of August off the coast of West Africa. The cruiser "Karlsruhe" sank a number of British merchant vessels in the South Atlantic. The German cruiser "Emden" captured and sank many British merchant vessels in the Bay of Bengal, and threw some shells into Madras, afterwards transferring her activities to the Arabian Sea, and later, by a daring surprise, she destroyed a small Russian cruiser and a French destroyer at Penang. For a time the British vessels in Indian waters were employed in convoying the ships bringing the Indian troops to Marseilles. The "Königsberg" discovered at Zanzibar the small, old cruiser "Pegasus" (Commander, J. A. Ingles) engaged in cleaning engines and boilers. The cruiser, in company with the "Astræa," had just destroyed Dar-es-Salaam, the chief town in German East Africa, but she was no match for the "Königsberg," which, finding her at a disadvantage, pounded her for fifteen minutes and disabled her. The German Colonial empire was rapidly crumbling away. New Zealand sent an expedition to seize the German possessions in Samoa. The Royal Australian Navy completed the capture of the German possessions in New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago and Marshall Islands. Many wireless telegraph stations were destroyed. Togo and the Cameroons were also captured, with much shipping in the Cameroon river. Indeed, save for German South-West Africa, —which led to the Maritz incident, and then the Beyers–De Wet incident—the German Colonies were all captured. A combined Japanese and British force engaged in operations for the capture and occupation of Kiao-chau, and soon not a "place in the sun" will be left. The miserable wretch who, in the "Arabian Nights," builds up a glowing future out of the sale of the wares in his pedlar's tray, and kicks it over with his foot, hardly compares with the German Emperor, who dreamed of a great world-dominion, and has lost it all by provoking war.

A Stirring Fight

One of the most stirring episodes of the naval fighting was the sinking of the splendid German liner "Cap Trafalgar," which was being employed as an auxiliary cruiser, in a very gallant action. The ex-Cunard liner "Carmania" met the "Cap Trafalgar," which was of about her own size, on September 14th, off the east coast of South America, and the action which followed will go down to history as a brilliant achievement for British naval arms. The "Carmania" is of 19,524 gross tonnage, with a speed of eighteen knots, and was launched in 1905. The "Cap Trafalgar" was of 18,710 gross tonnage, with a speed of seventeen and a half knots, and was launched in 1908.

The "Carmania" was, like all the Cunard vessels, a subsidised liner, held at the disposal of the Government for hire or purchase. Captain Noel Grant, late of the battleship "Irresistible," commissioned her as a warship on August 13th, Commander James Barr, R.N.R., who was in charge of her as a merchant vessel, remaining as second-in-command. The "Cap Trafalgar" arrived at Buenos Ayres on August 6th with a cargo of guns for German merchant vessels there, having already mounted some herself. The action lasted one hour and forty-five minutes, when the German ship capsized and sank, her survivors being rescued by an empty collier. Of the crew of the "Carmania" nine men were killed, five seriously injured, and twenty-one men slightly wounded. None of the officers were injured. The First Lord sent the following telegram to Captain Noel Grant:—"Well done. You have fought a fine action to a successful finish." The "Cap Trafalgar" made a good fight, and was not sunk until after a good deal of manœuvring on the part of Captain Noel Grant to bring his guns to bear effectually on his adversary. The German vessel went down with colours flying, but not without inflicting considerable damage upon her assailant.

Poste and Riposte

Captain Cecil H. Fox, late of the "Amphion," and afterwards of the "Faulknor" destroyer, had his revenge for the loss of the first-named vessel on October 17th, when in the new light cruiser "Undaunted," with four fine destroyers of the "L" class, he sank four German destroyers off the Dutch coast after an action lasting about an hour. It was a brilliant piece of work, though the Germans were completely outnumbered.

On the previous day, the old cruiser "Hawke," Captain P. E. Tudor Williams, was sunk by the torpedo of a German submarine. With her sister ship, the "Theseus" (which was unsuccessfully attacked by a submarine), she was engaged in examination service, and about 400 valuable officers and men were lost. A little later, submarine "E 3" (Lieut.-Commander G. F. Cholmley,) was sunk by the Germans.

When the tide of battle on the Continent rolled up to the Channel coasts, three gunboats, sometimes called monitors, taken over from the Brazilians at the beginning of the war, rendered magnificent service in shelling the enemy's positions, inflicting very great losses with their 6-in. guns and 4·7 howitzers. Commander E. J. A. Fullerton was in command.

During the whole of the hostilities the Royal Naval Air Service (Naval Wing of the Royal Flying Corps) has been occupied in the active use of its airships, aeroplanes and seaplanes.

While the Expeditionary Force was being sent abroad a strong patrol to the eastward of the Straits of Dover

was undertaken by both seaplanes and airships. The airships patrolled between the French and English coasts, sometimes for twelve hours on end, while a temporary seaplane base was established at Ostend, and a patrol kept up between this place and the English coast. By this means it was impossible for the enemy's ships to approach the Straits without being seen for very many miles.

On one occasion during one of the airship patrols it became necessary to change a propeller blade of one of the engines. The captain feared it would be necessary to descend for this purpose, but two of the crew immediately volunteered to carry out this difficult task in the air, and climbing out on to the bracket carrying the propeller shafting, they completed the hazardous work of changing the propeller's blade 2,000ft. above the sea.

So generally has progressed the naval fight, we losing a ship now and then, as we must while controlling the sea. The " Hermes " cruiser, an old ship, was torpedoed by a submarine in Dover Straits. Now Lord Fisher is again at the Admiralty as First Sea Lord, and his vigour means an ever-tightening grip by our sea power, especially in the North Sea, where, indeed, special measures have been taken to deal with the felonious strewing of German mines. Everybody who knew Prince Louis of Battenberg's gifts as a sailor and his services to the Navy regretted his retirement from the First Sea Lordship, but if that was to be, then Lord Fisher, beyond doubt, was the man to take up the reins.

P.S.

It should be added by way of postscript to these Naval Chapters that on August 27th, when Ostend was occupied by a force of Marines, a strong squadron of aeroplanes under Wing-Commander Samson, complete with all transport and equipment, was also sent over, the aeroplanes flying *via* Dover and Calais. Advanced bases were established some distance inland, and on several occasions skirmishes took place between armed motor-car supports and bands of Uhlans. All these affairs were successful. The naval armed cars and aeroplanes assisted French forces of artillery and infantry on several occasions. Commander Samson performed distinguished services in this work. Captain Williams, R.M.A., was also mentioned as having shown much coolness and capability in a difficult situation. Air reconnaissance by the naval airmen extended for considerable distances into the enemy's country. Squadron-Commander Gerrard, in command of a detached squadron of aeroplanes, crossed the Rhine and made an attack on Düsseldorf. Good work has been done in dropping bombs on positions of military importance and railway communications, and at Düsseldorf an airship shed and the airship within were destroyed.

XVIII. THE EASTERN CAMPAIGN

DISTANCE does not always lend enchantment to the view. The very distance of the warfare on the eastern side of Europe has, in some measure, made it less spectacular, but, nevertheless, it has been of transcendent importance on the whole course of the great conflict. Nay, it may be said of a surety that the operations in East Prussia and Galicia in the early stages of the campaign directly and most vitally affected the position in the western theatre of war. Every stunning blow struck by Russia in the east resounded in the west, and the military defeats of Austria by the Russian forces opened a new phase of the war almost at the commencement.

A RAPID "STEAM-ROLLER"

Defeat has laid bare the preconcerted plans of Germany and Austria that were intended to check and overwhelm the Russian hosts. The enemies of Russia calculated too incautiously upon the slow mobilisation of their northern adversary, and in that they dug a pit for themselves. All knew Russia to be mighty with her millions of armed men, but she was compared to a "steam-roller" for movement. Now she has surprised the world, and no countries more than Germany and Austria, by the quickness with which she got into her military stride, no less than by the splendid capacity of her army, which was, perhaps, unduly depreciated as a result of the Russo-Japanese War. It is clear that the common enemy meant to strike a blow at Russia through Poland, and to seize Warsaw, the capital. This part of Russia is wedged in on the Silesian side of Germany, and along its southern extremity runs the Austrian territory of Galicia. In fact, Warsaw is in a direct line with Berlin, and obviously would be a point of Russian concentration for a march on the German capital, from which it is 330 miles distant.

PLANS THAT WENT WRONG

The share of Austria in the campaign was, at a given moment, to invade Poland, and every preparation had been made beforehand towards this end. Huge bodies of the flower of the Austrian troops were massed in Galicia, and they started on their ill-fated march on Warsaw. It was thought that slow-moving Russia

would be caught napping, but, as a matter of fact, the Russians had secretly moved vast armies upon Galicia. They drove back and completely overwhelmed the Austrians. The military pride of the great dual empire was, by a succession of swift blows, humbled in the dust.

This *dénouement* was the last thing expected by either Austria or Germany. The Germans had had their attention arrested by the descent of a Russian army on the north-east of Prussia. This force at first swept the Germans before it, and spread consternation, which reached even to Berlin. Then the German Emperor, alarmed for his "beloved East Prussia," hurried troops from the western side to stem the Russian tide there. The bulk of these reinforcements went, however, to the wrong quarter, as events showed. After suffering a reverse, the Russian army in the north-east of Prussia biding its time was content to fall back before the fresh German troops. The operations in that sphere could wait. Not so the real battles upon which the future of the great war would turn. These were being fought in Poland and Galicia, where the Austrian armies were being crushed, and the Germans that too late hastened to their aid shared in their disaster. The object of the Russians was clearly to crush Austria first, and in that they well-nigh succeeded.

