

Nelson's History of the War

Volume I

John Buchan
1915

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NELSON'S
HISTORY OF THE WAR

VOLUME I.

NELSON'S HISTORY
OF THE WAR. By
John Buchan. With a Preface
by
the Earl of Rosebery, K.G.

Volume I. From the Beginning of
the War to the Fall of Namur
Illustrated with 23 Maps and Plans

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

PREFACE

Mr. John Buchan has asked me to write a short preface to his history of the war, and I owe so much pleasure to his books that I cannot refuse this pitiful instalment of return.

The definite history of this war is not now to be written, or for many a day. Still it may be possible to disentangle from this struggle of armed nations over hundreds of miles some explicit narrative which may help all of us who are hungering for help and guidance.

At present we do not authentically know even the subtle causes which produced this convulsion over half the world. What is on the surface is clear enough, but it is what is under the surface that matters. I am reluctant to believe in a diabolical and cold-blooded scheme to bring about war at this time; at least, this does not seem to be proved. If war was being planned, it was, I suspect, a longer and a slower match that was burning for a later explosion. And as regards our part in it, one would conjecture that that was, strangely enough, unexpected in Prussia, to judge from the venomous and insane fury which has raged against us in Germany since we entered on the campaign.

We must, then, I think, suspend our judgment as to the real causes of war till time and documents give us the clue. Perhaps the pregnant word "mobilization" may explain much. Meanwhile we can only conjecture by the light of a few facts.

Even if this history does not affix the deadly responsibility, and confines itself to the war, it is limiting itself to the unlimited.

Europe quakes to the tramp of armed races, compared to which the hosts of the past sink into insignificance. There must be nearer thirty millions than twenty of armed men in Europe clutching each other's throats this year. France, Austria, Russia, and Germany are hurling their nations at each other. Great Britain, Servia, and Belgium have all launched great armies into the field. Montenegro has sent her people. Armed, but not fighting, are the troops of Italy and Rumania, straining at the leash of their neutrality; while Turkey frowns and intrigues.

That is the European situation at this moment. It may change from day to day, but not in the direction of peace. It is truly a vast canvas for the historical painter.

Then as to the conflict itself, it is at present enveloped in the impenetrable smoke of battle, the shifting clouds of lies, and the reticent discipline of the Press censor. Little or nothing emerges, except some salient fact like the fall of Antwerp. Our nation, always at its best under the silent stress of anxiety, has to content itself with the rare but masterly dispatches of our General, and that most delightful form of literature, the gay, modest letters of officers and men at the front, as well as the racy narratives of our splendid Tommies, who carry with cheerful and imperturbable courage the British Empire on their backs.

Then there are few battles to trace, for each is a campaign. In France, it would seem, a million men or more, over a line of 250 or 300 miles, are trying to push another million or more out of entrenchments almost, if not quite, impervious. Russia, on the other side, is conducting at least two huge campaigns, which it is difficult for any but the most expert geographer to trace. Brooding over the North Sea is the Armada of Britain, the silent sentry guarding our food and commerce, and watching the menacing inaction of the German fleet. While in Asia and Africa, off South America, and in the islands of the Pacific, the world-wide struggle is raging.

The writer who can disentangle this vast labyrinth of armaments, and assist his contemporaries to comprehend the theatre of conflict, undertakes an heroic task, and will be entitled to the gratitude of his country; though the definite history of these simultaneous and colossal wars must still be remote.

We only know something of the first act of this drama. But it will not be complete till we know the fifth. If the Prussians are victorious we need not trouble our heads. That supremacy means, it would seem, the end of liberty, of civilization, and religion as we have understood them to be, and we shall be compelled to kneel before the Dagon of brute force. That contingency, however, we all exclude. But what will follow the victory of the Allies? Will it be a cessation of the burden of armaments, and the establishment of a more balanced equipoise of power in Europe? None can tell; but the answer to these questions, to be unfolded in the fifth act, makes it much the most momentous.

Part of the task, however, is easy and pleasant. War is an accursed thing, which punishes the innocent and generally lets the guilty go free. But our chronicler cannot fail to enlarge upon the incalculable blessing which the damnable invasion of Belgium has conferred incidentally upon ourselves. For it has revealed to the world the enthusiastic and weatherproof unity of the British Empire; or, rather, the loyalty of the three connected empires to the Mother country. That would be worth any ordinary war, and is not, perhaps, too dearly

bought even by such an appalling conflagration as this. And this unity, as it is not the beginning, so is not the end. Blood shed in common is the cement of nations, and we and our sons may look to see a beneficence of empire, not such as the Prussians dreamed of, not a war-lordship over other nations, not a nightmare of oppression, but a world-wide British influence which shall be a guarantee of liberty and peace, and which, hand in hand with our Allies in Europe, and with our kindred in the United States, should go far to make another war such as this impossible. That would be a crowning glory to fight for; a gain for humanity such as no other war has achieved, and yet not an impracticable dream.

ROSEBERRY.

October 1914.

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Nelson's History of the War, Volume I.

CHAPTER I. THE BREAKING OF THE BARRIERS.

The Tragedy of Serajevo—The Development of Modern Germany—The German Emperor—The New "Religion of Valour"—The Prussian Military Caste—German International Policy—The Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente—The Effect of the Balkan War—Germany's Attitude towards her Neighbours—The Slav Menace—The European Situation in July 1914—The Austrian Note to Serbia—Sir Edward Grey's Efforts for Peace—The German Offer to Britain—The Days of Waiting—The Declarations of War.

Early on the morning of Sunday, June 28, 1914, the little city of Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia, was astir with the expectation of a royal visit. The heir to the throne of Austria, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, had been for the past week attending the manœuvres of the 15th and 16th Army Corps, and had suddenly announced his intention of inspecting the troops in the capital. It was a military occasion; the civic authorities were given short notice, and had no time to organize a reception; and the Archduke and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, were met at the railway station only by the local Governor and his staff. The party drove in motor cars through the uneven streets of the Bosnian city, which, with its circle of bare hills and its mosques and minarets, suggests Asia rather than Europe. There was an exceptional crowd in the streets, for the day was a Serbian fête—Catholic Croats, with whom the Archduke was popular; Orthodox Serbs, with whom he was very much the reverse; Mussalman Serbs, whose politics were not of Christendom; and those strange, wildly clad gypsies that throng every Balkan town.

June 28, 1914.

The Archduke Francis Ferdinand was a man in middle life, a lonely and saddened figure, oppressed by the imminence of a fatal disease. Almost alone of his countrymen he had the larger vision in statesmanship. He saw that Austria was

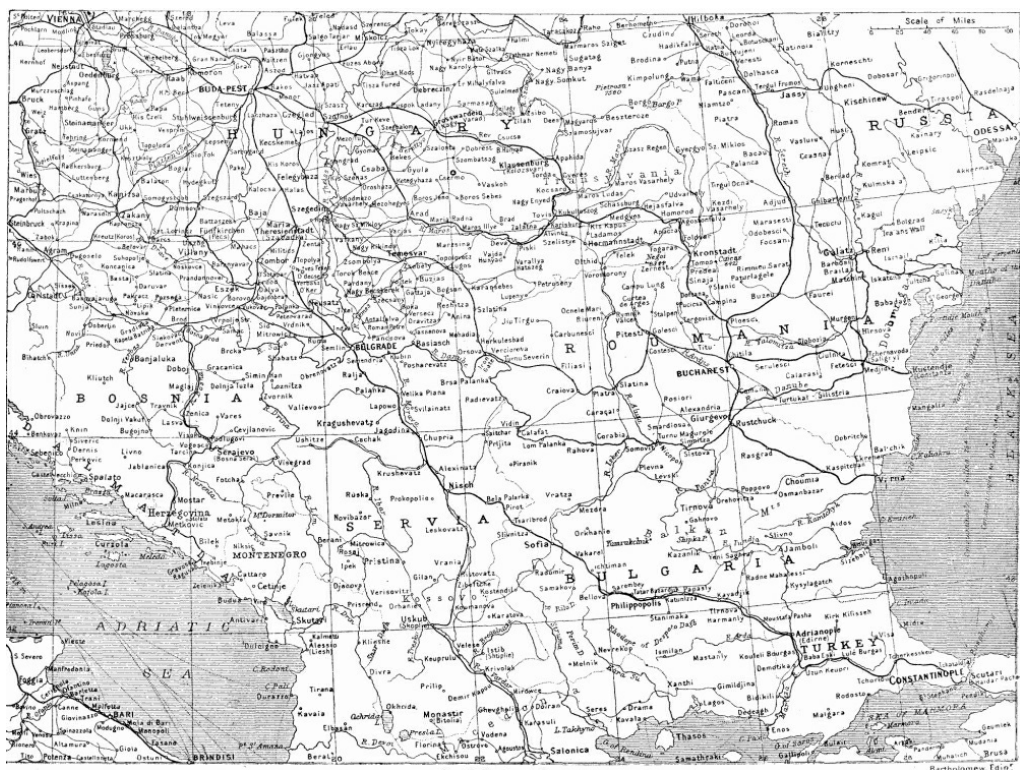
succeeding badly in the government of her strangely varied races, more especially those Croat, Serb, and Slovene peoples, numbering six and a half millions, whom we call the Southern Slavs. He had seen the rise of Serbia since the Balkan War, and realized that to her the Slavs of the Dual Monarchy looked as the emancipator of the future. But as a member of the House of Habsburg, he sought to counter the Greater Serbian ideal with that of a Greater Austria. His policy was the destruction of the Dualist system, and the establishment in its place of a true federation, under which different races should have a real local autonomy, and find union in a federal Parliament. Against such an ideal the military party of Vienna, represented by the Chief of the General Staff, Conrad von Hoetzendorff, and the Hungarians, under the leadership of Count Stephen Tisza, had set their faces like flint. To them the existing *régime* must be preserved at any cost, and they frankly acknowledged that their policy meant war. Indeed, early in the first Balkan War, von Hoetzendorff had contemplated an attack upon Serbia and Russia.^[1] The Archduke was, therefore, a voice in the wilderness, and his chief foes were those of his own household. Like Mirabeau, he was the only man who might have averted calamity, and his death, like Mirabeau's, meant that the arts of statesmanship must yield to the sword.

The royal party motored towards the Filipovitch Parade, where the inspection was to be held. Motoring in Serajevo is a leisurely business, and the car moved slowly along the Appel Quay. Just before it reached the Chumuria Bridge over the Miliatzka, a black package fell on the opened hood of the Archduke's car. He picked it up and tossed it into the street, where it exploded in front of the second car, in which sat Count Boos Waldeck and the aide-de-camp to the Governor. The bomb was filled with nails and bits of iron, and the two occupants of the car and six or seven spectators were wounded. The would-be assassin was arrested. He was a compositor, called Cabrinovitch, from Trebinje in Herzegovina, who had lived for some time in Belgrade, and had, as he confessed at his trial, got the bomb from the Serbian arsenal of Kragujevatz. "The fellow will get the Golden Cross of Merit for this," was the reported remark of the Archduke. He knew his real enemies, and was aware that to powerful circles in Vienna and Budapest his death would be a profound relief.

The Archduke continued on his way to the Town Hall, and arrived in something of a temper. "What is the use of your speeches?" he asked the Mayor hotly. "I come here to pay you a visit, and I am greeted with bombs. It is outrageous!" The embarrassed city dignitaries read the address of welcome, and the Archduke made a formal reply. Then the whole *entourage*—Mayor, Governor, and Chief of Police—attempted to dissuade him from driving again through the city. There had been dark

prophecies of evil, anonymous letters hinting at death had been frequent, and in those narrow streets amid the motley population no proper guard could be kept. The Duchess added her entreaties, but the Grand Duke was obdurate. He insisted on driving to the hospital to visit the aide-de-camp who had been wounded by the bomb.

About ten minutes to eleven the car was moving slowly along the Appel Quay, in the narrow part where it is joined by the Franz-Josefsgasse. Here a second bomb was thrown, which failed to explode. The thrower, a Bosnian student called Prinzip—like Cabrinovitch an Orthodox Serb and a member of the Greater Serbian party—ran forward and fired three shots from a Browning pistol. The Archduke was hit in the neck and the Duchess was terribly wounded in the lower part of the body, receiving the bullet in an effort to protect her husband. Both lost consciousness immediately. At Government House they rallied sufficiently to receive the last sacraments, but within the hour they were dead.



South-Eastern Europe.

In an impassioned proclamation to the awed and silent city the Mayor laid the

blame for the crime at Serbia's door.

Great events spring only from great causes, but the immediate occasion may be small. From the flight of Helen and Paris down to the Ems telegram there has always been some single incident which acted as the explosive charge to the waiting magazine of strife. The throwing of Martinitz and Slawata out of the upper window at Prague precipitated the Thirty Years' War; a sentence spoken by the King of France from a balcony at Versailles began the War of the Spanish Succession; the Boston Tea Party inaugurated the American Revolution; the election of Lincoln to the Presidency determined the struggle between North and South. The events of that June morning at Serajevo were dramatic enough in themselves, but in their sequel they must rank among the fateful moments of history. They brought to a head the secular antagonism between Slav and Teuton, and with it the dormant ambitions and fears of every Power in Europe. It is necessary, for a proper understanding of the issues, to review briefly the position of the chief nations at the time when the crime of a printer's devil and a schoolboy stripped off the diplomatic covering and laid bare the iron facts to the gaze of the world.

Since the successful war of 1870-1, which inaugurated Imperial Germany, the history of the land between the Baltic and the Alps had been one of steady and often brilliant progress in most domains of national life. In commerce she had invaded every market on earth, and by the aid of her admirable technical schools had founded prosperous industries within her own borders. German "efficiency" had become proverbial in the business world. The average wealth of her citizens had largely increased, and great fortunes were frequent in a country which fifty years ago was famous for its poverty and simplicity. The nation in every sphere had been keyed up to a high pitch of effort, and the results were remarkable and impressive. It is true that this rapid advance had been secured sometimes by dubious means. As the German Government financed itself by frequent loans, so German business was constructed on a gigantic basis of credit. While the machine was kept going no inconvenience appeared, but if a halt or a slowing down should be necessary, the equilibrium might be precarious. Progress for Germany must, therefore, be swift and continuous, for a moratorium in commerce or diplomacy might well be awkward.