How Hostilities Began

At the beginning of hostilities, Germany had left to Austria the major part of the task of attempting to break the power of Russia. The Germans were not in great force then in north-east Prussia, but they had massed a small force in Silesia on the Russian frontier prepared to co-operate with Austria in the march on Warsaw. The Austrians made their main attack by invading Poland towards Lublin, while another army made a flank attack through Galicia. The Austrians were early in the field, having been the first to mobilise, and, high-spirited, they set out gaily on the way that was speedily to end in catastrophe. For when the tumult and the shouting on the outbreak of war had died away, it was found that the Russians were moving with three large armies, under the Grand Duke Nicholas, Commander-in-Chief. One in the north was descending on East Prussia. The main army, in the centre, was prepared to strike from Warsaw, and later it fell to a portion of this army to co-operate with the third Russian army, which had invaded Galicia.

The First Big Battle

First to get into action was the northern Russian army, commanded by General Rennenkampf, who distinguished himself greatly in the Russo-Japanese War. Almost within twenty-four hours of the declaration of war Cossacks crossed the German frontier near Johannisburg, and at other parts of north-east Prussia the

Russians crossed the border, driving the enemy's cavalry before them. These Cossack patrols penetrated ten miles into German territory, and captured and burnt the railway stations at Bialla and Borjimen, thus cutting the railway communications. All along the frontier the Germans fell back, burning their villages in their retreat. It was found that the inhabitants in many places were armed, and their houses often loopholed. Even if caught with arms in their hands, the German population was not treated with the atrocious cruelty that the Germans meted out to innocent women and children in the western war arena.

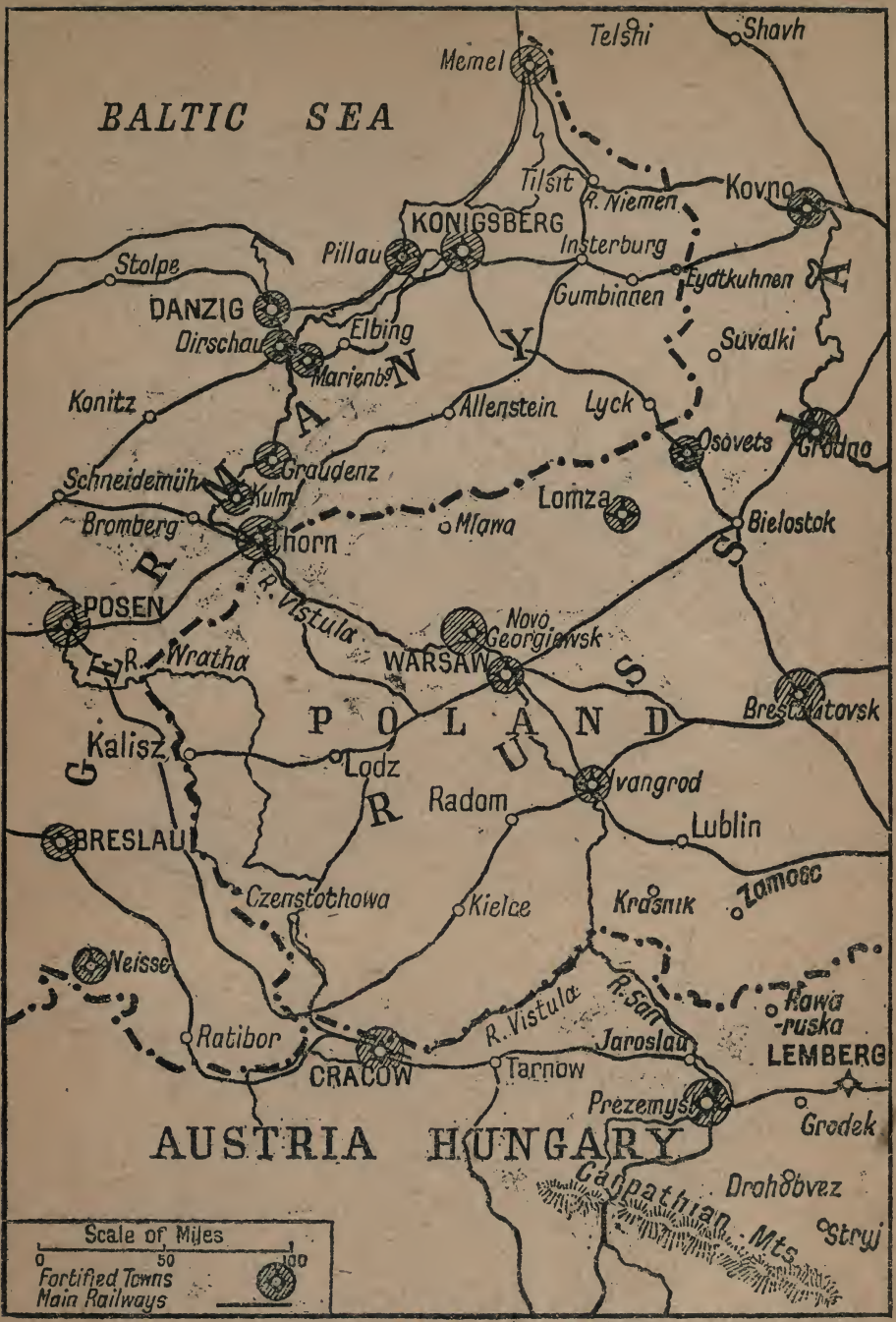
Then came the capture of Gumbinnen and Insterburg in East Prussia. The battle of Gumbinnen was the first serious engagement in this part of the campaign. The Russians had been advancing for several days when on August 19th a successful cavalry attack was made at Liedenthal, while the infantry at the same time drove out the enemy from Pilkallen. The Germans then retired to the west, concentrating towards Gumbinnen, which has a population of about 15,000 and is seventy-two miles east of the great German fortress of Königsberg. The Russians, after attending to their wounded and bringing up munitions, moved forward once again. But the Germans had been reinforced from Königsberg, and offered a very stubborn resistance.

An Artillery Duel

A terrific artillery duel commenced at daybreak on August 20th. Both sides had many guns in action, but the Germans were superior in the weight of metal, having brought heavy artillery from the fortress in their rear. The Russian infantry were hurled to the attack, and right bravely they faced the storm of projectiles that burst upon them as they moved forward in skirmishing order. They were not checked by the fierce fire of field and machine guns, but with a gallant and irresistible rush drove the enemy out of his positions one after another. It was a splendid exhibition of the stolid bravery and determination of the Russian troops. The German cavalry attempted to carry out counter-attacks, but every time they were beaten back with heavy loss.

Fighting All Day

The fight here mentioned lasted fourteen hours, and was only interrupted by the fall of night. Several positions were most fiercely contested, and were won first by one side and then by the other, but, in the end, all the positions remained in the hands of the Russians. An entire brigade of the enemy was annihilated by machine-gun fire, some 3,000 dead being left on this part of the field. The Russians captured thirty guns, and, apart from the wounded, took sixteen officers and 400 men prisoners. At nightfall the Germans retreated



"DAILY CHRONICLE" War Map drawn by G. W. BACON & CO., Ltd., 127, Strand, London

THE EASTERN WAR THEATRE AND FORTRESSES.

beyond Gumbinnen, from which the inhabitants had fled in terror.

The Germans made great use of their artillery that day, and a striking incident is related of a brave Russian commander. As great havoc was being wrought by a Russian battery, the enemy brought a concentrated fire of howitzers and field guns to play upon it. The commander of the battery was mortally wounded, and he was carried back to the field hospital where he expired after calmly giving directions for his burial and the arrangement of his affairs. To his last breath he continued telling the story to those around him of the triumphant advance of the Russian army, and his final words were, "I am quite satisfied. My battery is in good hands."

An Hospital Incident

So it was, for the battle meant the defeat and retreat of the Germans. While the fight was going on three German cavalry regiments had re-occupied Pilkallen, and it was the business of the Russians to expel them on the following day. They offered little resistance, and fled in disorder, flinging away their carbines and lances as they rode off in hot haste. The Russians captured four officers and eighty men.

There was, however, a disagreeable hospital incident during the fighting round Pilkallen. Three Russian field hospitals were moving towards the front when German cavalry called upon them to halt. It was in vain that the doctors protested, pointing out that they were going to render assistance to the wounded of both sides. The commander of the German cavalry ordered the whole equipment to be burned, and the medical staff to be sent as prisoners to Pilkallen. On the way to the latter place the convoy was attacked by Cossacks. The German escort thereupon fled precipitately, screaming in terrified tones: "Cossacks! Cossacks!" Such is the terror with which these famous Russian horsemen are regarded. Unhappily in the confusion a nurse was wounded.

Cigarettes in War

Meanwhile Pilkallen had been re-occupied by the Russians, and the hospital staff made their way there. On the following day one of the medical officers magnanimously supplied cigarettes to the German officers who had commanded the escort, and who had been captured. Cigarettes have been a great bond of union between combatants in this war.