In her Emperor Germany had a ruler admirably fitted to accelerate and sustain this national movement, for which, indeed, he was largely responsible. Bismarck had aimed at making his country the arbiter of the destinies of Europe. William II., when in 1890 he "dropped the pilot" and became his own adviser, aspired to control the destinies of the world. To future ages the Kaiser will present a curious psychological

study. A man of immense energy, highly susceptible to new ideas, emotional to a fault, but essentially bold and confident, the defects of his character are as patent as its merits. He took all knowledge for his province, and suffered the fate of such adventurers, for his excursions in scholarship, art, theology, and metaphysics produced amusement rather than edification. His mind was incapable of real originality or of any long-sustained and serious thought; it was the mind of the *impresario* or the journalist, but it had the merit of being highly impressionable. It was sensitive to every wave of feeling, to every fragment of an idea, that might pass through the brain of the people which he ruled. The Kaiser was the barometer of German opinion. He did not direct it; he registered it and was directed by it. His high susceptibility made him a lover of theatrical parts, all of which he played moderately well. It is probably a mistake to accuse him of insincerity. He was sincere enough while the mood lasted; the trouble was that it was only a mood at the best, and did not last long. The conception of William II. as an iron-hearted Borgia preparing ruthlessly for war is as far from the truth as that picture of him as a gushing angel of peace which was at one time accepted by a few people in Britain and by multitudes in America.

But with all his faults he was a ruler admirably suited to the German people as we know them to-day. His passion for the top-note in all things, his garish rhetorical personality, his splendid vitality, his amazing speeches, were exactly fitted to the grandiose temper of modern Germany. He was popular, as a man must always be who puts into words what a nation desires to think. Besides, his untiring energy was invaluable to his people. An autocrat in a hurry is the most efficient of hustlers. We must remember, too, in estimating his popular influence, the peculiar relation in which the House of Hohenzollern stood to Prussia. From 1415, when they appeared in Brandenburg, they had by their own energy enlarged its area and importance in each century. In 1701 the Elector of Brandenburg became King of Prussia; Frederick the Great added Silesia and parts of Poland; it was a queen of the Hohenzollern house who organized the resistance to Napoleon which made possible Leipzig and Waterloo; it was a Hohenzollern king who made Germany an empire. Prussia was modern Germany, and Prussia was the Hohenzollern creation.

We have said that Germany had made steady progress in every department of life. But there was one exception. In art and literature, in pure thought and in political science, she had declined since 1870. The simple *bourgeois* Germany of the early nineteenth century produced some of the greatest of the world's thinkers, poets, and musicians; Imperial Germany was content with mediocrities. It looked as if in gaining the world she had gone far towards losing her soul. Fifteen years ago there died in a

madhouse that strange genius, Friedrich Nietzsche, who called himself a philosopher, but was in reality a mystical poet. During his lifetime this prophet was of no account in his own country; he ranked Germans with Englishmen as among the lowest of created beings; he prophesied that "the German Empire will destroy the German mind;" and even to-day he is scarcely idolized by his countrymen. But his teaching, imperfectly understood and wrenched from its context, dominated their thoughts. He taught that for the truly great, the Superman, power is the only quest, and to attain it all things are permissible. He cast contempt upon what he called "slave-ethics"—that is, the morality of the Gospels, which enjoined humility and self-sacrifice. If the end is big enough, all things are justified—such may be taken as a popular version of his precepts. This doctrine, combined with the materialism of men like Haeckel and Mach, produced a frame of mind which was fruitful ground for the political seed sown by Treitschke, the historian of Prussia, and the various distinguished army officers, such as von der Goltz, and the theorists, such as von Bernhardi, who desired to point a contemporary moral.

"The great questions are to be settled," said Bismarck in the Prussian Diet in 1862, "not by speeches and majority resolutions, but by blood and iron." The phrase became the watchword of modern Germany; but Bismarck was a man of genius and far wiser than his epigrams. Any reader of the conversations recorded by Busch will see that his acute, far-reaching intellect would have selected for Germany a very different part from that which she has chosen to play to-day. "We must direct our policy in accordance with the facts," he said in 1891; "that is, we must do our best to prevent war or to limit it." But Bismarck's disciples pinned their faith to blood and iron, and forgot the brains which the great Chancellor had presupposed. Their true teachers were not Bismarck but the old Prussian military school, who, following and misinterpreting Clausewitz, regarded war as a "continuation of policy," a card to be played as readily as any other. Treitschke and Droysen enlarged on how Prussia became great, and how she could become greater; the stoppage of her progress was the one unpardonable sin. Prussia's advance was in their eyes inevitable, for she alone realized the first duty of man—to conquer; and it is not a far step from this assumption of a divinely appointed destiny to the Kaiser's view of himself as the chosen agent of God. To Treitschke war was the "drastic medicine of the human race," and the true religion the religion of valour. "The hope of banishing war is not only meaningless but immoral. Its disappearance would turn the earth into a great temple of selfishness It has always been the weary, spiritless, and exhausted ages which have played with the dream of perpetual peace." Such an age was represented by England, who, having got all she wanted in the world, desired to rest

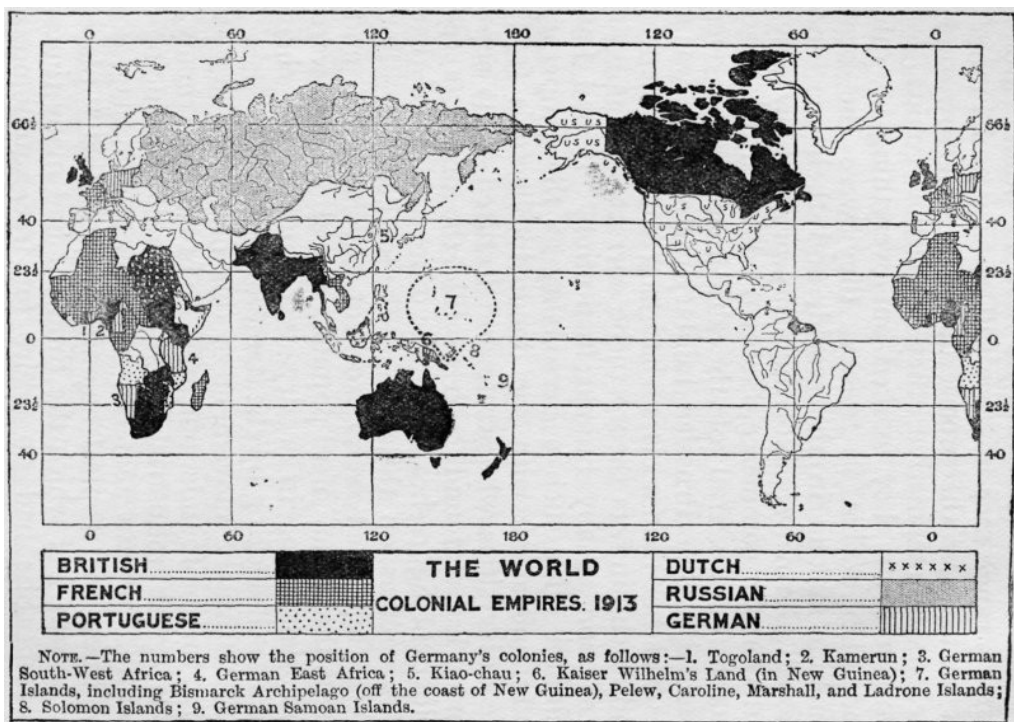
and speak smooth words to her more virile rivals. Treitschke's pages are full of contempt for Britain and her ramshackle empire, and Delbrück candidly set forth the hopes of his school. "One has become accustomed to liken the development of England to that of Holland, which, without ever having been overcome in war, sank in the course of a single generation from the position of a great Power to a state which is scarcely mentioned in history."

The "religion of valour" has its own magnificence. It is such a creed as might have been preached by some Old Testament warrior or some English Ironside. But in them it would have been conjoined with a spiritual religion, and the new German school had none. Rapidly it sank into a coarse materialism; sacrifice was preached, but it was sacrifice for low and earthy ends. Like the doctrine of Machiavelli, it taught that "*la petite morale*" was the enemy of "*la grande*," but the higher ethics turned out on inquiry to be merely the higher selfishness. It is all an old story in the world's history, but never before had the speculations of a doctrinaire been exalted into the inspiration of a people. As Gladstone said of the rule of King Bomba, the negation of God was constituted a principle of government; but it had a god of its own, a relic of the ancient Teutonic Pantheon. The German temperament cannot do without its poetry, and behind all the mercantile calculations we can discern a kind of epic grandeur, like the grandiosity of Wagner's music. "Thinking," wrote Madame de Staël, "calms men of other nations; it inflames the Germans." The despised Nietzsche had become the prophet of the race whom he so heartily disliked. Conventional ethics were discarded in public life, and the recent German White Book was doctored as skilfully as the Ems telegram. Nietzsche's "magnificent blonde beast, avidly rampant for spoil and victory," had become the avowed national ideal:—

"Ye have heard how in old times it was said, Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; but I say unto you, Blessed are the valiant, for they shall make the earth their throne. And ye have heard men say, Blessed are the poor in spirit; but I say unto you, Blessed are the great in soul and the free in spirit, for they shall enter into Valhalla. And ye have heard men say, Blessed are the peacemakers; but I say unto you, Blessed are the war-makers, for they shall be called, if not the children of Jahve, the children of Odin, who is greater than Jahve."

Commercial success, military fervour, a flamboyant monarch, and a philosophy which absolved from all narrow ethics, combined to foster in Germany an intense national complacency and an immoderate national ambition. In the phrase of one of

themselves, the Germans had become *sieges-trunken*—drunk with victory. This condition, however, may be more dangerous than useful unless the governing power is in strong hands, and at this juncture the hands were strong, if somewhat rough and occasionally clumsy. The German constitution, while it contained extravagantly democratic elements, such as the franchise on which the Reichstag was elected, was in spirit a powerful autocracy. There was no responsible government; the Imperial Chancellor answered to the Emperor and not to Parliament, and the controlling power was in the hands of reactionary Prussia. Above all, the army was wholly exempt from popular control. Far more important than Kaiser or Crown Prince, Herr Ballin or Professor Wagner, was the governing class, which was represented in the world's eyes by the Great General Staff. It was not only that the army counted in Germany more than with any other civilized Power; it was that the methods and ideals of the army had permeated the whole national life. The Germans, as their neighbours read them, were divided into the born-to-be-drilled and the natural drill-master. The ordinary Teuton, whom you found in the south and centre, was industrious, dreamy, and docile, the natural prey of the drill-sergeant of Brandenburg. But it was this Germany, remember, which had given birth to the great men, for Prussia has scarcely produced any one of first-rate genius except Bismarck. The Prussians, who were not pure Teutons, but a strange race-mixture full of Slav and Finnish elements, were the precise opposite. Narrow, one-ideaed, unimaginative, they had the genius for bureaucracy; they worked out everything by rule and plan. That is to say, they were the best machine-makers in the world, and their machine was all Germany. Not the army or the navy only, but German commerce, German education, German literature—the trail of the drill-master was over them all. The Prussian military caste—for it was a caste rather than a class—had supreme competence, and, assuming its theory to be correct, was as near perfection as any human institution. It had few affinities with such a personality as the Emperor, and none at all with the docile intellectuals from the universities who wrote and lectured in its support. But it found both useful—the one as a resplendent figure-head, and the other as a proof that learning was on the side of the mailed fist. For those Supermen were excellent psychologists, and knew the value of a popular appeal. They were humorists, too, in a dry way, and called their naked self-seeking by the name of Culture.



The World, Colonial Empires, 1913

At first the movement of this new crusade was slow, for the foundations must be broad. Germany, as a great industrial Power, needed producing-grounds for raw material under her own flag, so the quest for tropical colonies began—that “place in the sun” of which the Emperor had many times spoken. She had no desire for free autonomous dominions like Canada or New Zealand; what she sought was Crown colonies within a certain zone. As she cast her eyes about the world she found that other nations had been before her, and that few tropical lands remained for her civilizing mission. Some fragments, indeed, she picked up—territories in East, South-West, and West Africa; Samoa and a few islands in the Pacific; the port of Kiaochow in China, seized as a make-weight to Vladivostok and Wei-hai-wei. She undertook the Baghdad railway, with the vision of a German Mesopotamia at the end of it. She cast longing eyes towards South America, but the United States and the Monroe doctrine blocked that road, and she failed entirely to sow dispeace between Britain and America at the time of the war with Spain in 1898. The Portuguese colonies would have served her purpose, but there Britain was the barrier. France on the North African littoral and Britain in Egypt were the objects of her envy; but these were Powers that could not be attacked in front. Wherever she

turned throughout the world in her quest for new lands she found Britain or France there before her, and she began to realize that her way to the position which she desired could only lie over the bodies of one or the other or both.

A world-empire demands a navy, and this the Emperor secured from a not-too-willing country during the fever of Anglophobia which possessed Germany at the time of the Boer War. In 1900 the first Navy Bill was passed, containing in its preamble the significant words: "Germany must have a fleet of such strength that even for the mightiest naval Power a war with her would involve such risks as to jeopardize its own supremacy." Other Bills were launched on recurrent waves of Anglophobia—in 1906, in 1908, and in 1912; and by the last year her navy stood second among the fleets of the world. It was a superb achievement, for it was a true navy, and not merely a floating army, as was the original German ideal. Men like von Tirpitz, von Koester, and von Ingenohl appreciated the essential meaning of a sea force, and wrought assiduously till it was created.

German diplomacy meantime set itself to assert Germany's international position by sporadic and not always intelligent efforts in every quarter of the globe. The co-operation with Russia in depriving Japan of the fruits of her victory in 1895; the long intrigue with Turkey as to Anatolia; the Kaiser's theatrical Syrian tour; the German leadership of the allied force dispatched to China in the Boxer rising—are examples of how earnestly Germany went about the task of making herself felt throughout the world. But the activity had one drawback. It alarmed her neighbours, and disposed ancient rivals to make protective alliances. France, whom Germany had appealed to in 1895 and 1899 to collaborate against Britain during the latter's South African troubles, became joined to her secular enemy in an *entente*. She had already an alliance with Russia, and the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 completed the triple understanding. Germany, who had endeavoured to see that no alliance should exist in Europe except her own Triplice, found herself suddenly faced with a dangerous new grouping of the Powers. For eight years she set herself to dissolve the Entente by cajolery and by threats. In 1905, over the Moroccan question, she tried to pick a quarrel with France, and drove M. Delcassé from office, but was defeated in her main intention by the Algeciras Conference and Britain's support of her ally. In 1908, however, her diplomacy scored a striking success. The Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was supported by Germany, and the joint protests of Russia, France, and Britain were met with a cool contempt. The Kaiser made his famous speech about Germany's "shining armour," and the Entente, unprepared for a European war in such a cause, had to acquiesce with the best grace it could muster. But the Entente survived these blows unimpaired. Once again, in 1911, the attempt

was made. The dispatch of the gunboat *Panther* to Agadir was a gross provocation to France; but the support of Britain averted war, and the quarrel was settled by the cession to Germany of a slice of French Congo. It was the last of the efforts to sap the Entente, for events had now begun to alter the perspective of German ambitions.

The first was the war which broke out in November 1911 between Italy and Turkey—the former a colleague of Germany's in the Triple Alliance, the latter the object of German blandishments for a quarter of a century. The Italian annexation of Tripoli and Cyrenaica put an end to German hopes of these territories. Less than a year later the Balkan War began—a war which Germany expected to result in a decisive victory for Turkey. The issue was a final blow to Austria's hopes of a port on the Ægean, and to Germany's dreams of a gradual and painless absorption of the Ottoman Empire. A new and formidable Slav power stood in the way, and behind loomed Russia, the protector of the Slav nations. Such a situation drove Germany to reflect most seriously on her position. She saw the various avenues to world-power, on which she had based her plans, daily closing up. The Near East was shut by the new Slav renaissance; the Far East was too dangerous with Japan at its door; South America was closed to her adventures by the United States, and most of the rest of the world by Britain. Her navy had come to maturity, and was eager to win laurels. She was already the greatest military Power on earth, and ere the Balkan War was over had increased her total peace strength to 870,000 men. She saw the Triple Entente solidifying into an Alliance, an alliance accompanied by an amazing growth of sympathy and goodwill between the three constituent nations.

But at the same time she believed France to be politically precarious, on the verge of a syndicalist revolution; and the revelation of financial scandals in high places convinced her that the French army had been sacrificed to the greed of the politicians. The decline in the French birthrate suggested that in man-power France would show herself conspicuously weak. Britain seemed to German observers to be in the thralls of a sentimental socialism. The British nation declined the duty of self-defence, and its favourite political leaders had showered contempt on the veteran soldier who had tried to awake his countrymen. The islands were distracted with imminent civil war, and at any moment in Ireland the flames might break through the crust. Above all, British Governments during the past seven years had been toying with peace proposals, and British statesmen had shown themselves singularly averse to facing the probabilities of war. Britain, Germany argued, would remain neutral in any struggle in order to save her pockets, and if she did enter the contest, her army would be negligible, and her navy would come under the rule already quoted from the Navy Law of 1900. Russia, on the other hand, had infinite resources, but her

new navy was not yet ready, and her army was not prepared for war. As to her own allies, Germany felt, with some reason, that they could not be depended on indefinitely. Italian ministers showed themselves apathetic about the Triple Alliance, and by the Italian people it had always been detested. The Austrian Emperor could not live for ever, and it would be well to use the alliance while Francis Joseph remained to unite in personal loyalty the divergent elements of his kingdom. All arguments pointed to an early stroke if Germany would clear the road for her grandiose ambitions.

Another factor must be included in German psychology—the factor of fear. She was afraid of the great Slav Empire in the East. In introducing his latest Army Bill, the Imperial Chancellor forecast the day when *Slaventum* should fight against *Germanentum*, and in the last few years this notion, aided by Slav successes in the Balkans and by Russia's increasing prosperity, had gained firm hold of the German mind. Let it be said that the notion was not ignoble, and had good historical warrant. The Mark of Brandenburg was once the bulwark of Christendom against the inroads of barbarism; Austria—the Eastern Mark—was, during the whole Middle Ages and up to two centuries ago, the outpost of civilization against the Hun, the Slav, and the Turk. To the German, who prided himself on his race, the Slav was the enemy, always rolled back and always returning, alien in church and ideals and habits, and all the things that distinguish man from man. Any one familiar with Germany in the months before the war will remember the curious recurrence in conversation of the words “Russia” and “the Russians,” always with an accent of disquiet. The papers had periodical campaigns of violent abuse against the empire of the Tsar, varied with attacks upon her ally, France. A *malaise* seemed to have fallen upon the people, a desire, half scared, half angry, to strike out against they knew not what. Bernhardi's alternatives suddenly became terribly real. It was *Weltmacht oder Niedergang* —“World-Power or Downfall.”

It may be reasonably assumed that during the summer of 1914 the Emperor and his advisers had persuaded themselves that, in the interests of Germany's future, war could not long be delayed. The Secret Report, acquired by M. Etienne in April 1913, and published in a French Yellow Book,^[2] shows that for many months previously the subject had engrossed her interest. The Great General Staff, who had made plans for every conceivable emergency, were always ready. The war, as the Emperor saw it, would not be a European conflagration. Britain would stand out, France would speedily be broken, and after some sullen fighting on the Eastern frontier the Slav peril would be checked for a time. Germany would emerge as indisputably the greatest of the world's Powers, heavy indemnities would pay her

war bill, and her mailed diplomacy would not be denied in future conclaves of the peoples. The true history of the months just before the war cannot be written at present. Years hence, when indiscreet secretaries have published their memoirs, we may get some inkling of the truth. That war was considered by Germany inevitable at no distant date is certain, and the Kaiser seems to have sounded his fellow-monarchs of the Triple Alliance early in the spring. The steps taken by financial houses in America, specially associated with Austrian and German State business, as early as May and June point to a premonition based upon some hint from exalted quarters. It is highly improbable that Germany had any intention of forcing a European war by sudden violence on her own part; but she believed in the certainty of such a war, and when the chance offered was not averse to seizing it. At any rate, it is clear that after the murders in Bosnia she set about preparing for what she regarded as the inevitable. German officers serving abroad were suddenly recalled in the early days of the month; notices summoning reservists to the colours were printed and sent abroad at the same time; and the manufacture of certain classes of war *matériel* was hurried on. Long before mobilization was announced, or even military law proclaimed, the German army knew what was coming, and while sanguine diplomatists were still striving for peace the Great General Staff had selected its maps of the future battlefields.

At first the Serajevo tragedy seemed destined to be only a nine days' wonder. The victims passed in stately funerals to their tombs, and the trial of the murderers began. Undoubtedly the outrage was shocking and barbarous; undoubtedly Serbia had been a nest of anti-Austrian intrigue, and Belgrade a recruiting-ground for assassins. It is more than probable, too, that responsible Serbians were privy to and approved the deed, and the Serbian press and populace behaved with little decency. Attacks upon the Austro-Hungarian Legation at Belgrade, even though provoked by the anti-Serb riots in Bosnia, were not convincing proofs of penitence. At the same time, there is good reason to believe that the existence of a plot was not unknown in Vienna, and there is some evidence that Cabrinovitch and Prinzip were instigated by Austrian *agents-provocateurs*. Further, it seems clear that the Serbian Government was free from any complicity. But the incident had left a disagreeable impression on the world, and when it was announced that Vienna intended to extract assurances from Belgrade which would make a continuance of this brigandage impossible, the general opinion of Europe approved. But the general opinion of Europe was not greatly stirred. The Kaiser was cruising in Norwegian waters; British squadrons were at Kiel on a friendly visit; President Poincaré and two of his colleagues were on holiday in the north; Paris was chiefly concerned with the trial of Madame Caillaux;

Britain had her own Ulster crisis to fill her hands. It seemed as if the chances of European trouble were remote, because of the summer weather and men's preoccupation with their own concerns.

On the 23rd of July, nearly a month after the tragedy, the Austro-Hungarian Government presented its demands to Serbia. In their main lines they had been known unofficially a week before, and the full text had been communicated to, and had probably been drafted in collaboration with, the German Ambassador. The Austrian Note, which startled every Chancellery in Europe except the Wilhelmstrasse, was a lengthy document, embodying a number of drastic demands, devised partly as reparation for the Serajevo murders and partly as a safeguard for the future. A reply was requested within forty-eight hours—that is, by six o'clock on the evening of Saturday, the 25th. While the reply was pending, significant events happened. The German ambassadors at Paris, London, and Petrograd (St. Petersburg) called upon the French, British, and Russian foreign ministers, and announced that Germany approved the form and substance of the Austrian Note, adding that, if the quarrel between Austria and Serbia were not localized, dangerous friction might arise between the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance.

July 23.

Serbia, faced with Austria's ultimatum, had recourse to Russia. The empire of the Tsar had made remarkable progress since the close of her war with Japan. Many of her institutions had been liberalized; the people had been given a new chance of participating in the government of the country; though her lost navy had not been yet replaced, her army organization had been completely remodelled, and she was now stronger on land than ever before in her history; her commerce and industries had grown immoderately, and she had become in some respects the richest of continental nations. She had recovered her self-respect, and was setting herself seriously and patiently to the work of national regeneration. Her policy was, from the nature of her interests, pacific. She desired no extension of territory, for her aim was intensive development. But, as the greatest Slav Power, she recognized certain obligations to the Slav peoples beyond her borders. She could not allow the little Balkan states to be swallowed up in a Teutonic advance towards the Bosphorus. Moreover, as the protector of the Greek Church, she resented any ill treatment of Orthodox believers in other lands. For some years there had been much ecclesiastical friction in Austria-Hungary, and frequent and bitter appeals had been made to Russia by Greek Churches in the Dual Monarchy to protect her co-religionists. Russia, who had no bellicose aims, could be drawn into war on three contingencies only—an assault upon a Slav nationality, the persecution of the Greek Church beyond her borders, or

an attack upon her ally, France. The second had been long a cause of uneasiness to her statesmen, and the first was suddenly brought into prominence by the Austrian Note.

Acting on Russia's advice, Serbia replied within forty-eight hours, accepting all the Austrian demands in full with two reservations, on which she asked for a reference to the Hague Tribunal. These points concerned Articles 5 and 6 of the Note. Article 5 required Serbia "to accept the collaboration in Serbia of representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Government in the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy." Serbia replied that she did not clearly understand this request, but would admit such collaboration as agreed with the principles of international law and her own criminal procedure. Article 6 asked for judicial proceedings against the accessories to the Serajevo plot, in which delegates of the Austro-Hungarian Government should take part. Serbia replied that she could not accept this, as it would be a violation of her constitution. Obviously this was so. The complete acceptance of the Austrian Note meant that Serbia gave up her independent nationality and her rights as a sovereign state, and that Austria extended her authority to the Bulgarian and Greek frontiers. The Note was in the nature of a rhetorical question: it did not expect an answer; and at ten o'clock on the Saturday evening the Austro-Hungarian minister, after announcing that nothing short of a complete acceptance would satisfy his Government, asked for his passports and left Belgrade.

July 25.

The following day there began that feverish week of diplomatic effort, the record of which will be found in the British White Paper, and which constitutes as dramatic an episode as our annals can show. The chief part was played by the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, whose labours up till the last moment for peace were of incalculable value in establishing the honesty of British purpose in the eyes of neutral peoples. His first step was to approach Germany, France, and Italy, with a view to calling a conference in London to mediate in the Austro-Serbian quarrel. The two latter Powers agreed, but Germany declined, on the ground that a conference was impracticable in the special circumstances of the two countries, adding that she understood that the Russian and Austrian foreign ministers were actually at the moment exchanging views, and that she was hopeful about the result. Again Sir Edward Grey, quick to seize the chance of Germany's admission, returned to the task, but was again put off.

July 26.

Wednesday, the 29th, was the beginning of the final stage of the crisis. On that

day the situation, apart from the diplomats, was as follows: Austria had declared war upon Serbia, and was bombarding Belgrade; Belgium had ordered a mobilization in self-defence; Germany had recalled her High Sea Fleet; and in the British fleet all manœuvre leave had been cancelled, and concentration was proceeding. On that day we were informed that in consequence of Austria invading Serbia, Russia, while disclaiming any aggressive intentions against Germany, had ordered the mobilization of her southern commands. On that day a midnight Council of War was held at Potsdam, under the presidency of the Emperor William, and thereafter the Imperial Chancellor, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, sent for the British Ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, and made him an historic proposal.

July 29.

“He said that it was clear, so far as he was able to judge the main principles that governed British policy, that Great Britain would never stand by and allow France to be crushed in any conflict there might be. That, however, was not the object at which Germany aimed. Provided that the neutrality of Great Britain were certain, every assurance would be given to the British Government that the Imperial Government aimed at no territorial acquisitions at the expense of France should they prove victorious in any war that might ensue. I questioned his Excellency about the French colonies, and he said that he was unable to give a similar undertaking in that respect. As regards Holland, however, his Excellency said that, so long as Germany’s adversaries respected the integrity and neutrality of the Netherlands, Germany was ready to give His Majesty’s Government an assurance that she would do likewise. It depended upon the action of France what operations Germany might be forced to enter upon in Belgium, but *when the war was over*, Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany.”

We were offered complicity on the most insulting terms—that we should suffer our ally, France, to be stripped of her colonies without protest, and that the neutrality of Belgium, guaranteed by Germany and Britain, should be respected only when the war was over. But the tale of the events of that memorable day is not finished. The Russian Foreign Minister, M. Sazonov, had already warned our Ambassador in Petrograd that the one chance of averting war was that Britain should take her stand with France and Russia. On the 29th, M. Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador in London, asked Sir Edward Grey his intentions, and was told that we had not made

up our mind. Sir Edward Grey had probably made up his own mind, but, as a Liberal Minister, he held it his duty to feel the temper of the nation first through the House of Commons. At the same time he intimated to the German Ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, that Germany must not count on our standing aside.

On the following day Sir Edward Grey, while sharply rejecting the German Chancellor's bid for our neutrality, made an interesting proposal for a new Council of Europe, if the present crisis should be averted. At the moment there was a faint glimmering of hope. Austria, having expected some such easy success as she won in 1908, was beginning to tremble at the storm she had raised, and showed a tendency to abate her demands, urged thereto probably by the very grave social disorders then threatening in her cities. We now know that the iron hand of Germany prevented any such weakness on the part of her ally. There was also the possibility that Italy, whose neutrality at least was assured, might go further, and warn her colleagues of the Triple Alliance that in a war so unprovoked and needless she would side with the Entente—a course which might have made Germany pause. But speculation is idle, for these things did not happen. Events were marching fast to the inevitable conflict.

July 30.

The week-end—Friday, 31st July, to Tuesday, 4th August—was such as no one then living had ever spent. For so widespread a sense of foundations destroyed and a world turned topsy-turvy we must go back to the days of the French Revolution. In Britain the markets went to pieces, the Bank rate rose to 10 per cent. on the Saturday, and the Stock Exchange was closed. Monday, 3rd August, was a Bank Holiday, the strangest in the memory of man. An air of great and terrible things impending impressed the most casual visitor. Crowds hung about telegraph offices and railway stations; men stood in the street in little groups; there was not much talking, but many spells of tense silence. The country was uneasy. It had no desire for war; it suddenly realized the immensity of the crisis; but it was in terror of a dishonourable peace. The sigh of relief which went up after Sir Edward Grey's speech on the Monday, from men who stood to lose most by the conflict, showed how deep had been the anxiety. In Paris there was a strange calm, very different from the excitable hours before the 1870 war. The long-expected attack had come, and the nation was ready. Business went on much as usual, till the mobilization orders were issued.

Aug. 3.

Meantime in Berlin, where the news was no novelty to the inner circle, an interesting performance was being enacted. With excellent stage management the incidents of 1870 were repeated. In the middle of the week the populace went mad with war fever, in spite of the famine of coin and the rapid advance in food prices.