It was on August 23rd that the Russians made an attack on Insterburg, which is the junction of the railway leading north to Tilsit, west to Königsberg, south-west to the fortress of Thorn, and east to the Russian frontier at Wirballen. The Germans made no attempt to hold their entrenched positions, and as they fled a portion of the Russian army occupied the town. The German force then fell back on their great fortress of Königsberg with

the Russian advance guard in hot pursuit. During these engagements the Germans lost heavily in killed and wounded, while a large number of prisoners were taken.

Covering a front of 100 miles, the Russians continued to push their advance with great vigour, and occupied Lyck, a frontier town, 55 miles south of Gumbinnen The Germans abandoned, without firing a shot, a fortified position on the River Angerapp which runs through the important railway centre of Intersburg, and the track of their hurried retreat was strewn with shells, cartridges and shrapnels, which they had thrown away in their flight.

The Russians in their advance in East Prussia found that the inhabitants resorted to all manner of tricks, and showed considerable duplicity. There had been a prearranged plan of operations agreed upon between the German military authorities and some of the people. Sometimes when the Russians entered a village, a cottage would mysteriously take fire. It was a signal to the enemy, for soon the village was shelled by the Germans.

This signalling was afterwards prevented by sending cavalry ahead to search all the cottages. Once the Germans shelled and utterly destroyed one of their own towns that lay behind the Russian lines. The flying inhabitants, old men and women, burned bridges behind them. Yet there were no savage reprisals on the population such as the Kaiser's troops, with much less justification, ruthlessly carried out on the innocent people of Belgium.

Marching Victoriously

Onwards day by day the Russians continued to sweep victoriously along the north-east Prussian frontier, driving the Germans before them. General Rennenkampf in carrying out these operations with great energy and judgment had evidently in his mind the effect that such an invasion of Germany would have on the western theatre of war, and as events proved he was really calculating more upon this than any solid immediate advantage to be reaped. The Russians next occupied Angerburg, a town thirty-two miles to the south of Insterburg. Fierce and successful battles were fought on August 23rd and 24th, in the region to the north of Nerdenberg on the German frontier due south of Königsberg. The German fortified positions at Orlan and Frankenan, forty-six miles south-east of Königsberg, were also forced by the Russians who attacked with hand grenades and bayonets, the 20th Corps of the German army being routed. The enemy fled to Osterode, abandoning cannon, machine guns, caissons, and many prisoners. Osterode is on the Thorn-Insterburg railway, one of the chief strategic lines of Eastern Prussia. The Russians likewise occupied the important fortified town of Allenstein, a great

railway junction leading to the fortresses of Thorn and Danzig.

It was for the time being a flowing tide of victory for the Russians, who were practically overrunning one side of Eastern Prussia. Everywhere the Germans, unprepared for this Russian avalanche, were being beaten back, and were flying in disorder. At Soldau it is stated that the Germans in retreating strayed into morasses and were drowned; while the Russians used the dead bodies of their foes as stepping-stones. The Russians gave the world a superb exhibition of quick and effective strokes at the enemy. Their cavalry distinguished itself in these rapid marches, and the infantry carried position after position at the point of the bayonet.

One brilliant charge of the Russian Horseguards recalls that of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. The cavalry was ordered to attack the enemy, who from a village was pouring in a murderous artillery fire on the Russian position. The first squadron rode straight for the guns, and were mowed down by the galling fire. A second squadron followed, and were only saved by another squadron rushing on the enemy from the flank, and sabring the gunners to right and to left. The Germans then "ran like rabbits." Cold steel was not at all to their taste, as was shown over and over again.

The Kaiser Alarmed

Faced with this disaster to German arms, and with the population fleeing and burning their own villages as the Russians advanced, it is no wonder that the alarm spread to Berlin. The German defeat wore the aspect of panic. The three German army corps defeated at Gumbinnen had retired into the safety of the fortress of Königsberg, which was threatened with investment. Many of the people of East Prussia were taking refuge in Berlin, whither they carried the alarming tale of the oncoming Russian hosts breaking down the first line of German defence on the Masurian Lakes, and carrying all before them in their invading march. The result was seen in a dispatch from the Kaiser in the western battlefield to his Council of Ministers in Berlin, charging them with the immediate organisation of all possible relief for the population of his beloved province of East Prussia, which was being invaded by the Russians. What happened further, and of greater importance, was that the Kaiser withdrew a portion of his army from the western theatre of war, and transferred it to Prussia to stem the tide of the invasion. This was what had been calculated upon by the Allies. The dashing and successful operations of General Rennenkampf were designed to relieve the German pressure in the west, and, at the same time, attracted a large German force to Prussia, while by far the heaviest Russian attack was being actually delivered on the Austrians, who were being crushed in Galicia.

A Changed Situation

Certainly, with the arrival of the German reinforcements in Prussia, a change came over the scene there. From August 28th to September 7th the Germans continued to bring up fresh troops, aided by their highly-developed railway system. They strongly reinforced their line in the southern portion of eastern Prussia, and brought into action heavy artillery from their forts. With considerably superior numbers, they flung themselves on two Russian army corps at Osterode. The powerful Krupp siege guns, about which there had been some mystery, were used, and inflicted heavy losses on the Russians, who fought heroically, but had to retreat. In this fight General Samsonoff and several Russian staff officers fell. General Samsonoff was a very distinguished and popular officer, who commanded a division of Siberian Cossacks in the Russo-Japanese War. This defeat was due not merely to the superior numbers of the enemy, but also to the superiority of the German siege guns over the Russian field and horse artillery.

The German attack began across the Masurian Lakes, in a region of wooded defiles well known to them. They advanced their right wing, threatening to envelop large forces on the front Nordenburg-Goldap-Suwalki, but General Rennenkampf's troops were able to resist this manœuvre, and extricated themselves from a difficult situation with a view to later operations. The German army was commanded by General von Hindenburg, to whom the Kaiser, in honour of the victory, awarded the Iron Cross of the first class.

Rightly the Headquarters Staff of the Russian Commander-in-Chief described the reverse as purely local, and pointed to the fact that the rapid and energetic advance of General Rennenkampf's army in East Prussia, and the decisive successes of the Russians over the Austrian army, numbering over 1,000,000 men, forced the Germans to send back a considerable portion of their troops from the western frontier, which object, as already indicated, was an important factor in these Russian operations in East Prussia.

Poor German Shooting

Here, as in the western war area, a poor opinion was formed of the shooting of the German infantry. It was the artillery and the aeroplanes of the Germans that were most effective. Their Zeppelins were not of much account, as the Russians brought down three of them. The aeroplanes, hovering over the Russians, dropped rockets to indicate their position, and this enabled the German artillery to direct its fire straight into the Russian lines. Bravely the Russians stood this withering hail of shrapnel raining down upon them, longing to get at the enemy who was out of reach. But of the German rifle fire the Russian

wounded spoke contemptuously. "A whole battalion of Germans," said one wounded man, "fired at a turning motor-car that almost stood still, and could not hit it. As for bayonets, the Germans could not endure the sight of them. A single company of Russians put a whole regiment of the enemy to flight at the bayonet point, and the Germans ran helter-skelter, flinging down their rifles, ammunition, revolvers, and even boots, in their wild panic."

Many are the stories told of individual heroism during the Russian advance in East Prussia. One wounded private, who was being carried away on a stretcher had beside him a rifle with a bayonet bent double. "Why is your bayonet bent?" asked an officer. "I twisted it on a German," replied the soldier, smiling proudly.

A Polish soldier in hospital, who was lamenting that he had been brought back from the front, was wounded in the foot, but he had concealed his wound, and took part in a bayonet attack. Then he was wounded in the hand, and was ordered to hospital.

Russians Fall Back

Following the reverse at Osterode, consequent upon the strong reinforcements of the Germans, General Rennenkampf gradually fell back, and made a successful retreat to Kovno, well within Russian territory. An attempt by the Germans to cut him off through the Masurian Lakes failed, and, himself reinforced later, he was able to check the German advance. He played his part well. He acted as a magnet to draw a large force of Germans from the west, thus relieving the pressure on the Allies in France and Belgium, while the Austrians, in their great battles with the Russians, were only receiving scant measure of German support. When the secret history of General Rennenkampf's incursion into north-east Prussia comes to be told, it will be found that it was a masterpiece of tactics. He was just to push forward as rapidly and as far as he could, and then retire, drawing the Germans after him. Meanwhile, great events were going forward in Poland and Galicia. It is time to speak of the crushing of the Austrian armies there.

XIX. THE CONQUERING RUSSIANS

THE story of the Russian campaign against the Austrians is one of unvarying and tragic success. The soldiers of the Tsar marched triumphantly from victory to victory in Poland and Galicia. Countless thousands of prisoners were taken, and large captures made of guns and stores, while enormous numbers of wounded Austrians were left stricken on the field just as they had fallen. The battlefields abandoned by the Austro-German forces were indeed scenes of nameless horror, covered with the dying and the dead trodden down in headlong flight, and overspread with the discarded weapons of war. The very streams were choked with the slain till the waters overflowed, and riderless horses, many of them wounded, careered wildly over the desolated land.

CRUSHING THE AUSTRIANS

It seemed, in fact, as if the Austrian army was being annihilated. When the Germans had at length realised the dire need for supporting their Austrian allies, they made desperate efforts to parry the Russian blow, but it was too late. The Germans, in their haste to rescue the Austrians from the Russian grip, even lost some of their heavy artillery before it really got into action, and the defeat of the Austro-German armies became practically a rout. It is officially stated that their losses in Galicia in killed and wounded at this stage were not less than a round quarter of a million of men. Besides this, the Austrian prisoners taken numbered over 100,000, and the German prisoners were given as 5,000, though this was represented as an under-estimate, and referred only to one part of the front, while the Germans were in force with the Austrians in other parts. Add to this 400 guns captured and vast quantities of stores, and the Austro-German disaster is apparent.