The Emperor had returned from his cruise on the Monday, and during the week was busy at the Palace with his ministers and the General Staff. Whenever he appeared he was greeted with wild enthusiasm. On the Thursday feeling quieted down, and it was rumoured that Russia had given in, and that there would be no war. But on Friday, a little after 1 p.m., it was officially announced that the Emperor, in accordance with Paragraph 68 of the Imperial Constitution, had decreed a state of war throughout all Germany, and those who had seen for days the troops in their new field-grey marching through Charlottenburg were justified of their suspicions. Once more the war fever broke out. The approaches to the Palace were crowded at all hours, thrilling religious services were held, singing and shouting crowds filled the streets, until on the Saturday evening the general mobilization was ordered. That solemnized Berlin; anxious women took the place of noisy maffickers; and the capital, pulling herself together, prepared for the final struggle. If Germany failed, it was on her gates that the conqueror would beat.

To return to the chronicle of events. On Friday, 31st July, Germany issued an ultimatum to Russia, requiring immediate demobilization, and a reply next day by eleven o'clock. She also made final inquiry of France as to her attitude. On the same day Sir Edward Grey asked the German and French Governments if they would respect the neutrality of Belgium, provided it was not violated by another Power. France gave a ready guarantee; Germany did not reply. Her views on the matter were already plain from the Imperial Chancellor's offer of 29th July. She had taken to heart Bismarck's famous dictum that "no people should sacrifice its existence on the altar of fidelity to treaty, but should only go so far as suited its own interests."¹³¹ Lastly, late in the evening, the French Ambassador was informed by his Government that the 16th Army Corps from Metz, the 8th from Trèves and Cologne, and the 15th from Strassburg, had closed up on the frontier, and that French territory had already been entered by German patrols.

Things now moved fast. On Saturday evening, about five o'clock, Germany declared war upon Russia. On Sunday our Naval Reserves were called out, and a moratorium proclaimed for the payment of certain bills of exchange. The Opposition offered to the Government their unqualified support in any measures they might take for the support of the Allied cause. Telegrams had been exchanged between the Tsar, the Kaiser, and our King, but the matter had gone too far for royal mediation, even if all three monarchs had desired it. On Monday, 3rd August, Sir Edward Grey expounded to the House of

July 31.

Aug. 1.

Aug. 2.

Commons, in a speech^[4] impressive from the entire absence of rhetoric or passion, the events which had led up to the situation, and the part which, in his view, Britain must play. We were bound by the most sacred treaty obligations to protect the neutrality of Belgium, and that very afternoon King Albert had appealed to Britain for help. We were not bound to France by any actual defensive and offensive alliance, though we had anticipated that joint action might some day be necessary, and had arranged for certain consultations between the two General Staffs. But the Government had given France the assurance that if the German fleet undertook hostile operations against the French coast or French shipping, the British fleet would protect it. The House of Commons received this declaration of policy with almost unanimous approval.

Aug. 3.

Next day, 4th August, the British Ambassador in Berlin was instructed to ask for certain information. It was reported that Germany had demanded of Belgium free passage through her territory, promising after peace to maintain the integrity and independence of the kingdom, and requesting an answer within twelve hours. Belgium had refused this categorically, and the British Government requested from Germany an assurance that Belgian wishes would be respected. Later in the day news came that German troops were at Gemmenich, and Sir Edward Grey wired again to Sir E. Goschen, asking for a reply before midnight, and instructing him, if it were not received, to return home. That telegram reached Berlin at 7 p.m., and the German Government, without waiting for the full time to expire, handed the British Ambassador his passports. Half an hour later the newsboys were shouting in every street that England had declared war. A state of war had already begun. That very night the German mine-layer, the *Koenigin Luise*, was busy off the British coast; the plain of Luxemburg was overrun by Uhlans; and the guns of the frontier guards in Lorraine were already making their reply to the Kaiser's challenge.

Aug. 4.

The German defence of the action which was the immediate occasion, though not the principal cause, of war, will be found in the subsequent speech in the Reichstag by the Imperial Chancellor:—

“We are now in a state of necessity, and necessity knows no law. We were compelled to override the just protest of the Luxemburg and Belgian Governments. The wrong—I speak openly—that we are committing we will endeavour to make good as soon as our military goal is reached. Anybody who is threatened as we are threatened, and is fighting for his highest possessions, can have only one thought—how he is to hack his

way through.”

This doctrine, if put into general practice, would obviously make a speedy end of treaties and international conventions, and, indeed, of public faith. The best comment upon it is to be found in one of the latest interviews between Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg and Sir Edward Goschen. “Do you mean to say,” the Imperial Chancellor asked, with scorn and incredulity, “that you are going to make war for a scrap of paper?” “Unfortunately, sir,” the British Ambassador replied, “that scrap of paper contains our signature as well as yours.”

[1] Signor Giolitti’s disclosures in the Italian Parliament on December 5, 1914, show that, in August 1913, Austria had tried to persuade Italy and Germany to co-operate in aggressive action against Serbia.

[2] Documents Diplomatiques 1914, *La Guerre Européenne* (Paris, December 2, 1914). It is printed as an appendix to this volume.

[3] The same view is common in Treitschke’s writings. For example: “All treaties are written with the clause understood: so long as things remain as they are at present.”—“The statesman has no right to warm his hands at the smoking ruin of his Fatherland with the pleased self-praise that he has never lied. That is merely a monkish virtue.”

[4] See Appendix.

CHAPTER II.

THE STRENGTH OF THE COMBATANTS.

German Entry into Luxemburg—Fighting on the Lorraine and Alsace
Borders—Germany enters Belgium—The German Army System—The
Austro-Hungarian Army—The French Army—The Russian Army—The
British Army—The Belgian and Serbian Armies—The Economic
Question—The Financial Question—The Strategic Position of the
Different Combatants—Summary of Relative Strength.

On Saturday, 1st August, while Germany was awaiting Russia's answer to her ultimatum, the British people had their first practical intimation of the imminence of war. Posted up in the London terminus of each southern railway were notices informing the public that all Belgian traffic was under military direction; that the through trains ran no farther than Herbesthal, on the Belgian border; and that communication with Luxemburg through Belgium could not be guaranteed.

Aug. 1.

Early on the Sunday morning the first act of war was committed. The Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, about the size of an English county, lies at the south-eastern corner of Belgium, between the southern Ardennes and the river Moselle. It is a country of low ridges and meadow-land, through which run from east to west two important railways, built largely by German capital; while a third, with branches into the Ardennes hills, connects with Liège in the north. The little State, which had a population less than Edinburgh, had long been in a position of disarmed neutrality under the protection of its powerful neighbours. A volunteer force of 150, and the same number of gendarmes, constituted its sole defence, and the city of Luxemburg, once reckoned the strongest fortress in Europe, had for half a century been dismantled.

Aug. 2.

On the Sunday morning the inhabitants of the capital, which lies beautifully on the cliffs above the winding Alzette, were surprised by the appearance of armed motor cars filled with German officers and men. It was the vanguard of the 29th Regiment from Thionville coming down the river by the Lorraine road. They seized the Adolf Bridge, and demanded a right of passage through the Duchy for the German army. The Grand Duchess motored up and wheeled her car across the roadway, but she was bidden go home, and her chauffeur was compelled to turn. One of the ministers

of state made a formal protest, which was greeted with laughter. Luxemburg was like the nest of field-mice in the path of the reaping-machine, and her handful of gendarmes could do nothing to stay the onrush. By the afternoon German covering troops from Trèves were tramping along her eastern roads, and her railways were in German hands.

That hot August Sunday saw movements elsewhere on the frontier. From Thionville, German cavalry crossed the line to Longwy, the French fortress which guards the passage from Luxemburg to the central vale of the Meuse. Farther south, a German reconnoitring force from the Strassburg neighbourhood pushed across the Vosges, near the frontier fort of Manonvilliers, and reached the town of Cirey-les-Forges. In the extreme south some cavalry from Mulhouse made an incursion inside the French frontier and fired on the customs guards. The French covering troops had been everywhere withdrawn eight miles within the border line, in accordance with France's pacific policy, and instructions had been given them not to fire upon German scouting parties unless they were attacked.

Meanwhile on the Belgian frontier grave preparations threatened. The German mobilization began officially on the Saturday night, and on the line from Malmedy to Aix-la-Chapelle six brigades were concentrated for the forthcoming dash into Belgium. At the training camp of Malmedy several regiments are always kept at full peace strength. These were utilized, and others were hurried to Aix from the lower Rhine. The brigades were taken from the 7th (Westphalian) Corps, the 10th (Hanover) Corps, and the 9th (Schleswig-Holstein) Corps; and it is interesting to note that some of the Hanover regiments bore on their colours the names of British battles—a memory of the days when they fought by our side at Blenheim and Ramillies, at Minden and Waterloo. The brigades thus concentrated were, let it be remembered, still at peace strength and not yet mobilized; but it was resolved to use them at once, and send their reservists and supplies after them. The blow to be launched at Belgium could not be delayed, especially since both Belgian forts and army were held in contempt by the German Staff. The total of the force, with the addition of some extra artillery and cavalry, cannot have been less than 30,000 or more than 35,000 men.

This force, under General von Emmich, did not move on the Sunday, but the news of it was sufficient to hurry on Belgium's preparations. Her army, so far as it was mobilized, was concentrated on Liège; the forts there were roughly got ready; and then was begun that great destruction of bridges, roads, and tunnels in the Ardennes which cannot have cost the little country less than £40,000,000 sterling. Two days later came the declaration of war, and the German advance began.

Before we can proceed to the chronicle of the campaign it is necessary to review in some detail the position of the different combatants, their relative preparedness for war, and the various circumstances which determined their strategic plans.

The German army system may be said to date from the reconstruction of the Prussian army which followed the battle of Jena. Under Bismarck, von Moltke, and von Roon it was extended to the other German States; it was barely completed when the war of 1870 began; since that date it had been amplified and perfected into an exact machine, but the main features were still those of Gneisenau and Scharnhorst. Its guiding principle was that of the "nation in arms," an idea which was in turn the product of the wars of Napoleon. Every male citizen of reasonable physique was liable to service; the State took what men it desired, passed them through its hands in a period of short service, and from them, and from those less fully trained, established under various grades of efficiency an enormous reserve, which could be called up in that combat *à outrance* which has never been absent from the contemplation of German statesmen.

A German was liable to serve from the age of seventeen, and if he was wanted his service began at twenty; if he was not called up he passed into the Ersatz Reserve, which was liable to mobilization along with the Landsturm. He served for two years with the colours if in the infantry, and for three in the case of cavalry and horse artillery. A high standard of physique and discipline prevailed, and those years were years of incessant toil. Then he entered the Regular Reserve, where he remained for five or four years, according to his arm. These seven years completed, he went into the first levy of the Landwehr for five years more, and then entered the second levy, where he remained till he had completed his thirty-ninth year. This gave him a total of nineteen years of varied service since he first joined. After that he went into the first levy of the Landsturm, where he remained till he was forty-five. This Landsturm had a second levy, which consisted of men between the ages of thirty-nine and forty-five who had escaped the ordinary training. There were thus various classes of reserves, who were called up in order of their value. First came the Regular Reserve, the men who had served with the colours and were aged from twenty-three to twenty-seven. Next came the Landwehr, Class I., consisting of those who had served seven years with the colours and with the Regular Reserve, and whose ages were from twenty-seven to thirty-two. After that ranked the Landwehr, Class II., made up of the same men between thirty-two and thirty-nine. Then we reach the Landsturm, Class I., which consisted of men who had passed through the

Landwehr, and were from thirty-nine to forty-five years old. The Landsturm, Class II., the last emergency resort, were untrained men of all ages. We may call the three reserves the Regular, the Special, and the National, provided we realize that these names are not to be construed in their English sense.

The German army was organized in twenty-five army corps, which, except the Guard Corps, were recruited on a territorial basis. Each corps was usually composed on a war establishment of a Staff, two infantry divisions, each of two brigades, while each brigade was made up of two regiments with three battalions each; two regiments of field artillery, comprising twenty-two pieces; a battalion of riflemen (Jaeger); a contingent of cavalry, varying from three squadrons to a complete division in the case of the Guard; and a number of corps troops. On mobilization each corps formed a third or reserve division from the Regular Reserve. The cavalry was organized in regiments, each with four service and one dépôt squadron, and was grouped in brigades of two regiments, and in divisions of three brigades. It is difficult to form an exact estimate of the total fighting strength of such a force. On a war footing the first line army for purpose of offence could not be less than 1,500,000, and the second line less than 1,000,000; but for a war of defence, and for many purposes of offence, the numbers were much greater. The complete military resources of Germany have been estimated, taking trained and untrained men together, at some figure just short of 7,000,000, out of which at least 4,000,000 had served at one time with the colours.



Peace Distribution of German Army Corps.

Of equal importance with the man-power of Germany was the quality of the organization. For at least half a century the best brains in the country had been devoted to the art of war. The army was the chief arbiter of social fashion, and a middle-class family would pinch and hoard to have one son an officer. For the nobility it was almost the sole profession; and it was a real profession—arduous, exacting, laborious, but offering the highest rewards. Promotion was slow, for a senior subaltern might have twenty years' service behind him, and a senior captain thirty, but the interest and prestige of the life would seem to have been sufficient rewards. Every detail had been carefully studied, and the machinery of transport and supply had been brought to the highest point of efficiency. The Staff officer was the pivot of the whole, and nowhere in the world had Staff work been so brilliantly developed. The antiquated ideas of the old Prussian system had been discarded, subordinate commanders had been encouraged to show initiative, and mistakes were rated lightly compared with the vice of supineness. The Great General Staff, created by Scharnhorst, developed by Gneisenau, Mueffling, von Krausener, and von Reyberg, and perfected by von Moltke, had for years been making plans in full detail to meet every conceivable crisis. Well served by a system of world-wide espionage, minutely informed as to the views and capacity of their neighbours, and the *terrain* of every possible field of operations, they had made certain that, at the word of the

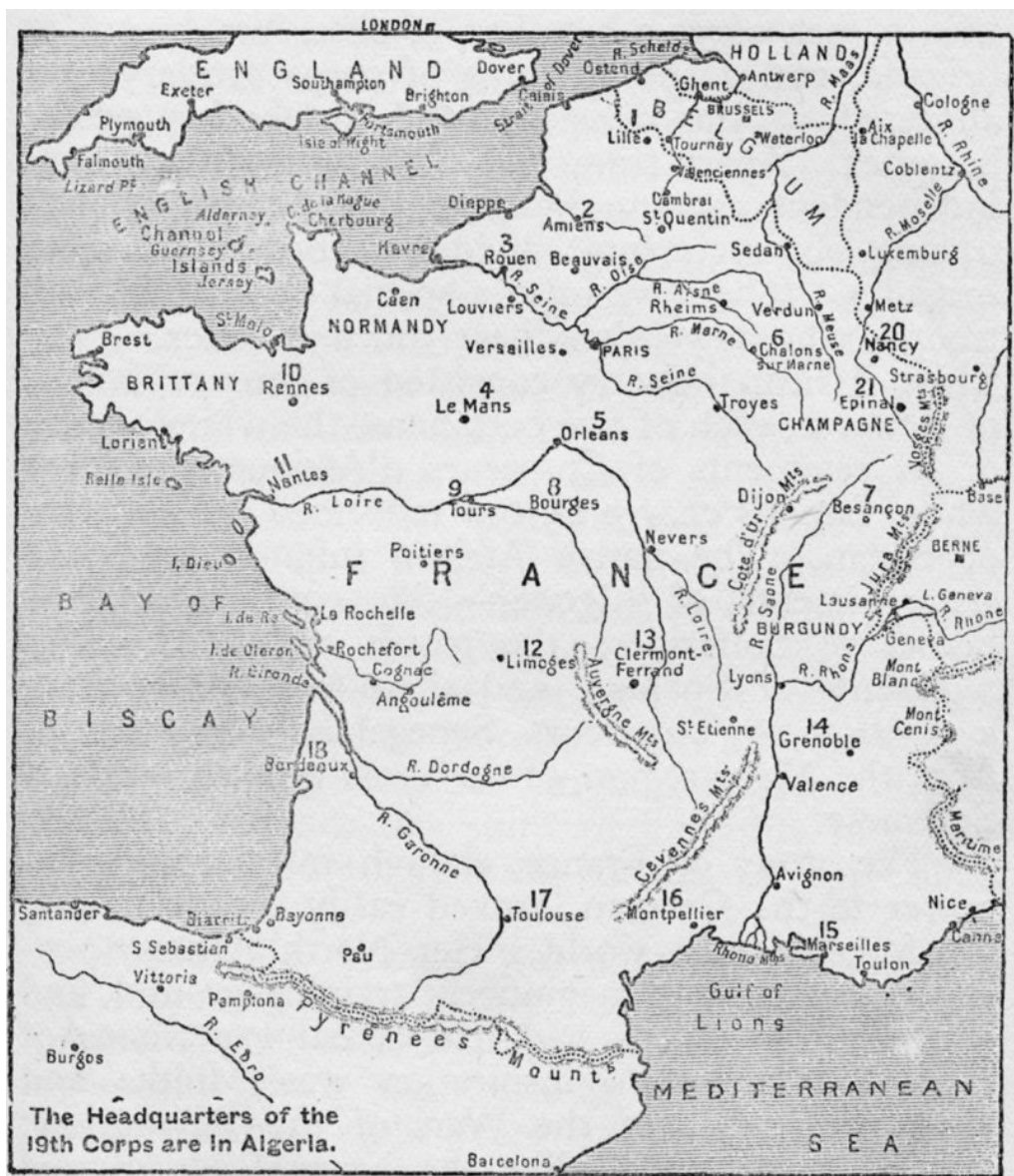
Emperor, a machine would be set in motion which for power and smoothness was without a parallel in the history of the world. In later chapters we shall consider the principles which govern German warfare; here it is enough to note the strength and suppleness of the weapon.

The armed forces of Austria-Hungary were organized mainly on the German system, with certain exceptions due to the nature of the Dual Monarchy. There was an Imperial army; two Landwehrs, one for Austria and one for Hungary; and a general Landsturm, or levy-in-mass. There were fifteen army corps, on a territorial basis, each corps containing two infantry divisions of two brigades each, one cavalry brigade, one artillery brigade, and various corps troops. In war a Landwehr division was added to each of the regular corps. On a peace footing the strength of the army was about 350,000 officers and men, and on a war basis it would reach some figure in the neighbourhood of 2,000,000, exclusive of the Landsturm, for which no figures were given. In a defensive war *à outrance* the country could probably count on putting some 4,000,000 men, trained and untrained, into the field.

The Austrian army was not a military machine which approached the calibre of the German. Austria had had no Bismarck or Moltke, not even a Gneisenau, in her recent history. Since the Archduke Charles she had had no commander of the first rank, and her campaigns from Austerlitz onward had been mainly records of defeat. Solferino and Sadowa were not encouragements to recruiting like Gravelotte and Sedan. The result was that, while her military caste was dominant and assured and many of her constituent peoples of excellent fighting quality, there was no strong popular enthusiasm for her army and no great brain-power in its direction. Austria was faced with a special difficulty. Under her rule were many races who had affinities beyond her borders. It would have been impossible to send her Galician troops against Russian Poland, or her Croats and Serbs against the armies of the Southern Slavs. In a war such as the present she was, therefore, bound to distribute her army corps not on purely military but on political grounds. Her Tirolese must go north of the Carpathians; her Galicians to the Italian frontier. It is obvious that such a necessity must grievously complicate her whole problem of mobilization at the outset, and of transport and reinforcements in the later stages.

The French army, as is usual with a nation whose last great campaign ended in defeat, had been the subject of many experiments in the past forty years. The law which governed it in its present form was only one year old; which meant that the service was not yet properly standardized, and many of those with the colours were

the products of superseded statutes, just as in Britain the term of enlistment laid down in 1902 only ceased to work in 1914. The law of 1913, like its predecessor of 1905, was framed to reduce the disparity of France as against the rapidly increasing man-power of Germany. Unlike Germany, she called practically her whole able-bodied male population to arms. A Frenchman found fit for service joined the colours at the age of twenty, spent three years in the Regular Army, eleven in the Regular Reserve, seven in the Territorial Army, and seven in the Territorial Reserve, and did not leave the strength till he had attained the age of forty-eight. On mobilization the Regular Army, which had a peace strength of 673,000 men, was practically doubled by the incorporation of men from the Regular Reserve. The remaining reservists were organized in reserve units similar to the regular, and out of the Territorial Army special units were formed corresponding to the regulars, and the remainder kept as a last reserve at the dépôts. Roughly speaking, the system gave France a month or so after the beginning of war 4,000,000 trained men, of whom we might allot 700,000 to the Regular Army, 700,000 to that portion of the Regular Reserve required to put that army on a war footing, 700,000 to the balance of the Regular Reserve, 700,000 to the embodied Territorial Army, 700,000 to the Territorial dépôt reserve, and 700,000 to the Territorial surplus. This gave a first line army of about 1,500,000, a second line of about 500,000, and a reserve of some 2,000,000.



Peace Distribution of French Army Corps.

The internal organization of the French force corresponded closely to that of Germany. There were twenty army corps on a territorial basis, nineteen located in France and one in Algeria. An army corps had two divisions, a division two brigades, a brigade two regiments, a regiment three battalions each of 1,000 men. In addition, there was in each corps a battalion of chasseurs, a cavalry brigade, and a

special force of corps artillery, not allocated to the divisions, and numbering twelve batteries. Apart from the corps there were eight independent cavalry divisions, each division comprising six regiments, divided into two or three brigades. There was also a special class of African troops, whom we shall hear much of later. The white African infantry consisted of four regiments of Zouaves, each of five battalions, the white cavalry of six regiments of Chasseurs d'Afrique, the force whose famous charge all but redeemed the calamity of Sedan. The native African infantry were the six regiments of Algerian Rifles or Turcos, the heroes of Solferino; the native cavalry the four regiments of Spahis; and there was in addition a division of *Traillleurs* Senegalais, negro troops from the Niger region, of the same type as our own Sudanese.

The army of France, though inferior in man-power to the German, ranked easily second among the forces of the world. Her North African possessions gave her a magnificent training-ground, and many of her troops had had actual experience of war. If Germany's inspiration was Moltke and 1870, France's was the Wars of the Revolution; and in many points, like the heavy loads carried by the infantry and the belief in rapid and cumulative attack, her views were those of the *Grande Armée*. The French infantry retained all their historic dash and *élan*, and were probably the best marchers in Europe. The French General Staff, too, had not been behind Germany in that "fundamental brain work" which was rightly regarded as the basis of success. Some of the best military literature of modern times had been produced by French officers, and France had of late years shown a remarkable aptitude for military inventions. In one respect she differed greatly from her neighbour. She had no militant caste to draw upon for her officers. The highest posts in her service were open to any one who could pass the requisite examinations and show the requisite talent. A democracy has its drawbacks in war, and a republic cannot give, perhaps, that freedom from political interference and that continuity of policy which are desirable in a military machine. But the lack of this mechanical perfection had its compensations. If the discipline appeared less rigorous, there was a far greater *camaraderie* between men and officers, as any one who has marched with a French regiment will bear witness. In a defensive war for national existence this spirit of fraternity might be more potent in battle than any barrack-yard precision.

Russia, like France, was a great Power which had suffered disaster in her last campaign, and was therefore eager to redeem her credit. The reform movement which had been at work in her army during the past eight years is difficult to estimate, for she did not publish her domestic concerns to the world. Like her

neighbours, she had the system of universal compulsory service; but with her vast population of more than 170 millions she could afford to allow large exemptions. The age limit of service was forty-three, and the term with the colours was five years. Her force was organized in army corps, whose recruiting areas extended from the banks of the Vistula to the shores of the Pacific, and from the Arctic circle to the steppes of Turkestan. It was divided into the Regular Army and a vast Landsturm, or militia. No exact figures are available for either; but the nominal peace strength of the Regulars might be put at something well over 1,000,000, and the war strength, assuming the necessary artillery and transport to be available, at some figure in the neighbourhood of 4,000,000. As to the Landsturm, one can only guess, but judging from the population it could not have a less potential capacity than six or seven millions. The man-power of Russia was, indeed, inexhaustible, and her fighting capacity was limited only by the difficulties of the transport problem over so vast an area and the doubt as to whether *matériel* could be accumulated in sufficient quantities to do justice to her numbers. Unlike Western Europe, her railways were few and irregularly distributed. In a war of defence she might justly be regarded as invincible; in offensive warfare, where time was of the essence of the problem, her drawbacks were obvious. The Regular Army, however, had been thoroughly overhauled and adequately equipped. Her field artillery was excellent, and she had taken to heart the moral of the Manchurian War and perfected individual rifle fire. One other lesson she had learnt from Japan. Her officer class had been professionalized, and was no longer the refuge of well-born incompetents. She had a General Staff which might rank with the best in Europe, and which possessed the sovereign advantage that many of its members had an experience of great modern campaigns behind them. The docility and endurance of the Russian rank and file have always been famous, and, under competent leading, they could have few superiors. For Russia much depended upon the cause in which she fought. Her infinite masses, far removed from ordinary news channels, were slow to kindle: but if the cause were truly national and the appeal were truly popular, the Slav nature might reveal that stubborn ardour against which a hundred years ago the genius of Napoleon strove in vain.

In the British army we find a force different in history, constitution, and purpose from that of any other European country. In this place we shall deal only with the army organization of the British Islands, and shall discuss the forces of the Overseas Empire as they appear in the operations of the campaign.

The aim of the British people for the last century had been to possess a small,

highly professional, and perfectly equipped army for service anywhere on the globe, and a second line army purely for home defence. Of the many efforts to achieve this ideal we need not speak; every war which we have waged has taught us a lesson, not infrequently exaggerated in its application. We will content ourselves with the system instituted between 1907 and 1910 by Lord Haldane, during his tenancy of the office of Secretary of State for War. This provided an Expeditionary Force of voluntary recruits, who served seven years with the colours and five in the Army Reserve; a Special Reserve, which took the place of the old Militia, and which in peace acted as a feeder for the Regular Army, and in war might provide reserve battalions; and a Territorial Force, replacing the old Yeomanry and Volunteers, with an organization similar to that of the Regular Army. The aim of such a scheme was to provide a small striking force of professional soldiers, who should be ready at any moment to serve in our little frontier wars, and behind it a volunteer citizen army, capable of rapid expansion and intensive training in time of war, which was destined solely for home defence. Critics might differ as to the details of the two forces, but it was pretty generally admitted that this type of system met Britain's needs. We did not require an army on a continental scale; our navy was our chief weapon for defence and offence.

To take the Regular Army first. This was organized as a force of six infantry divisions and one of cavalry. The infantry were divided between the stations at home and abroad, with the exception of the Guards, who in peace time were not employed on foreign service, and whose term was three years with the colours and nine in the Reserve. The Army Reserve consisted of those who had completed their service with the colours, and had not yet completed the term for which they had enlisted. The Special Reserve acted in peace time mainly as a feeder for the Regulars, many joining it as a preliminary to the Line; the period of enlistment was for six years, and all ranks were liable for foreign service in war. In the Territorial Force the term of service was four years, re-engagement being allowed, and the training was considerably higher than in most of the classes of the continental Territorial forces. The Territorial Reserve, which was part of Lord Haldane's scheme, had made little progress, and consisted mainly of officers who had left their regiments but wished to rejoin on mobilization. Lastly came the National Reserve, made up of old soldiers, many beyond the age limit, who were registered in part for general service, in part for home service alone, and in part merely for purposes of training and administration. It will be seen that the British army presented features analogous to all the classes of continental military systems.

The army corps, the superior unit of continental systems, did not appear in the

British army in its peace organization. The administrative unit was the Command based on localities, and including both Regular Army, Special Reserve, and Territorial forces. The highest field unit in peace was the division, which consisted of three infantry brigades, three field artillery brigades, one field howitzer brigade, one heavy battery, two field companies of Royal Engineers, one squadron of cavalry, and various divisional troops, making a total of 18,073 men, 5,592 horses, 76 guns, and 24 machine guns. A brigade of infantry consisted of four battalions; a battalion of four companies of about 240 men each, subdivided into platoons of 60. The battalion was commanded by a lieutenant-colonel, the brigade by a brigadier-general, and the division by a major-general. The artillery unit was the "brigade," which in this connection had a different meaning from the word as used in continental armies. In the Field Artillery a brigade comprised three six-gun batteries; in the Horse Artillery two batteries. The cavalry regiment was made up of three squadrons, each some 150 sabres, subdivided into four troops. A cavalry brigade had three regiments; a cavalry division had four brigades and four batteries of horse artillery; but there were also cavalry brigades which were not allotted to any division. In war the full strength of a cavalry division was 9,269 men, 9,813 horses, 24 guns, and 24 machine guns.