There was a brisk succession of engagements right from the commencement, but in reality two great battles decided the preliminary issues. These battles were long drawn out, and extended over many days. One centred around the Lublin district of Poland, and the other was fought in Galicia, over a front of 100 miles, converging upon Lemberg, and ending in the capture of that place, and the re-naming of it Lvoff.

Austria's Big Armies

At the outbreak of the war two huge Austrian armies were put in motion, the one advancing from Cracow into Poland and reaching Kielce, and the other moving along the southern Polish frontier in Galicia, with the view of crossing into Russia from the south-east and threatening the flank of the Russian armies. Support was lent by Germany with a force invading Russia from Silesia towards Warsaw, which was the great objective of the combined enemies. These early German troops penetrated some distance into Poland, but were driven back after fighting at Kalish. The first Austrian army in great force succeeded in taking up a strong position on both sides of the river Vistula, in Poland, between Kielce and Lublin. This great river of Poland, along with the San, a tributary flowing from Galicia, and the Bug further east, figured conspicuously in the fighting that ensued. The advance patrols of the second Austrian army, operating from Galicia, got so far as to cross the frontier into Poland at Berestechko.

Invasion of Galicia

Such in brief outline was the position when the more serious operations of the war began, and when General Ivanoff, the commander-in-chief of the Russian armies opposing the Austrian, commenced to move in earnest the enormous masses of his troops that had been speedily mobilised. The enemy apprehended danger from the Russian army concentrating at Warsaw for the invasion of Germany on the Posen line to Berlin, and little suspected that General Ivanoff, with great rapidity and secrecy, had gathered a force in the south-east of Poland to strike from Rovno. It was to this Russian army, commanded by General Russky, a tall, silent man wearing spectacles, who distinguished himself at Mukden in the Russo-Japanese conflict, that the early fruits of victory over the Austrians fell, and culminated in the successful invasion of Galicia and the driving of the enemy in disorder from Lemberg, the capital of the province.

Just twelve days after war was declared General Russky defeated the Austrians at Berestechko, and the enemy that had been bold enough to invade Russian territory were sent flying back across the border. Then the Russians, turning the tables, began the invasion of Galicia. The Russian cavalry crossed the frontier by the Upper Bug and by the Styr, at points about sixty miles distant from Lemberg.

Cossack Exploit

In this frontier fighting an exciting story is told of how a force of Cossacks wiped out two crack Austrian cavalry regiments, which had made an excursion on Russian soil as far as Bielgoraj. The Cossacks, supported by a field battery, moved into a dense forest skirting the main road along which the marauders would presently return.

THE EMPIRE THAT GERMANY IS LOSING.

The country at the side of the road opposite the forest was a vast swamp. As the Austrian horsemen, towards evening, were trotting back to their headquarters, they were suddenly attacked from front and rear by the Cossacks, while quick-firers hidden in the forest mowed them down on the flank. The terrified horses and riders made for the marshes, the only way open to them, but the animals struggled hopelessly in the soft ground, while the Russian battery completed the work of death.

The invading Russians crossed into Galicia at Sokal, where they dislodged an Austrian force from a strongly fortified position, and some soldiers of the Landsturm, who defended the forest of Sokal, fled without waiting the result of the engagement. On the advance of the Russian Army, the Grand Duke Nicholas, as commander-in-chief, issued an appeal to the Ruthenians of Galicia, who are the same people as the little Russians in the Southern provinces. As the Russians advanced into Galicia, they came across the bodies of several priests who had been hanged by the Austrians, showing the strong religious and race animosity that animated the Hapsburg troops.

Severe Day Battle

This army of General Russky marched straight for Lemberg. The Austrians, though driven back to defend Galicia, were yet uncrushed, and they offered considerable opposition. After much hard fighting, the Russians captured fortified positions that brought them within thirty miles of Lemberg. Then commenced a prolonged battle, in which the Austrians fought desperately to check the advance of their formidable adversary. The Austrian army in this area numbered 250,000, and held a strong position in a country full of rivers. But General Russky delivered his attack with great skill and energy. He threw his men forward by rapid marches, and they had frequently not more than three hours sleep of a night, and often transport trains were left behind in the hurry forward. Staggering blows were delivered on the Austrians and a final battle, lasting over seven days, drove them to headlong flight.

As a result of this battle, the Russians were enabled to seize some heavily fortified positions about ten miles to the east of Lemberg, and then advanced towards the principal forts. Here the Austrians made another stand, but were forced to retreat in disorder, leaving behind them heavy and light guns and even field kitchens. The Russian advance guard and cavalry pursued the fleeing enemy, who sustained enormous losses in killed, wounded and prisoners. The roads were encumbered with abandoned artillery parks and convoys loaded with provisions of every kind. Some 200 guns were actually captured, and 30,000 prisoners.

Lemberg Occupied

Recognising that the occupation

of Lemberg by the Russian troops was inevitable, the Provincial Government removed its headquarters from the city, and Lemberg was left to its fate. It was closely surrounded on September 2nd, and the Russians entered it while the routed Austrians were still in flight. The Russian staff, in view of the military importance of the town, had made preparations for its bombardment, and expected a siege, but the Austrians in their panic left the ground strewn with rifles, ammunition, clothes, and even officers' swords, which had been thrown away. Ambulances had been used as vehicles to escape in, while the wounded were abandoned, and the hospitals and houses in the town were full of injured men. There was, however, no scarcity of food or medical comforts, for Lemberg, the administrative and military centre of a vast province, provided rich supplies to the victors. At the same time, after fierce fighting, the Russians occupied Halitch, on the Dniester, sixty miles south of Lemberg, which was defended by thirty forts. This was an important centre of administration second only to Lemberg. Thus the whole of Eastern Galicia, between the Russian frontier and the Carpathians, was in the hands of the troops of the Tsar.

This splendid victory was achieved after fighting that lasted for a fortnight, covering a front of more than a hundred miles. The outstanding feature was the noble quality of the Russian infantry. For two weeks they were hurled at the Austrian line, which extended from Komenka to Halitch, with Lemberg as the centre, General Russky being in command on the north, and that heroic and typically Russian soldier, General Brusiloff, on the south. The latter had for his objective the position at the junction of the Lipa and Dniester rivers, where the Austrians held the bridgehead, which presently became the key to Halitch.

Here on September 3rd the great diffused battle narrowed itself down to the real struggle. It was almost entirely a battle of infantry advancing across the low-lying river levels, in which lies the big Galician village of Podhajeco, against a huge body of Austrians strongly entrenched and covered by strong forces of artillery. The disposition of the latter had been already disturbed by the previous day's artillery attack.

Won by the Bayonet

Nothing could have exceeded the discipline and steadiness of the Russian infantry under the terrific fire. In earlier forward movements with a massed attacking force in the wooded lands east of the river they lost pretty heavily, but in spite of this, and of the fact that they had already been in action almost continuously for two weeks, their first actual assault carried them right into the Austrian position. The bridgehead was won by the bayonet, but not without heavy losses. At this point the Austrians stood stubbornly. There

was no panic at the onslaught, as at Lemberg, and it was the seizure of crossing places on the river further north, and the passage of large bodies of Russians, which finally made the Austrian position untenable.

Further, the terrible severity of the fighting is dwelt upon in a letter from a general at the front in praise of General Radko Dmitrieff, formerly Bulgarian Minister at Petrograd, who was mentioned in despatches by the Grand Duke Nicholas as having specially distinguished himself in command of a Russian army corps. This general says that for three days General Dmitrieff's corps never got any rest, and the fatigue was so overpowering on the last day that the men fell asleep under fire. One officer dropped off, and never woke through all the tremendous bombardment, rifle firing, and attempt to take his trenches. When he finally awoke he found himself before piles of dead, and on attempting to move he then first learned that he was wounded, two toes having been cut clean off by shrapnel fire during his sleep. Between sleeping and waking General Dmitrieff's heroes held their ground in a hail of shrapnel fire, varied with meeting the enemy's charges on the trenches, until other troops came up to their support, and the enemy retired in disorder. It was for this action that General Dmitrieff, was decorated for valour.

By the capture of Lemberg on September 3rd the Russians commanded all the roads into Hungary and to the Hungarian capital, Budapest, and, secure on their flank by holding Stryj and Halitch on the south, this force was prepared to move on the great Austrian fortress of Przemysl and thence to Cracow, that other great citadel of Austria on the German frontier. Above all this victorious Russian army was firmly established on the flank and rear of the main Austrian forces in South Poland, and gave valuable assistance in finally crushing them.

Poland Invaded

For while these successful operations were being carried on against Lemberg, the main Austrian army had penetrated into Poland towards Lublin and Kholm with their right flank resting on Betz in their own territory of Galicia just south-west of Sokal. There were three Austrian groups forming the main army, and numbering about a million men. That on the left was commanded by General Dankl, that in the centre by General von Auffenberg, and that on the right by the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand. The Austrian forces which had thus invaded Poland had been able to occupy a position between the Vistula and the Bug extending from Lublin to Tomasoff on the Galician frontier, with Kholm as the centre. The invasion of the Austrians in this direction had been stubbornly contested by the Russians, who, however, as all their forces were not on the scene could not do more than check the enemy.