On the outbreak of war our Expeditionary Force consisted of six divisions of infantry, one cavalry division, and one or more cavalry brigades with no divisional attachment, besides the usual complement of what are called "army troops," to be used for general purposes—a total of some 160,000 men. The total regular strength with the British colours reached in round figures 250,000; the Army Reserve numbered 145,000; the Special Reserve 81,000; the Territorial Force had a peace establishment of 316,500, but it was short of this by some 50,000; and the National Reserve had reached the creditable level of 200,000. But these figures were no index to the potential fighting strength of Britain. We had never been called on to exert ourselves in recruiting, and the first shock of war sent young men flocking to the colours. Happily, the protection of our navy gave us the breathing space necessary to allow of the improvisation of an army. The first 100,000 recruits asked for appeared in a day or two; the second army of half a million was raised with little difficulty; and the nation accepted with equanimity Mr. Churchill's statement that within a year we must be able to put a million men into the field. It seemed a reasonable estimate, taking the analogy of continental countries, that Britain, with her colonies and dependencies, could within three years send 4,000,000 men to the theatre of war.

Small as our striking force was by comparison with our neighbours—a mere

spearhead to the shaft which was the man-power of Britain—it was not to be compared with any continental army of the same size. Our troops were without question the most professional in the world. The training of our Regulars, both in duration and thoroughness, was far beyond anything known in the short-service German army. The fact that we had had usually to fight our wars in desert and ill-provided countries had compelled us to bring our transport and commissariat arrangements to the highest point of perfection. The same held true of our engineering and medical services. It is also to be remembered that a very large proportion of both men and officers had had actual experience of war. Most officers over thirty had gone through the trying South African campaign, which was an excellent training in initiative; the senior commanders had Indian and Egyptian wars as well in their recollection. This field experience is no small ingredient in the *moral* of an army. A man who has already led or followed successfully under fire has learned something which no textbook or staff college or manœuvres can teach. In Carnot's famous words, "It is not pirouetting up and down a barrack yard, but active service that makes an old soldier."

Lastly, we come to the armies of the two small states who were co-operating with the Allies. Belgium's problem was purely defensive, and one answer to it was her fortifications, which we shall consider in another chapter. The old Belgian army was organized on the basis of conscription with paid substitution, which virtually produced a force of professional volunteers. By the reforms of 1909 and 1913 the principle of a "nation in arms" was introduced; the term of service was put at thirteen years, and the strength on mobilization was fixed at 150,000 for the field army, 130,000 for the fortress garrisons, and a reserve of 60,000—a total of 340,000 men. Unfortunately, these reforms were not completed by 1914, and the total available was only 263,000, which, on the assumption that the fortress garrisons could not be reduced, left only 133,000 for the field. To bring the field force up to the required standard, it was found necessary to call upon the Civic Guard, one of the last survivors of the old National Guards of Europe. Belgium was, therefore, able to put in the field six divisions of infantry and one of cavalry. A division was formed of three "mixed brigades," each consisting of six battalions and three batteries. The artillery was good, but the equipment, especially of the infantry, left something to be desired, and no field uniform had been adopted. The Belgian soldier went into battle in the same garb that he wore in peace time on parade.

Serbia's fighting strength is difficult to set down on paper, however effective it might prove itself in the field. With a population of only some 3,000,000, she was yet

the type of state which in war could organize herself far more effectively than many richer and more populous communities. Her race of peasant proprietors, habituated to bare living and accustomed to arms, made excellent fighting material. She had a system of national service, each man serving with the colours from eighteen months to two years between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five, and her Landsturm included those between seventeen and twenty-one and between forty-five and fifty. Her experiences in the Balkan War had made her army a veteran one, and her General Staff had shown itself brilliant both in initiative and defence. Her weakness was her poverty; she was behindhand in the equipment of various arms, and her commissariat and medical arrangements were rudimentary. These drawbacks, however, were largely counteracted by the fighting spirit of her people, and their tolerance of hardships which to a Western European are unthinkable. In an extreme national crisis, such as the present, she could probably count on a fighting strength of some half-million men.

Only second in importance to the armed might of a country in the problem of its defence is the provision of the sinews of war. The capacity of a nation to endure the economic strain of long campaigns, to feed itself, to keep its people in reasonable employment, to avoid the panics which force the hand of statesmen, is an integral part of military strength. Of the combatants in the present war Serbia and Belgium may be disregarded from this point of view; they were certain to suffer to the utmost, the one as a state already drained by two years' fighting, the other as the cockpit of the Western struggle. Many economic issues, also, may be neglected in the case of the protagonists. War reduces things to their bare bones, and only the simplest questions are worth asking. These are three in number—could the land keep itself from starvation? could it provide work, and payment for that work, for the majority of its citizens? could it raise, within or without its borders, the funds necessary to pay for the conduct of war?

Britain imported the larger part of her food supply—about 80 per cent. of her wheat, 40 per cent. of her meat, vast quantities of other cereals, of butter, eggs, poultry, and the whole of her sugar. Of these supplies, however, only a small proportion came from Germany and Austria—something like £12,000,000 out of £280,000,000, and of this more than half was sugar. Of our wheat, some 95 per cent. came from open countries not affected by the war, like the United States, Canada, India, and Australia. Provided, therefore, the seas could be kept clear by her navy, Britain's food supply was not seriously affected in any of the great staples. The closing of the seas, on the other hand, would mean starvation within three

months. France was able to feed herself. She grew 40 million quarters of wheat to our 7½, and though she imported food-stuffs to a considerable amount, she also exported others. Her danger under this head came from the decline in her own productive capacity caused by the march of the invader and the withdrawal of peasants for military service. Unless, however, France were utterly prostrate, the invader could only cover a part of the land, and French women might be trusted to look to the harvest in the absence of their men. To this may be added the facts that the oversea routes were open to her, assuming the British navy were not beaten, and that her customary surplus of home-grown food was now available for home consumption. Russia could easily feed herself, even if she put 10,000,000 men into the field; Austria-Hungary had also a balance of home-grown supplies beyond her needs. Germany's position approximated to that of Britain. She produced less than half the wheat of France, and in 1913 bought imported wheat to the value of 21½ millions, and 20 millions' worth of barley. In normal times, therefore, the balance was against her, and this deficit would be greatly increased in time of war by the withdrawal of rural workers. Of the areas from which she drew her food the most important, Russia, was now closed to her; and with the British navy keeping the seas she would have difficulty in getting overseas supplies in any quantity. Austria-Hungary could do a little to help her, and Rumania, so long as she remained neutral, could do more. Starvation would be a slow process in Germany, for her food deficit was not overwhelming; but after six months' war the pinch would be felt, and a year might mean something like famine.

How far could the countries concerned keep their citizens in employment? In Britain the position was favourable. Only 7 millions of our raw material came from Germany and Austria, only 10 millions from France and Belgium, only 19 millions from Russia; the rest we imported from countries not engaged in the war. Nor did we suffer like continental countries in the withdrawal of men from industrial life for the line of battle. Always providing that our navy were undefeated, our chief losses—apart from the natural and temporary industrial dislocation caused by a great war—would lie in the disappearance of the German and Austrian markets, which took 45 millions' worth of our manufactures, and a certain contraction of our exports to France and Belgium. This loss, however, might be atoned for by an increase in our trade with Russia, and by the capture of German trade in neutral and home markets. For every £1 of merchandise, let it be remembered, which we sold abroad, we sold £4 to our own people. Certain industries would be stimulated by war conditions, and agriculture would be considerably benefited.

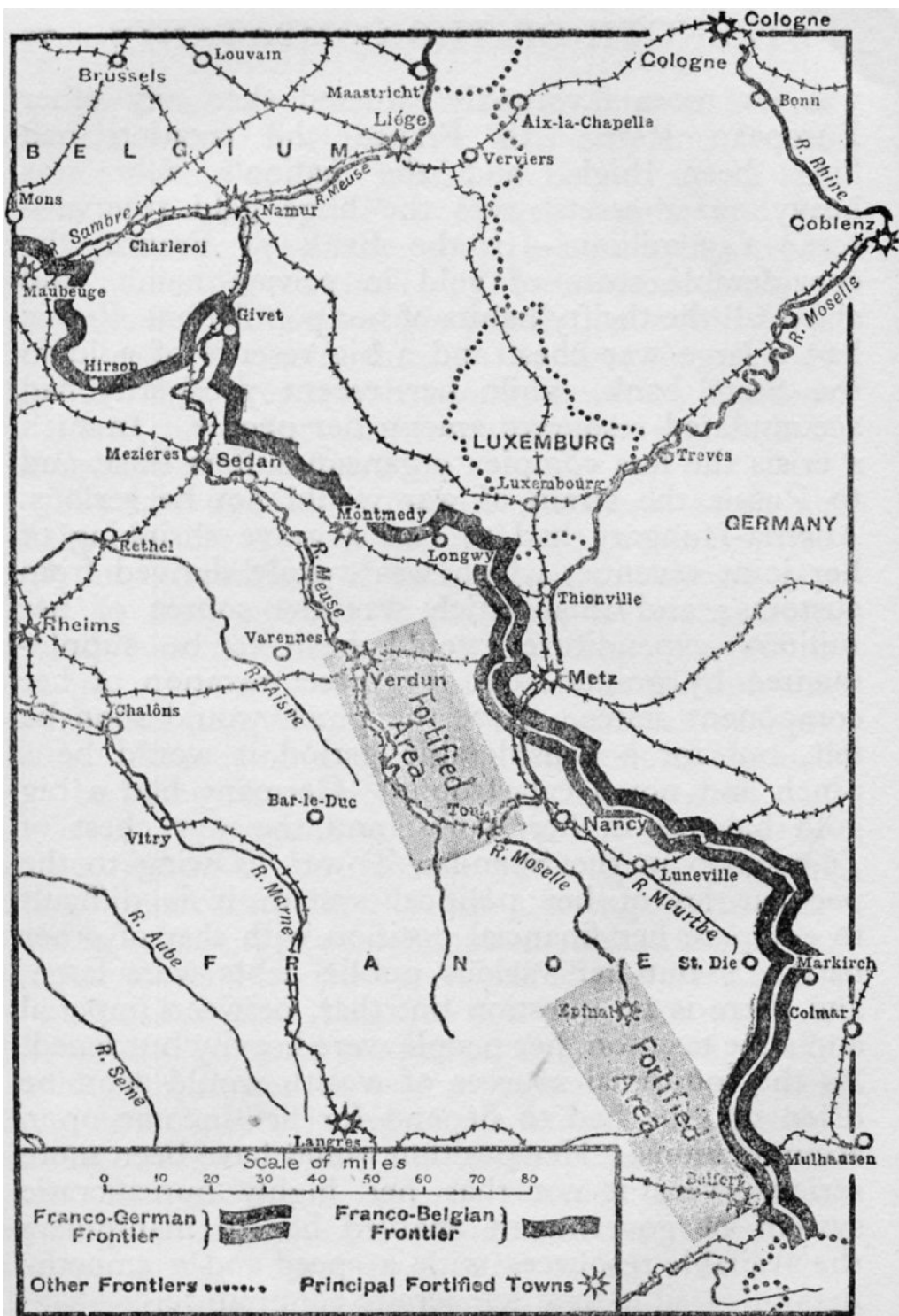
A more difficult question concerns the business of finance and banking, which

was one of our greatest national industries. War dislocates the credit system of the world, and bankers, discounters, bill brokers, accepting houses, exchange houses, stockbrokers, and all whose business concerns the manipulation of this credit must suffer to some extent. London, as the financial centre of the world, suffers especially, and there was little doubt that Germany looked to the prospect of this temporary financial confusion to keep Britain out of war. Germany had normally some 70 million of bills in the London market drawn on her account, and there was reason to believe that in the weeks preceding the war she had succeeded very effectually in running into debt with English houses. The war meant a considerable loss of credit which could never quite be restored. But, on the other hand, it should be remembered that the pinch was at its worst at the beginning, and must decrease as time went on, and the various measures taken by the British Government during the first weeks of the conflict prevented anything in the nature of panic or widespread disaster.

Like Britain, France could get most of her raw material with fair ease, and the chief cause of industrial suffering would lie in the withdrawal of labour for the field. She would suffer, too, from the contraction of her markets. After Britain, Germany and Belgium were her best customers, and now the German market was wholly closed and the Belgian partially. This loss, however, might be made up by the extension of trade in certain markets, like the British, now shut to Germany. Russia had little industrial export, and, though her best customer was Germany, she sent her mainly raw material. Austria-Hungary, too, exported little, the fruits of her industries being for home consumption. Germany, on the other hand, was predominantly a manufacturing country, and her exports, chiefly of manufactured goods, reached in 1913 the enormous total of £495,000,000. Her imports were mainly raw materials like cotton and silk, and raw minerals like copper. These imports were derived from the following countries in order of importance—the United States, Russia, Great Britain, Austria, France, Argentina, Belgium; with four of these Germany was now at war, and two were across the Atlantic. Her exports, mainly manufactured goods, were taken chiefly by Great Britain, Austria, the United States, France, Russia, Holland, Switzerland, Belgium; with four of these she was at war, and one was across the ocean. War, therefore, meant the stoppage of Germany's best markets for exports, and of many sources of raw material, so long as Britain held the seas. Further, her own shipping would become powerless. It would be bottled up in her ports, or lying captive in British hands, and all the industries attendant upon her carrying trade would come to a standstill. The enormous drain of her armies upon Germany's population would keep down unemployment during the first months of

the war; but presently it would appear as if three-fourths of her industrial life must cease, and with it the livelihood of millions.

The last question concerns the funds available for the conduct of war. In the long run this resolves itself into the ability of each nation to raise money from its own citizens or its allies, for loans from neutral countries are at best a precarious staff to lean on. Too much stress is apt to be laid on the actual gold reserve existing at the outbreak of hostilities. This is no doubt important, but its absence may be compensated for by the general stability of credit in a particular country and the existence of private wealth to be reached by taxation. Britain had no war chest, but she had a strong and elastic banking system, a wealthier population than any other, and her losses from the operations of war were likely to be far less than those of the other combatants. The recent heavy depreciation in gilt-edged stocks would compel her to pay a higher price for her loans, and the inflation of recent expenditure, necessitating an income-tax for some years on a war basis, had to some extent reduced the taxable capacity of her citizens. Nevertheless there remained a vast reserve of untouched wealth in British hands, and in a struggle for endurance she was far more favourably situated than any other European state. In France the taxation had long been high, and the nation's debt was heavy. Her assets were the huge gold reserve—some 145 million—in the Bank of France, the considerable store of gold in private hands, and above all the thrifty habits of her population. Russia had a large war chest and a big reserve of gold in the State bank, while her recent prosperity had accumulated resources among her people. In such a crisis the less complex organism suffers least, and to Russia the strain of war would not be serious. Austria-Hungary had to face a grave shrinking of her joint revenue, which was mainly derived from customs; and this, which was the source of her military expenditure, would have to be supplemented by grants from the direct taxation of her component states. Here the pinch would soon be felt, but for a considerable period it would be a pinch and not a catastrophe. Germany had a big gold balance in her banks, and the war chest of £6,000,000 in the Spandau Tower. Owing to the peculiarities of her political system it is difficult to compare her financial position with that of other nations; but her various public debts were large, and there is no question but that, between imperial and state taxation, her people were heavily burdened. As the industrial sources of wealth would soon be dried up, she had to depend for her income upon accumulations. Her position would have been more serious were it not that her highly bureaucratic system of government enabled her to manipulate the available resources with a speed and a smoothness impossible in a democratic community.



Eastern Frontier of France.

Last of these questions comes that of the strategical position of the different combatants. The natural situation of Britain was unique. Without a land frontier in Europe, she was practically invulnerable to land attack from a European Power throughout her whole empire, except from Russia, who was her ally. The key of her security was the ocean, and invasion was possible only when some Power temporarily had command of the narrow seas. But this position, admirable for defence, had its drawbacks in offensive warfare. If she desired to fight on the Continent, not only must she hold the seas for the transport of her armies, but she must be in alliance with a continental Power who would facilitate their disembarkation and land transport.

France had a land frontier with Germany, extending from a point just south of Belfort at the north-west corner of Switzerland, northwards to Longwy, on the Belgian border—a distance of some 150 miles. This frontier showed very varied physical characteristics. Between Switzerland and the southern butt of the Vosges Mountains is a piece of flat land known as the Gap of Belfort, the passage through which is dominated by the fortress of that name. Northwards for seventy miles the line follows the crest of the Vosges till the mountains sink into the plain of Lorraine. Inside this French frontier on the west are the upper valleys of two rivers—the Meuse on the north, and the Moselle farther south. In all parts this line is strongly defended. From Belfort north to Epinal runs a line of forts, while the difficult Vosges country to the east is a further protection. Between Toul and Verdun, two first-class fortresses, lies the fortified area of the upper Meuse. Opposite Verdun, and commanded by it, lies a gateway into France from the German fortress of Metz. This gap is some thirty miles wide, and at its northern end begins the rough, hilly land of the Ardennes, which extends through Belgium to the valley of the lower Meuse. France was thus protected on her side towards Germany by a combination of natural and artificial barriers which would make invasion a slow and difficult process.

Her weak point was the contiguity of Belgium and Luxemburg. The latter was a neutral state wholly without fortifications, and giving access to any enemy, which cared to disregard its neutrality, to the Southern Ardennes and the Central Meuse valley. Belgium showed on the north-east a narrow point of entry between the Dutch frontier and the northern flank of the Ardennes—a point which was defended by the Meuse, which here turns northward, and by the forts of Liège. In Namur and Antwerp she possessed other first-class fortresses; but obviously the resistance of so small a State against invasion could not be indefinitely prolonged. Once the invader

won through Belgium, the French line of defence would become the line Lille-Maubeuge-Mezières, a line vastly inferior both in natural and artificial strength to the Verdun-Belfort line in the east.

On the south France had no strategic difficulties. Switzerland would be neutral, Spain friendly, and though Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance, it was highly unlikely that she would draw the sword against her old ally in the Risorgimento. France's sea-power had considerable strategic importance, though far less than in the case of Britain. Some of the best of her troops were in Algiers, and to bring them back necessitated the command of the Western Mediterranean. With the assistance of the British fleet this was a practical certainty.

Russia, so far as conquest is concerned, might be regarded as invulnerable. No invasion, not even under a Charles XII. or a Napoleon, could hope to prevail against her vast distances and the rigours of her winter climate. For a war of offence she had certain strategic difficulties, chiefly concerned with the topography of her western frontier. On the east she had nothing to fear from Japan; and since the Japanese were now her allies, she could recall her troops of occupation from Manchuria. Nor had she any danger to anticipate from the British Empire to the south of her, and little from States like Persia and Turkey. She was free to concentrate her whole might against the Teutonic alliance, but that concentration was not an easy matter.

From the map it will be seen that Russian Poland runs in a salient westwards to a point only some 180 miles from Berlin. North is East Prussia, commanding the right flank of any Russian advance; and south is the Austrian province of Galicia, commanding the left. While the main Russian concentration was likely to be on the fortress line running through Warsaw, it was necessary, before an advance could be made westwards, to clear the enemy out of East Prussia and Galicia. The first is a land of marshes and swampy ponds, difficult campaigning at all times, and one vast morass, as Napoleon found, in the rains. When that country is traversed, the line of the Vistula has to be crossed, defended by the strong fortresses of Thorn, Graudenz, and Danzig. Galicia, on the south, contained only two first-class fortresses, Przemysl and Cracow, and the Austrian armies operating there, being drawn from the non-Slav parts of the Dual Monarchy, would be at some distance from their southern bases. Once the flanks were clear, the way would be open for a Russian advance against Posen from Russian Poland, and against Breslau and Silesia from Galicia.

The natural difficulties of Russia's strategic position in a war of offence were obvious, and they were not decreased by the nature of her communications. A report of General Kuropatkin as war minister, written in 1900, summarized a situation which for Russia had not materially improved. In the West, both in France

and Germany, railways and canals had been considered from the strategic point of view. They were admirably adapted for concentration on important points; all vital bridges and tunnels were provided with explosive chambers, and, when necessary, were heavily fortified. But on the East the preparation was one-sided. Germany had seventeen lines of railway leading to the Russian frontier, which would enable her to send five hundred troop trains daily, so that she could concentrate some fourteen to sixteen army corps on that border within a few days of the declaration of war. On the Russian side there were only five railway lines. So, too, with Austria. The Carpathians had been pierced by seven railways, so that Galicia had become like a glacis of the Austrian fort, where in a short space she could concentrate over 1,000,000 men, while on her eight lines she could run two hundred and sixty trains to the frontier every twenty-four hours. As against this, Russia had only four lines. The gauge of her railways differed from the German and Austrian, but much of the German rolling stock was fitted with wheels on the axle which could be adjusted to increase or diminish the gauge. Further, the German gauge was in force as far east as Warsaw, so Germany could run across the frontier from her internal bases without detraining. Generally speaking, Russian communications were better fitted for defence than offence. Her mobilization and transport problems would always be difficult, since she had to bring her soldiers from thousands of miles off, and had only indifferent means of bringing them.

The German Staff had long foreseen the possibility of Germany being involved in a war such as the present—with Austria in alliance, Italy neutral, and France, Russia, and Britain engaged against her. Obviously, such a war must mean that Germany took the offensive. If she were assailed on both sides she must crush one enemy before turning to the other. Time was the essence of her problem, for a protracted struggle would mean starvation, bankruptcy, and, consequently, defeat. Her first movement would naturally be directed against the West. On the West her frontier was strongly defended. The great fortified areas of Metz and Thionville stood as outposts, and behind them was the line of the Rhine fortresses—Neu-Breisach, Strassburg, Mayence, Coblenz, Cologne—not to speak of the Rhine itself, where almost every bridge was strongly armoured. On the East the position was far less secure. The Vistula, the Warta, and the Oder, though by no means contemptible, were not natural barriers like the Rhine; the eastern fortresses, with the exception of Koenigsberg, had not the strength of the western; and the difficult nature of the country and the immense length—some 500 miles—of the frontier, made the offensive, proceeding from a not too secure base, terribly liable to a counter stroke. There was also the difficulty that, for the defence of her right flank on the East,

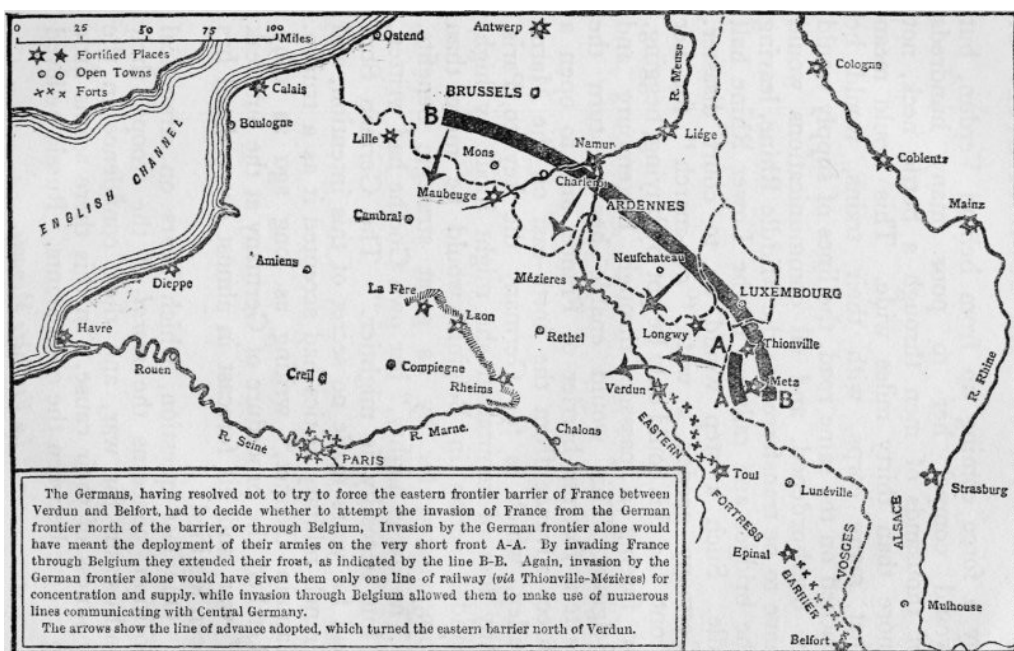
Germany must trust Austria, and such vicarious security was repugnant to the orderly mind of her General Staff. There was the further trouble about Italy. Though nominally an ally, neutrality was the most that could be hoped from her, and at any moment she might be drawn into active hostility. In the latter case she would take Austria in the rear by way of the Trentino and Trieste; and Austria, with Russia in front, Italy behind, and Serbia on her flank, would be in no position to safeguard her share of the Eastern frontier. It was, therefore, highly necessary to strike a deadly blow as early as possible at France, in order to confirm the wavering neutrality of Italy, and to enable Germany to concentrate her attention on the East, where lay what seemed to her the graver danger.



Railway Map Central Europe.

Now, a swift blow at France was only possible through Luxemburg and Belgium. A glance at the map will reveal the reason. A frontal attack on the frontier barrier, Verdun-Belfort, would be a matter of months. An entry by the Gap of Metz would not only expose her armies to a flank attack by a force coming up from behind Verdun, but would compel her to pour many hundreds of thousands of men through a bottle neck, not more than thirty miles wide. This would mean that many

corps, with their trains, would be packed on the same road, the lines of supply would be overburdened, and all communications would have to be transferred to the Middle Rhine, leaving the bridges and railways of the Lower Rhine half idle. Such a step would be to court disaster. Germany needed a wide “out-march” for her front, and this could only be got by buying, begging, or forcing a passage through Luxemburg and Belgium. This would enable her to turn the eastern fortress barrier of France, and to open a direct advance from the north-east on the Marne valley, which is for Germany the key to Paris. Any loss of reputation she might incur by high-handed action in Belgium would be more than compensated for by its great strategic benefits. “The law is mighty,” her own Goethe had written, “but necessity is mightier.” The German Staff had for years made no secret of this intention, and French military critics had accepted it as a truism. Captain Gélinet,^[1] writing as long ago as 1895, sketched the procedure of Germany at the outbreak of war, and his forecast in almost every detail has been justified.



Map illustrating German Strategic Conditions.

One last question, which bears on strategic position, concerns the *moral* of the troops, their enthusiasm for war, and their confidence in the goodness of their cause. In this there seems little to choose between the combatants. Russia believed herself to be engaged in a holy war; France was fighting for her life against her secular

enemy; Britain was drawing the sword for public honour and the free ideals of her empire against the massed forces of militarism and reaction. Austria may have been somewhat half-hearted, for she had been made a catspaw of by Germany, but she had her long grievance against Serbia to avenge, and she had as a spur the terror of the advancing Slav. Not least was Germany confident in her cause. What seemed to the world an act of brigandage and bad faith was to her only the natural instinct of self-preservation. To the ordinary German the Triple Entente was a vast conspiracy to hem in Germany, and prevent her from gaining the expansion which her vigour demanded. Germany must fight some day unless she were to be crushed, and the sooner the better before Russia became too strong. She believed that in such a war she was certain to win, since France was decadent, Britain contemptible by land, and Russia not yet prepared. The British navy might be stronger than the German, but the latter could at any rate cripple its power; and she thought she knew that Britain had no stomach for war, and would speedily make an inglorious peace. Let us also admit that something more than self-preservation and material aggrandizement entered into the German ideal. There was the exhilaration of one strong people *contra mundum*, and the belief that German "culture" was fighting for its life. To the Prussian militarist, *Kultur* may have been merely a convenient euphemism for blood and iron; but to the ordinary German it meant a world of homely and honourable things which seemed in deadly jeopardy from the Slav barbarians. Scholars in Germany are a docile class, much under Government influence; but we may admit that when men like Haeckel and Wundt, Harnack and Eucken, declared that this was a war for civilization, they did sincerely believe that something noble and worthy was in danger.

To sum up briefly the conclusions of this chapter. At the outbreak of war the ultimate man-power of the Allies (excluding Japan) stood to that of the Teutonic League in some such proportion as 23 to 13. The actual armies capable of being put in the field on mobilization stood probably as 13 to 8. Germany was economically the least fitted of the great Powers to stand a long war, and political and strategic considerations also pointed to a swift offensive directed against France. In the western theatre of war the proportions of the Allied armies to the German were at the beginning as 4 to 7, and of the figure 4 the British Expeditionary Force may be put at .7. The natural policy of the Allies was, therefore, to play for time to give their vast potential resources the chance of coming into action. In fighting quality there was probably little to choose between the different armies, and all entered upon war completely confident in the justice of their cause. For each it was a struggle of life

and death.

[\[1\]](#) *La Frontière Menacée.*

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST SHOTS.

Nature of Modern Battle Problems—Importance of Communications—
Routes into Belgium from the Rhine Valley—The Surroundings of Liège
—Brialmont and the Liège Forts—Belgian Troops at Liège—General
Leman—The Fighting from August 5th to 7th—The Occupation of the
City and Fall of Southern Forts—Original German Concentration—
German Plan of Campaign—The French Raid into Alsace—The
Capture of Mulhouse—General Joffre's Proclamation.

The history of a modern war must lack much of the picturesqueness of the struggles of the past. There is no room in the higher command for the brilliant guesses, the sudden unexpected strokes, or the personal heroisms of old days. A surprise, such as Montrose's flank march at Inverlochy, or Stonewall Jackson's at Chancellorsville, is almost impossible nowadays. It will no longer be necessary to guess, like the Duke of Wellington at Assaye, what is happening behind a hill; the superior intelligence given by aircraft has put an end to all that. The problem in a sense is simpler—at least it has fewer elements; but these few elements are difficult to handle, and, from their novelty, hard to estimate. The chief is the amazing numbers now present on any battlefield. The greatest fight of the old *régime* was the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig, but there the combatants numbered only 472,000. At Sadowa there were 436,000; at Gravelotte 300,000. The Russo-Japanese War furnishes the closest parallel. The Battle of Mukden was fought on a front of eighty miles, it lasted for three weeks, and over 700,000 were engaged. But in the contests of the present war the battle front was often double that length, the decision deferred over many weeks, and the total in the neighbourhood of two millions.