These fiercely-contested engagements, reported separately, were hailed as great Russian victories, and successful though they were, they were really only the prelude to the second big battle of the war in this area, which took place in the first fortnight of September. After his victory at Lemberg, General Russky was able to co-operate with the army in Poland in inflicting a great defeat on the Austrian invaders. For this battle, fought between Lublin and the frontier of Galicia, the Austrians had been reinforced by the tardy arrival from the western theatre of war of several German army corps, variously estimated at 300,000 men. As the campaign was originally planned by the enemy the Germans ought to have been pushing on vigorously from Silesia over the Polish frontier for Warsaw, but, as has been shown, they were prevented carrying out this design owing to the Russian invasion of north-east Prussia.

Rout of the Invaders

This battle, which raged for several days, resulted in the complete rout of the Austrian armies. An attempt to break the Russian line between Lublin and Kholm, a distance of 40 miles, failed. The Russians seized documents containing an urgent appeal from General Dankl for help from Germany. A German corps that came to the aid of the retiring Austrians was attacked by the Russians before it could cross the Vistula, and thirty-six heavy guns were captured. In the Lublin district the Austro-German troops were dislodged from their fortified positions, and retired south. Everywhere it was the same tale. The enemy, who at first was on the offensive, was forced back with enormous losses after a succession of pitched battles. The Austrian armies under Generals Dankl and von Auffenberg were cut off from the army under the command of Archduke Joseph Ferdinand. They were driven into the angle between the Rivers San and Vistula, in marshy ground cut up by streams, and guns and transports had to be abandoned in escaping across the San. The army of Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, after a severe defeat at Tomasoff, retreated to Ravarusska in Galicia, where the remnants of the Austrian force from Lemberg joined it, together with Germans, in an endeavour to make a final stand, but the Russians, reinforced by the victorious troops of General Russky, completely overthrew the enemy, capturing many guns and prisoners. Over a million men the Austrians sent to invade the empire of the Tsar, and now the remains of that great host were struggling by lonely and desperate ways, through bog and peat and thick forest, towards their fortresses with the Russians in hot pursuit over the San.

Stubborn Austrians

More or less continuous, the fighting that ended in this signal defeat had gone on for about three weeks. The

Austrians at first advanced in face of an inferior force in Poland, and then, when, after the victory of Lemberg, the Russians had concentrated their army in the north, the Austrian advance was gradually turned into a retreat, which finally became the rout we see.

The Austrians, in the main, fought bravely and stubbornly, but the Russians had skilled generals, superior artillery, first-class cavalry, and, above all, an infantry undaunted and aflame for victory. The Austrian Slavs fought reluctantly against the Russians. Again and again a Cossack, a priest, or a Russian officer brought in a score of Poles or Czechs willing prisoners. Often when Austrian Slavs and Russians were in opposing entrenchments conversation began which ended with the Austrians dropping their rifles, and crossing to the Russian lines.

The remarkable feat of strategy by which General Russky dealt a swift, sharp blow on Lemberg, while the main Austrian army, relying on the slowness of Russian concentration, entered into the Lublin trap in Poland, indicates the new spirit animating the Russian Army. The Tsar conferred on General Ivanoff for "deeds of arms" the Order of St. Alexander Nevsky with Swords.

How well the Russians fought is shown by the story of a wounded officer who went with his regiment by train from the south of Lemberg to near Kholm. They were detrained early one morning to the sound of distant gun-fire, and that same afternoon were in action against Austrian infantry entrenched on a long line which included the village of Mikolaieff. They entered the village the same night, the Austrians having fallen back to a half-circle of small steep hills which overlook the village. In the village some houses had been set on fire, but the flames had been extinguished by the villagers themselves.

Rushing a Hill

Before daybreak on the following morning the attack on the hills commenced; the Austrians occupying them numbered 15,000, of which a large number were in a deeply wooded gorge. Russian artillery swept the crest of the hill and shelled the gorge with shrapnel. The Austrians replied strongly, but once again showed that inferiority in speed and accuracy of fire which all observers mention.

Describing the shell-fire the officer states that at any moment he could see more Russian shrapnel bursting in the air above the gorge than he could count. At noon the position was stormed, his own company being among the attackers. The Russian infantry at the word of command rose with cheers repeated again and again, and rushed the hill. The Austrian guns to their left cut them about badly. He tells of a company officer, badly wounded, who would not let two of his men stay behind to carry him off. With a pool of his

own blood widening around him, he sat on the ground cheering on his men from behind.

The officer who gives this record himself received a bayonet thrust in the left forearm as his regiment took the first trench, and he killed his assailant with a revolver. At the same time the position was stormed from the east, and the Austrians surrendered almost immediately. The gorge, he adds, was full of dead men lying in heaps on the slopes. Even at Halitch, where he was present, he had never seen so many dead in an equal space. The troops gave the place the name of the "Valley of Death." The Austrian general commanding the division watched his men being disarmed. Presently Austrian standards were brought up from the gorge, and at that sight the general drew his revolver and shot himself.

An Officer's Story

Another Russian officer who was in the battle with the Austrians in the Lublin district writes:

"Our army corps fought on the line from Lublin to Kholm. The battles were long, stubborn, and desperate, but we finally dislodged the Austrians. We pressed on them and they began to retire. Now I hear, thank God, that they are utterly smashed.

"We were brought up swiftly and went straight from the train to the firing line. The Austrians, with an army of 200,000 men, stood and looked on. Why they so calmly allowed us to concentrate I cannot imagine, unless it was for the reason that their scouting is very bad.

"The first battle lasted twelve hours, which were like hell. It was all a matter of who could hold out the longer, and our soldiers, while one officer is left, can stand a loss of 90 per cent. without retiring. Not another army in the world is capable of this.

"Of one company of 240, only 15 were left, and these still rushed to the attack. Of a group of ten, among whom were a lieutenant of the Reserve and myself, six were blown to pieces, while the lieutenant and I were thrown to the ground, stunned and wounded, he in the leg and I in the arm. This was the work of one shell.

"I must tell you that the Poles are wonderful. The Polish women attend the wounded; the landowners give all they have to the troops and the way in which the common people treat our wounded makes the tears start to one's eyes."

Picturesque Horsemen

Many stories are told, too, of the Cossacks in the field, those picturesque Russian horsemen, who carried little bags of apples in their saddles which they considered a good preventive of both hunger and thirst. A Cossack has, indeed, such complete command over his horse that at a word the animal will drop "dead" under its rider, and spring up again the next

instant when called upon. As cavalry the Cossacks showed a marked superiority over the Austrians and Germans, and numbers of cases are cited in which Cossack horsemen transfixed with their lances horse and man together at a stroke.

A Cossack describing the fighting at Lublin reminds one of Dumas' famous musketeers. He says :

" Our squadron, fighting on foot, made a running attack. Somehow I stopped. Feeling a sharp sensation in my left hand, I looked at it, and saw it bathed in blood. I stopped to bandage it with a handkerchief, pulling one end with my teeth and the other with my right hand.

" All of a sudden two Austrians started up beside me and pulled away my rifle. Ah, thinks I, sons of dogs ! But all right, I said, take it if it's your luck. Off they led me, and a black word I said to myself. You crow, I said, you double-barrelled blockhead ! They're leading you like a sheep, and in the land of the heathen you'll sit till the world's end.

" But out we came to the hillside, and, slap, I flung myself to the ground and shouted : ' Lie down ! Lie down ! The Russians are coming and will shoot us all.' So down they flopped.

" ' Where are the Russians ? ' they asked, and I said, ' There, hiding in the wood.' Then I crawled up to them, clapped my hands on the rifle, and shouted, ' Lie still, you sons of swine ! If you move I'll kill you.' And I frightened them so, that my Austrians followed me like calves to our lines."

A Pathetic Episode

A touching episode of the battlefield is related of Colonel Lopukhin, a member of an ancient historic Russian family, who commanded a regiment of the famous Horse Grenadiers. After a fight the Colonel was receiving a report from one of his officers. The total of officers and men killed and wounded was given. " Officers killed, one." " Who was it ? " asked the Colonel. " Cornet Lopukhin " was the reply. Never a muscle of the heroic commander's face moved. He simply asked where the body was, and he went and kissed his dead son without a tear. Then he said, " Now back to duty." And it was his only son.

Those on the spot bear witness to the utter disorganisation of the Austrian military administration, and their war commissariat was in a chaotic condition. Their armies were now as we have seen in disorderly retreat. General Russky, continuing his victorious march, occupied Gorodek, an important position west of Lemberg. The two Austrian fortresses of Jaroslav and Przemysl guarded the way to Cracow, but the Austrians were unable to make any decided stand, and continued their flight, fighting rearguard actions. Jaroslav was set ablaze by Russian artillery, and on September 22nd this stronghold was carried by storm at the point of the bayonet after two days' fighting.

A Great Fortress

The strongest fortress in Galicia, Przemysl, standing astride the river San, was invested and isolated, while the Russians pushed on in pursuit of the Austrians who were retiring on Cracow, where they would come into touch with the main German forces. From Lemberg to Przemysl is about fifty miles, and Cracow is about 100 miles further west. Jaroslav stands thirty miles north of Przemysl. These two great fortresses were supposed to be lions in the paths of the Russian advance, but they were obstacles quickly overcome, and the Russians in their onward sweep at the same time obtained the command of the passes of the Carpathian mountains, thus opening the road into Hungary.

In fact, the fleeing Austrians were allowed no respite. No sooner did they retire from one position, blowing up bridges and arsenals behind them, than the Russians were again at their heels. It was a pitiful plight for a once great army. They looted all along the line of retreat, and seemed to have lost all discipline. No wonder, indeed, for many regiments had been so decimated that hardly any officers were left.

While the pursuit of the demoralised Austrians was being continued through Galicia towards Cracow, other Russian armies were gathering in Poland. And, at the same time, Germany was concentrating her forces, in conjunction with Austria, for a new invasion of Poland by fresh troops. But General Rennenkampf, after his successful withdrawal before the German advance away in north-east Prussia, also became again an aggressive Russian factor to be reckoned with, and he took the offensive once more, as will be seen.

XX. THE CLASH OF SLAV AND TEUTON

When General Rennenkampf, after his rapid dash into Prussia, gradually retired into Russia before a superior force, he drew after him the German army of General von Hindenburg, which had defeated him at Osterode. This was a strategic and wily move on the part of the Russians, withdrawing a considerable German force from the western front in France, while the Austrians were being crushed in South Poland and Galicia. It has been well said that the German attack which checked the Russians in Prussia was a blow in the air. It had no effect on altering the course of the campaign, for, as we shall see, General Rennenkampf was able later to inflict a considerable defeat on the enemy, who pursued him into Russian territory.

Something further may be said of General Rennenkampf's fighting on the Prussian frontier during his retreat. By September 7th the Germans had brought from the west five new army corps, which began to envelop the Russian position. Retreating cautiously, General Rennenkampf occupied a defensive position. On September 8th Russian patrols discovered a considerable force enveloping the Russian left flank and reaching almost to Gumbinnen, and a severe fight ensued. The Russians began to retire, but caused terrible losses to the Germans. The manner in which General Rennenkampf disengaged himself, and frustrated the German advance has all the attributes of a victory.

A Daring Raid

An exciting instance of this was a reconnaissance and raid, dashingly carried out at Bialla among the hills in the Masurian Lakes district, close to the frontier. The expedition was undertaken from Grajewo on the border to Bialla among the lakes. It was a night march among small wooded hills, and at dawn the Russian force was level with Bialla, where the suspected German concentration for the advance was taking place. The Cossacks rushed the outposts, and forthwith in the glow of resplendent sunrise the battle shaped itself. The Russian infantry took up its positions under a tremendous artillery fire.

"From behind the town in the distance," says a Russian eye-witness, "up went the aeroplanes, which dived forward over the Russians, circled

round and returned; but here are so many of the eternal fir woods of Eastern Europe that their task of observation must have been all but impossible. Each of them spluttered from time to time into rocket signals —red for artillery, white for infantry. The enemy had guns beyond all counting, and they spent ammunition like water. A single mounted messenger was enough to draw a shower of shells. They fired at everything and nothing, and at all ranges. Two Red Cross doctors in our rear were killed, and some of the wagon drivers."

At Close Quarters

The fight lasted till late in the afternoon. Russian officers agreed that the Germans fought gallantly. Again and again they attacked, only to be driven back, and several times the Russians ceased firing in order to let the attackers approach.

In one instance a German detachment was permitted to come within eight paces of the waiting Russian infantrymen. In the ditch where they lay, holding their fire, they could see the faces and hear the panting of the Germans running forward. The signal to fire was to be a shot fired by the Russian captain. Speaking all the time to his men, warning them to wait for his signal, he let the Germans approach till he could, as he explained, see their teeth, and then only did he loose the terrible volley that cut them down in swathes.

In the afternoon the trenches were carried by storm, and here again there is a generous agreement that the Germans fought like heroes.

"One must do them justice," says the eye-witness quoted. "Usually they flinch from the bayonet, but at Bialla they stood to it. Our men went in like an avalanche. I was never prouder of my country than when I saw our big, long-legged infantrymen surge forward in that charge. There was no shouting. The pace was too hot. At the word they were up on their feet and racing forward straight into the trenches. Those trenches were a fearful sight afterwards. They were full, like the great graves after a battle, with German dead, and the blood lay in pools—literally in pools and puddles on the ground. Some of our men were splashed to the knees with it."

There was street-fighting in the town of Bialla afterwards, and among the scattered houses beyond. The stone houses of these parts, with deep trenches dug around them and barbed wire entanglements, became miniature fortresses, and each one had to be taken separately.

Burying the Dead

The Germans never gathered at any time the size of the ridiculously inferior Russian force which had attacked them on this occasion. By nightfall the town was empty of them. There seemed to be no civil population left at Bialla. Among the stores to which the Russians set fire before they left was a small collection of handsome coffins. It

appears that the bodies of Prussian officers above a certain rank are not to be buried with the rank and file.

Here is a further episode worthy of a high place in the annals of heroism recorded in connection with the Russian retreat through the Masurian Lakes district in East Prussia. A Russian battery was surrounded on three sides by the enemy's quick-firers and infantry. On the other side lay the lake. The ammunition of the Russians was exhausted. In order to avoid capture the commander ordered the battery to gallop over a declivity into the lake. His order was obeyed, and he himself was among the drowned.

Not only had German reinforcements been hurried to the scene by rail to repel General Rennenkampf but troops were landed at Memel in the Baltic. But in vain was the attempt made to surround and cut off the Russian army. General Rennenkampf retreated with guns and stores intact as far as Kovno, with the Germans in his wake, and the way in which he carried out his retirement earned him the special thanks of the Tsar.

Several German spies who were caught red-handed firing at Russian soldiers from windows at Insterburg in Prussia were shot. Next day a German aeroplane scattered proclamations addressed to General Rennenkampf, stating "Your troops are shooting peaceful inhabitants. If this is done without your knowledge, put an end to it, but if your troops are carrying out orders, know, General, that the blood of the innocent ones shall fall on your head, and only yours."

Civilian Treachery

There was a good deal of treachery to Russian troops shown by civilians in East Prussia. At Tilsit, a border town, on a market day when the place was full of peasants, and Russian soldiers were standing in the market buying hay or watching the chaffering, a long train of carts with hay and straw came to a halt in the square. The peasants hurried round them, snatched hidden rifles, and throwing off the hay and straw disclosed quick-firers, which showered bullets on the unsuspecting Russians. This trick proved disastrous to Tilsit, for when the Russian artillery got to work it made the town uninhabitable.

The Germans also repeatedly fired on Red Cross hospitals and trains in East Prussia. During the Russian retreat one Red Cross train was pursued and fired on by Uhlans. The train stopped, and all who could fled. Two nurses were badly wounded. Doctors and nurses on an ambulance train that retreated from Goldap relate that they had to accomplish the journey with great speed, resting only ten minutes at a time at intervals of three hours. Their hospital was fired on with shrapnel and rifle shots, and during the retreat, when a halt was made to bandage a wounded soldier, Germans fired on the hospital again. Later, fire was opened on the train from a German farm.

The Kaiser's Hunting Lodge

Some interesting stories were told by wounded Russian soldiers returned from East Prussia as to how they occupied the Kaiser's hunting estate at Rominten, which is not far from the borders of Poland. A large quantity of stores of very remarkable quality was found here, particularly wines and canned goods, which the Russians seized. For tactical reasons it was necessary to fell all trees in the magnificent park, while the game (which was abundant and comprised many specially preserved varieties of deer, including the elk) was slaughtered as provisions for the troops. From the castle many objects of value were formally captured, and were sent to Russia.

Naturally there was some disappointment that a portion of Russian territory in Poland should be occupied by the advance of the German troops, but this seeming triumph of the enemy was short-lived. The Germans attempted the offensive on a large scale against General Rennenkampf towards the river Niemen over a front of about one hundred miles, ranging from Lomza in the south to Suwalki in the north, with Grodno in the centre eastwards. For this grand attack they had concentrated an army of between 400,000 and 500,000 men. It is difficult to conceive what object Germany had in making an advance in this quarter unless it was to cut the railway communications between Petrograd and Warsaw, where Russia was massing large armies for the greater fight impending. Or possibly the German Emperor thought to follow up the success already achieved by General von Hindenburg against General Rennenkampf, and by striking a swift blow to gain the sorely-needed prestige of a victory on Russian soil, and then to transfer this portion of his army to harass the southern armies of his powerful adversary.

Napoleon's Precedent

Anyhow this move on northern Poland was an ill-starred German enterprise. The country to the west of the Niemen was most unfavourable for German tactics. It is swampy and full of little lakes and streams. The roads are bad at this rainy season of the year, and the Germans found it difficult to move their heavy guns on motor lorries and their armoured motors with quick-firers.

This region is famous historically. Over 100 years ago Napoleon's armies entered Russia at this place, but Napoleon had mid-summer weather, and was not encumbered with the heavy transports of a modern army.

Perhaps Napoleon's precedent weighed with the Kaiser, who is playing the rôle of a Napoleon. Anyway, it is said that the German Emperor directed in person this invasion of Russia. It may well be so, seeing that his army was driven back most disastrously in their attempt to force the passage of the river Niemen, which formed an excellent line of defence for the Russians.

"DAILY CHRONICLE" WAR MAP drawn by G. W. BACON & CO., Ltd., 127, Strand, London.

THE PEOPLES OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.

To do the Germans justice, the attack was made with exceptional vigour, but it failed, and the enemy—or what remained of them—had to thread their way back through a network of lakes and swamps. A retreating army cannot choose its route. It must go as it is driven.

It was about the middle of September that the Germans, in force, crossed the frontier into Poland at several points from Stshutsin to Suwalki, all converging on Grodno, the capital of a Russian province situated on the Niemen's right bank, and 148 miles by rail north-east of Warsaw.

Bombs from Aeroplanes

Count Borch, vice-governor of the town of Suwalki, who was the last to leave it when the Germans entered, relates that the enemy was preceded by three aeroplanes each of which threw bombs into the town. The first fell in the street outside the school and wounded one girl; the second, thrown at the station, killed a woman, and the third, also thrown at the station, fell 600 paces away and injured nobody. Two of the machines got away, but the third was shot down and captured.

The severe battles in the region of the Niemen river, which runs from Grodno to Kovno, lasted for 10 days. The object of the Germans was to gain possession of the river and its crossings. They were trapped at one point on September 24th, when proceeding to cross in fancied security, and lost thousands of men. The rearguard of General Rennenkampf's army had been transferred to the eastern bank on the previous day, and lay in ambush. When on the following evening the Germans approached they were allowed to construct pontoon bridges without opposition, but when their troops were in the act of crossing, Russian guns, which had been skilfully posted and screened, opened a concentrated fire upon them, and the enemy was swept into the river. Hundreds of bodies floated down the muddy waters. The Germans replied with their artillery, and made another effort to cross, but once again every man was mown down by the terrible fire of the Russian machine-guns. At length the enemy fell back eight miles, pursued by the Cossacks, who had crossed the river on the German-made bridges. One account states that 20,000 German corpses were carried down the swollen river after this awful slaughter.

An All-Night Struggle

There was also in the struggle on the Niemen a stirring all-night battle at Stredniki. Here the Russians occupied an excellent position on the right bank. Firing began on the left bank at three o'clock in the afternoon. An hour later the battle concentrated at the confluence of the river with the Dubissa. Russian howitzers from the right bank pounded the enemy. The battle continued all night, but towards dawn the fighting

slackened and there were only isolated rifle shots. The Germans fled, leaving great heaps of dead, shattered wagons, automobiles, and motor-cycles, which were all captured by the Russians.

But the heaviest fighting took place at Augustowo, which is about 37 miles west from Grodno, and at Osowiec fort, guarding the railway where it crosses the Niemen, some 17 miles from Stshutsin on the German frontier. The battle of Augustowo began on September 25th with the bombardment by the great German guns of the Sopotskino region, followed by an attack on Augustowo. At the same time the Germans made great efforts to pierce and break up the Russian forces near Druskeniki, a watering place on the Niemen, 20 miles north-west of Grodno.

Forést Fights

There were particularly desperate conflicts for the possession of the northern outlets from the Augustowo forest. This large pine forest, studded with lakes, is 24 miles long and 35 miles broad, and it is intersected by a canal connecting the Niemen with the Vistula. In the woods of Augustowo, the Russian troops had to advance almost without the support of artillery. To the south of Augustowo the hand-to-hand fighting was especially fierce. The Russian flanking column settled the fate of the struggle. It crossed the canal near Borki Lock, and attacked from the west. North of Augustowo the Russians had to engage the German rearguards in numerous defiles, where the enemy was entrenched. Here Russian infantry were strongly supported by heavy artillery, and inflicted enormous losses on the enemy in the trenches and as he retreated. The fighting extended over a wide front of broken country, which rendered it difficult to maintain a junction of the separate detachments.

The battle of Augustowo ended on October 4th in a complete victory for the Russian arms, and the enemy fled in disorder towards the frontier of Eastern Prussia, abandoning convoys, guns, and even their wounded, and hotly pursued by their conquerors. The reports of the Russian commanders state that their troops in this battle gave evidence of heroic valour and extraordinary courage. Several regiments fought without any rest for a week, but they never shrank from the conflict.

The Enemy Trapped

The Germans began the bombardment of Osoweic fort, which is twenty-five miles south of Augustowo, on September 26th. Finding no other way of approaching the fortress, they marched along the road from Graevo, but they could not get their big guns near, owing to the marshy nature of the ground. At a distance of nine miles they commenced to shell the fortress, and sent forward their infantry with numerous machine-guns. These could only get within four miles of the fort. The Russians,

who had used a captive balloon for reconnoitring, made a sortie during the night, and, marching by roads and paths of which the enemy were ignorant, they completely enveloped both the German wings.

Imagining that they held all the practicable roads, the Germans had concentrated their attention on the fortress and neglected their flanks. When the enveloping movement became apparent, a fierce engagement ensued, the enemy being completely at a disadvantage. The fortress guns mowed them down on the open road, while the Russian infantry poured a devastating fire into their wings. The battle lasted thirty-six hours, and ended in the complete rout of the Germans, who fled in disorder along the Graevo road, pursued by the victorious Russians. All the German guns which had stuck in the marshy ground were captured. The road from Graevo was strewn with the slain.

Caught in a Bog

One German column, in escaping, got into a bog, and the Russians shelled the bog. The Germans, unable to extricate themselves, sank deeper and deeper into the mire. Those who were not killed or wounded were engulfed. There were only about forty survivors of the column. A German officer shot himself rather than surrender. So precipitate, indeed, was the retreat from Osowiec that the Russians captured the whole camp, and among the great quantity of provisions left behind were many bottles of champagne and brandy looted in France—a double tell-tale, indicating at once where these German troops had come from, and how they had plundered the fair land of France.

There was also a fierce battle at Suwalki, which is forty-five miles north of Osoweic, and an important Government centre. Here the Germans had concentrated large forces and had fortified the frontier. They were dislodged from the trenches by frequent bayonet assaults. The armies were in close contact, and prisoners state that the German losses at Suwalki were so great that only twenty men remained out of detachments of a hundred. The Germans retreated before the Russian bayonets, and the line of retreat was covered with corpses, some of the dead grasping the scabbards of their swords, and one gunner still holding a shell in his arms, stiff in death.

The Kaiser's Escape

Completely overthrown and staggered by these defeats, the Germans left the Russian territory "in a hurry," says the official report of the Headquarters Staff of the Tsar's army. "At certain points," continues the report, "the retreat is in the nature of a flight. We are vigorously pursuing the defeated enemy." The report concludes by stating that "this German style of invasion from Prussia has failed completely in Russia, and the enemy is now definitely leaving the limits and the provinces of Suwalki and Lomza."

Thus the Germans in Western Russia, though inspired by the presence and eloquence of the Kaiser, having utterly failed in their attack, had for the most part to retreat in disorder through the marshy tract lying between the Niemen and East Prussia. Rain had fallen steadily, and it is a land of bog and morass. The losses of the German army of invasion were very heavy, being estimated at 70,000. Whole regiments were drowned in the Niemen, and siege artillery lost. It is declared, indeed, that the Kaiser, moving from point to point, escaped with great difficulty from this débâcle of his army.

The victory was a veritable triumph for General Rennenkampf, who was greatly helped in his operations by the use of new heavy Russian artillery. A new pattern Russian gun of large calibre and considerable mobility was brought into the field for the first time. The Germans, expecting that they had only ordinary field artillery to meet, were surprised at the havoc wrought by these new heavy guns. Many efforts were made to kill General Rennenkampf, according to the statement of an officer in a Russian paper. At Insterburg a German aeroplane dropped a sandbag, with a letter addressed to General Rennenkampf, right in front of the entrance to the Army Staff's headquarters, showing that German spies had ascertained his exact whereabouts. A Zeppelin one night tried to destroy with bombs the hotel in which he was staying, but failed. It is also related that a number of German officers acting as spies were captured attired in women's clothes.

Germans Driven Out

Following their helter-skelter retreat, the Germans attempted to hold fortified positions along the eastern Prussian frontier, from Wirballen (a Russian frontier station on the line from Vilna to Königsberg) to Lyck, a distance of about seventy miles, being reinforced from the garrison at Königsberg. But they were forced back, and Russian territory in this part was freed from the invader, who had been severely punished, and lost heavily in men, guns, and stores. Then there came from Berlin the announcement that General von Mogen had replaced General von Hindenburg in Eastern Prussia. General von Hindenburg had gone to take supreme control of the combined Austro-German armies in the south. At any rate, there is strong evidence that the Kaiser himself had a considerable share in directing the futile invasion. It was reported that he had addressed his troops in his customary inflammatory and high-flown language at Bromberg and Thorn, two frontier towns of East Prussia.

Having driven the foe out of Russian territory, General Rennenkampf was now free once more to invade East Prussia from the north, and with this object he commenced a movement with his army towards

Allenstein, which is sixty miles south-west of Suwalki. Again the Prussian frontier was crossed by the Russians.

Gathering Armies

Meanwhile, to the south, events were moving rapidly. The main armies of Russia, directed from Warsaw, were massing in South Poland to join their victorious brethren coming on through Galicia. At Cracow the shattered Austrian armies had gathered under the German wing, and the Germans were concentrating right along the Polish frontier. The Austro-German forces had, indeed, boldly penetrated Poland for a considerable distance towards Warsaw. Here was to be fought the greatest battle of all, with combatants numbered by millions.

Further south again the Russians, after their successful exploits in Galicia, had pushed on a force into Hungary, crossing the Carpathians at a point that brought them within ninety miles of Budapest, the capital.

Such was the situation in the eastern theatre of war early in October, and at this exciting juncture, when the tramp of millions of armed men was echoing through the land, the Tsar, amid much enthusiasm, took his departure from Petrograd for the front to await the ringing up of the curtain on the next act.

XXI. GREAT EVENTS ON THE VISTULA

WHILE events on the north-west frontier of Poland were hastening to the issue described, a veil was drawn over what was happening in South Poland and Galicia. Not till the great battle here had been joined was the curtain rung up to the public gaze. Then it was found that the Austro-German armies had been allowed to penetrate a considerable distance into Poland, almost, indeed, to the gates of Warsaw, the capital.

Here again the Russians displayed wily strategy of a cunning order. They lured the enemy out into marshy, treacherous country, away from his lines of railway communication, and, once beaten, left him to struggle back over bad roads and ground converted in many places into quagmires by the heavy rains. The Germans had moved forward over a hundred miles inside the Russian frontier, and the Austrians, in co-operation, had marched from Cracow in Galicia. This Russian plan of drawing the enemy on before falling upon him, bore a strong resemblance to the French scheme of campaign of General Joffre.

FIGHT FOR WARSAW

The front of this great battle extended over 200 miles from the region of Warsaw, along the Vistula and the San Rivers, as far as Przemysl, the invested Austrian fortress in Galicia, and then continued further south to the Dniester. It is calculated that the German troops numbered 600,000 of the active army, and 400,000 of the reserve, and those of Austria probably added another half-million, though it is difficult to gauge the strength of the Austrians, who were formed of the remnants of their twice-beaten Galician armies.

The Germans had brought a large number of men from the force that was defeated by General Rennenkampf. Quite clearly the Kaiser's object had been to invade north-west Poland and inflict a crushing defeat on General Rennenkampf, and then to hurry the major part of his troops thence to the scene of the great central battle in Poland. But the tables were turned. All the same, the German troops, dispirited by their failure, had to be moved to take part in the march on Warsaw.

These great combined Austro-German armies, numbering altogether roughly a million and a half of men, were under the command of General von Hindenburg, while the Kaiser, rushing again from the western theatre, was flitting about, taking, it may be safely assumed, a hand in the game of military control.

It is stated, in fact, that the Kaiser, with characteristic presumption, took possession of the Tsar's shooting seat at Spala as his headquarters. The Germans, in assuming the supreme command, showed that they had no confidence in the Austrian military commanders, and a scapegoat for the Austrian failures was found in General von Auffenberg, who was deposed, while General Dankl, the only Austrian leader whom the German General Staff approved, was retained. While the Grand Duke Nicholas, as commander-in-chief, directed the strategic plans of the Russians, he had as able lieutenants in the field Generals Ivanoff, Russky, and Brusiloff.

An Imperial Birthday Present

There was some timidity at Warsaw at first when the Germans were allowed to approach uncomfortably near to the capital, and a considerable number of the population were prepared for flight. The Kaiser, too, baulked elsewhere, was ready for a triumphal entry into Warsaw. On German prisoners subsequently captured postcards were found ready written, announcing that Warsaw would be taken on October 15th, the birthday of the German Empress, and the event would form a fitting birthday present from the Emperor.

The Russians, however, with perfect confidence, chose their own battle-ground, and the moment for the conflict. There had been a number of rearguard actions, but the serious engagement did not begin till the middle of October. The fighting began at Sandomir, at the junction of the Vistula and the San, and gradually spread northwards along the left bank of the Vistula. The German right wing, covering a front of 20 miles from Opatow to Sandomir, was making for the Russian fortress of Ivangorod, and their left wing to the north was aiming at Warsaw, and purposing to cross the Middle Vistula. It was the German active army, 600,000 strong, composed of their best troops, that attempted to take Warsaw, and suffered defeat.

Defeating the Spies

The fury of the battle was felt along the line of the Vistula from a point just south of Warsaw. It was the object of the Germans to force the passage of the Vistula while they secured possession of Warsaw. They got within 15 miles of the capital, and no wonder the population were alarmed when the thunder of the guns reached their ears. The wiles of the Russians were here again apparent. The Grand Duke Nicholas misled the spies who infested Warsaw by leaving the greater part of his army at a

distance, only throwing forward a small force, and the Germans therefore attacked with confidence in the belief that the capital was inadequately defended. The small Russian force held its own until the main body of troops were rapidly transported by rail through Warsaw, and hurled the Germans back. The laying of the city open to capture was a considerable risk, but it was a bait to the Germans, who were relying on their spy organisation.

Taking with them towards the north a portion of the Austrian troops, the Germans on approaching the outlying fortifications of Warsaw entrenched themselves, and brought up many guns. After severe fighting the German army on the night of October 20th was forced to evacuate its position, which had been most elaborately fortified. The Russian troops then took the offensive along a large stretch of front, sweeping away the resistance of the German rearguards, and driving them at the point of the bayonet from forests and villages. The Germans, who had occupied the roads leading to Warsaw, were thus utterly routed, and left their wounded on the field of battle. They had been expected to make a stand in their strongly fortified position, but they were unable to resist the Russian onslaught. Many prisoners were taken.

Terrified Citizens

During the engagement German shells reached some portions of the outlying suburbs of Warsaw, and many of the inhabitants went out to see the battle. Warsaw had been seriously alarmed, for from German sources false rumours had been spread that the town was to be left to its fate. Confidence was quickly restored when trainload after trainload of Russian troops were hurried through to the front even while the German guns were thundering in the ears of the terrified people. It proved a successful military manœuvre. The German attacking forces, relying on the information of their spies, were caught at a tactical disadvantage. It was too late for them to change their dispositions, which were well known to the Russian commander. German aeroplanes, which had been dropping bombs over the city, had apparently failed to discover the Russian corps held in the leash in readiness for this rush to the battle line. These bombs killed fifty people in Warsaw.

The Siberian regiments particularly distinguished themselves in the fighting. Passing through the Polish capital they were warmly cheered by the people, who for the first time made acquaintance with these splendid warriors from the confines of the Empire. They came fresh to the fight, and being accustomed to the trackless forests of Siberia they did terrible execution with the bayonet upon the Germans in the forests west of Warsaw.

This defeat entirely upset the plans of the Germans. They had intended

to force the passage of the Vistula further south, and secure a crossing for a force in the rear of the Russian lines. But many of their troops south of Warsaw had to be hurriedly withdrawn to parry, if possible, the blow dealt by the Russians on the armies marching on Warsaw.

It was at Ivangorod that the Germans sought to cross the Vistula, which is a quarter of a mile wide at this point. They bombarded the fortress of Ivangorod with their heavy guns, but little damage was done, and the bridges were untouched.

With so wide a river and running ten to twenty feet deep, the Germans in their attack naturally would spare the bridges which they hoped to cross, but it is remarkable that on their retirement they left them standing, whereby the Russians were enabled to advance. The garrison of the fortress assisted in finally driving back the Germans.

On October 22nd the Russian Commander-in-Chief was able to report that the Austro-German armies were falling back on the Ivangorod and Novo Alexandria roads, while the rapid retreat of the Germans from Warsaw continued. In the trenches before Ivangorod the Russians took a large quantity of munitions of war which the German Reserve Guard Corps had abandoned in its precipitate flight.

Russian Arms Victorious

Continuing a vigorous offensive, the Russian armies crossed the Vistula on a broad front, meeting with no resistance from the retreating Germans, who were being hotly pursued. The Russians succeeded in dividing the German armies, which were much harried in seeking to escape to their fortified line on the Warta, on the frontier. All the German armies in Poland were now in retreat. As a fitting sequel to these operations the Tsar conferred the Order of St. George on the Grand Duke Nicholas, on account of his "valiant determination in the unflinching execution of the Russian plans, which has covered the Russian arms with glory."

Farther south, in the Galician area between the Vistula and the San, the Austrian troops, supported by German reserves, maintained, however, a stubborn fight, and in Galicia, to the south of Przemysl, there was also sanguinary fighting with the Austrians, but the advantage rested with the Russians, who took many prisoners and guns.

So November found the German main army in Poland beaten, and retreating towards the Polish frontier. That was the main thing. Russia by her strategy had crushed the forces of the active German army, and the German Reserves and the Austrians only remained to be dealt with. The losses of the re-organised Austrian troops, who had previously been so severely handled in Galicia, were enormous. The Austrian regiments were described as fighting in confusion, having been split up among various corps.

Baffled Germany

Again we see Germany, no less than Austria, baffled and defeated. The only success that Germany could claim from the commencement of the campaign was the reverse sustained by General Rennenkampf in East Prussia, and that was speedily avenged. What were Germany's hopes in the powerful attack in this last great battle in Poland? It may have been thought that if the Austro-German armies secured the line of the Vistula the Russians could then be held in check by a smaller force, and so German troops could be transferred to the western theatre of war again, for the Germans have prided themselves on these rapid changes. The fortunes of the battlefield, however, dashed all such hopes.

And no more successful was a renewal of German attacks from north-east Prussia on the Russian frontier amid lakes and marshes. These attacks were once again beaten back by General Rennenkampf. Nowhere, indeed, could the Kaiser's legions obtain a foothold, and the Russians were speeding towards their ultimate goal—the invasion of Germany.

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