NUMBERS ENGAGED IN CHIEF BATTLES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

(Taken from *Die Zahl im Kriege*, by Captain Otto Berndt, of the
Austrian General Staff.)

		Total.
MARENGO (June 14, 1800).	French (Napoleon), 28,500; Austrians (Melas), 28,000.	56,500
AUSTERLITZ (Dec. 2, 1805).	French (Napoleon), 65,000; Austrians and Russians (Kutusov), 82,500.	147,500
JENA (Oct. 14, 1806).	French (Napoleon), 54,000; Prussians and Saxons (Hohenlohe), 53,000.	107,000
AUERSTADT (Oct. 14, 1806).	French (Davoust), 27,300; Prussians (Duke of Brunswick), 49,800.	77,100
ASPERN (May 21-2, 1809).	French (Napoleon), 90,000; Austrians (Archduke Charles), 75,000.	165,000
WAGRAM (July 5, 6, 1809).	French (Napoleon), 181,700; Austrians (Archduke Charles), 128,600.	310,300
TALAVERA (July 27-8, 1809).	British and Spanish (Wellington), 54,000; French (Joseph Bonaparte), 56,000.	110,000
BORODINO (Sept. 7, 1812).	French (Napoleon), 130,000; Russians (Kutusov), 121,000.	251,000
VITTORIA (June 21, 1813).	British and Allies (Wellington), 80,000; French (Joseph Bonaparte), 60,000.	140,000
DRESDEN (Aug. 26-7, 1813).	French (Napoleon), 96,000; Russians and Allies (Schwarzenberg), 200,000.	296,000
LEIPZIG (Oct. 16, 18, 19, 1813).	Russians and Allies (Schwarzenberg), 301,500; French (Napoleon), 171,000.	472,500
WATERLOO (June 18, 1815).	British and Allies (Wellington), 70,200; French (Napoleon), 72,250. (About half the Prussian Army of 75,000 under Bluecher came into action towards evening.)	142,450
THE ALMA (Sept. 20, 1854).	British and Allies (Raglan), 57,000; Russians (Mentschikov), 33,600.	90,600

INKERMAN (Nov. 5, 1854).	British and French (Raglan and Canrobert), 18,000; Russians (Mentschikov), 36,000.	54,000
SOLFERINO (June 24, 1859).	French and Piedmontese (Napoleon III.), 151,200; Austrians (Emperor Francis Joseph), 133,250.	284,450
SADOWA (July 3, 1866).	Prussians (King William and Moltke), 220,982; Austrians and Saxons (von Benedek), 215,134.	436,116
WOERTH (Aug. 6, 1870).	Germans (Crown Prince of Prussia), 82,100; French (MacMahon), 48,500.	130,600
GRAVELLOTTE (Aug. 18, 1870).	Germans (King William and Moltke), 187,600; French (Bazaine), 112,900.	300,500
SEDAN (Sept. 1, 1870).	Germans (King William and Moltke), 154,000; French (MacMahon), 90,000.	244,000
PLEVNA (Dec. 10, 1877).	Turks (Osman), 30,000; Russians and Allies (Totleben), 120,000.	150,000

One special feature distinguished this from other recent struggles. It was the first instance in history of large bodies of men operating in a closely-settled country. Manchuria and the Balkans are wild and sparsely inhabited, with rudimentary roads and few enclosures. But in many parts of the garden land of Western Europe there is less freedom of movement, and the wide and open battlefield which great masses of men require was not easy to happen upon. At the same time, the civilized nature of the *terrain* simplified the problem of communications. Two millions of men can be supplied with food and ammunition only by an elaborate system of railways and good roads from the railheads for motor traffic.

The growing complexity of scientific apparatus adds to the delicacy of the machine which we call a modern army. Communications are more vital, because improvisation is less possible. The artillery of the Napoleonic wars consisted of easily-cast field pieces, mounted on carriages which could be repaired by any carpenter, and served by men who worked by rule of thumb. The great range and deadly effect of modern artillery are counterbalanced by the elaboration of its transport and service. Deficiencies cannot be hastily supplied or expert gunners improvised, and a hitch in communications may render this mighty engine of war so many tons of useless metal.

The General Commanding-in-chief finds the matter of numbers his chief preoccupation. The human brain is limited in organizing power, and no man can handle a modern army who is not capable of disregarding irrelevancies and grasping the simple essentials. He must take above all things the broad, synoptic view. A modern army will resolve itself into a number of separate commands operating on a general strategic plan. The individual generals must be given a free hand to fight their own battles, provided they conform to the main scheme. The task of the Generalissimo is to remain at some point well in the rear, where he can collocate the reports from his different marshals, and retain a general grasp of the situation and its strategic significance. It is a task not unlike that which Chatham in his great days performed from Whitehall, when his generals made war over the whole globe under the impulse and direction of the British statesman.

On Tuesday, 4th August, the north-west frontier of the German Rhineland was in a state of furious busyness. The General Staff, being of Frederick the Great's opinion that the worst place to make war is in one's own country, the best in the enemy's, and the second best in that of a neutral, had decided on the violation of Belgium, and preparations made long before were now brought to a head. On all the German frontier lines elaborate

Aug. 4

arrangements had been perfected for the concentration of troops. Even small towns had long stations with detraining platforms, often five or six hundred yards long, and special sidings for disembarking guns. Where these did not exist, as in Luxemburg, they were constructed, and the capital of the grand duchy presented a strange spectacle of mechanical energy.

The chief routes into Belgium from the Rhine valley are four. There is the ingress through Luxemburg into the Southern Ardennes, and so to the Central Meuse valley; there is the route from the German frontier camp of Malmedy to Stabelot, which would give access to the Northern Ardennes and to the Meuse at Dinant, Namur, and Huy; there is the great route from Aix *via* Verviers, by the main line between Paris and Berlin, down the valley of the Vesdre to Liège; and, lastly, there is the direct route by road from Aix to the crossing of the Meuse at Visé, on the very edge of the Dutch frontier. All four routes were requisitioned. During the early days of August there was a great massing of German troops in Luxemburg and the Ardennes. But the immediate movement against the enemy was undertaken by way of that narrow entry between Visé and the Ardennes, through which the Meuse flows past the city of Liège, and where lies the gateway to the Belgian plains. To seize this gate was vital for an army which wished to deploy on a broad front along and north of the Central Meuse, and the seizure must be made before the armies of France came eastwards to dispute it.

The German striking force consisted, as we have seen, of one division from each of three corps, and, being imperfectly mobilized, lacked adequate equipment, transport, and siege artillery. This explains the stories published at the time of starving German soldiers, and men lame from hard new boots not yet supplied by use. The German Staff did not rate Belgian valour high. "Why spend so much money on spies, and know us so little?" was the question which the Belgians asked of each other. They forgot that the people of Liège, an independent state till a century ago, and still the capital of the Walloon race, had an historic reputation for being hard to drive. They believed that an improvised force could break through the barrier of the fortresses, seize the city, and hold the railways running to the west. The commander of the vanguard, General von Emmich, was normally in command of the 10th Hanoverian Corps. One of his three divisions came from Malmedy by way of Verviers, where it was joined by the troops from Aix. By the evening of Monday, 3rd August, the German columns were in Belgian territory. Late that night, or early the next morning, the second line of German advance reached Visé, where the bridge had been destroyed by Belgian engineers, seized the river crossing, and after a brush with local troops set the town on fire with shells. Some German troopers

seem on this occasion to have blundered unintentionally inside the Dutch border. By the evening of Tuesday the 4th the enemy was closing in on Liège from the north-east, east, and south.

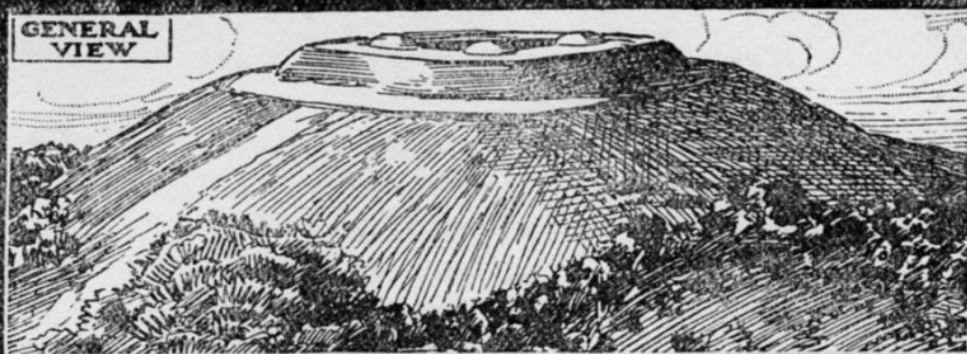
The Meuse, in the neighbourhood of Liège, runs in a deep, wide trench between two masses of upland. On the north lies a tableland which extends for fifty miles to the vicinity of Louvain; on the south and east is the hill country of the Ardennes, a land of ridges and forests, broken by the glens of swift-running streams, which fall eastwards to the plains of the Rhine. The sides of the trench are sharply cut, and generally clothed with scrub oak and beeches. The alluvial bottom is the site of many industries; railways follow both banks of the river, and the smoke from a hundred factory and colliery chimneys darkens the sky. It is the Black Country of Belgium, and, like our own Black Country, is next-door neighbour to the clean pastoral hills. Strategically, the bordering uplands are very different in character. The Ardennes are rough and broken, easy to defend, and difficult for large armies to move in; while the northern tableland is a plain covered with crops of beetroot and cereals, presenting no serious obstacle to any invader. North-east and east of Liège the Meuse valley broadens into the Dutch flats. The natural defence of Belgium from the east may be said to cease with the winning of the upland crest north of the city.

Liège itself lies astride the main stream of the Meuse and the second channel which receives the waters of the Ourthe and the Vesdre. It occupies the flat between the northern plateau and the river, spreading eastwards down the valley, and climbing westwards towards the plateau in steep, crooked streets. The city has no defences in itself, the old walls having gone, and the old citadel being merely a relic in a public square. It contains many bridges, the most important of which is the railway bridge of Val-Benoît, which carries the main line from Germany across the Meuse. From the railway station this line is borne to the northern plateau on a high embankment, called the *Plan incliné*, through which the roadways pass under vaulted gateways. Special engines are used to push the trains up the hills, till the junction of Ans is reached on the edge of the plateau, whence there is a level run to Brussels. Obviously such a position has great capacities for defence, and these were made use of in the series of forts constructed by Henri Alexis Brialmont for the Belgian Government between the years 1888 and 1892.

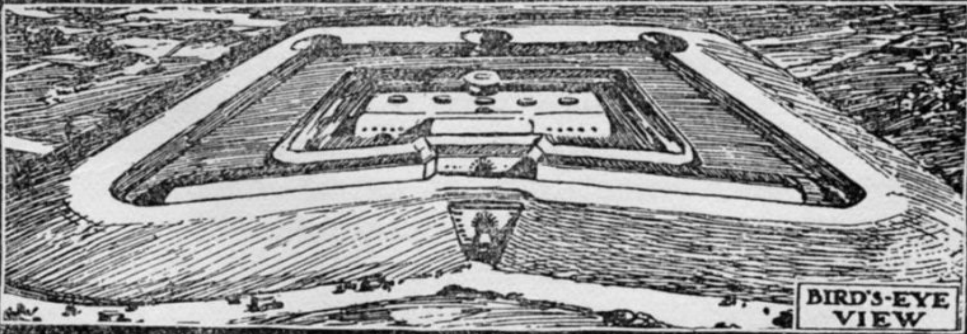
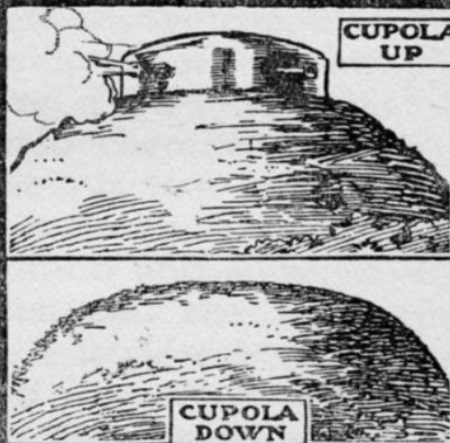
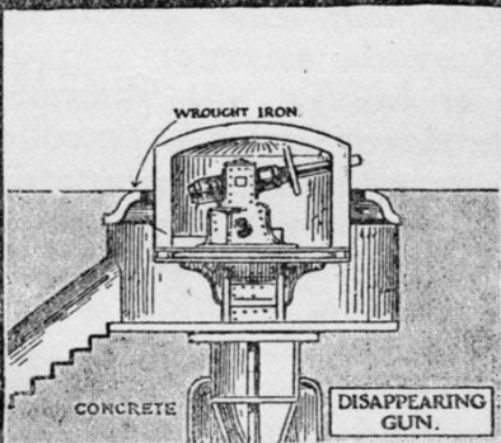
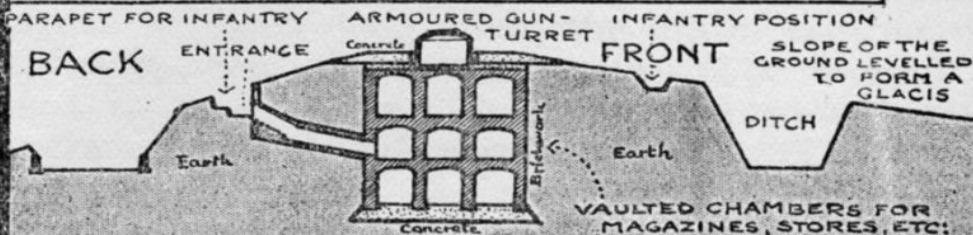
Brialmont occupies in the modern history of fortifications the place which Vauban held in the old. Born in 1821, he received his first training in military engineering from French officers, but by 1855, when he was a captain on the Belgian General Staff, he had thrown over French models, and was inclined to the new German theories. He aimed at adapting fortresses to meet long-range rifled guns and high-angled shell

fire, and rejected the old French star shape, with bastioned ramparts and intricate outworks, for the German type of long front and detached forts. The approval of Todleben, the defender of Sebastopol, confirmed him in his views. His first great work was the fortifications of Antwerp, completed in 1868, the details of which we shall consider later. In 1883 he designed for the Rumanian Government the gigantic defences of Bucharest, and by 1892 he had completed the defence of the Meuse valley in the forts of Liège and Namur.

**GENERAL
VIEW**



SECTION THROUGH ONE OF THE GUN POSITIONS



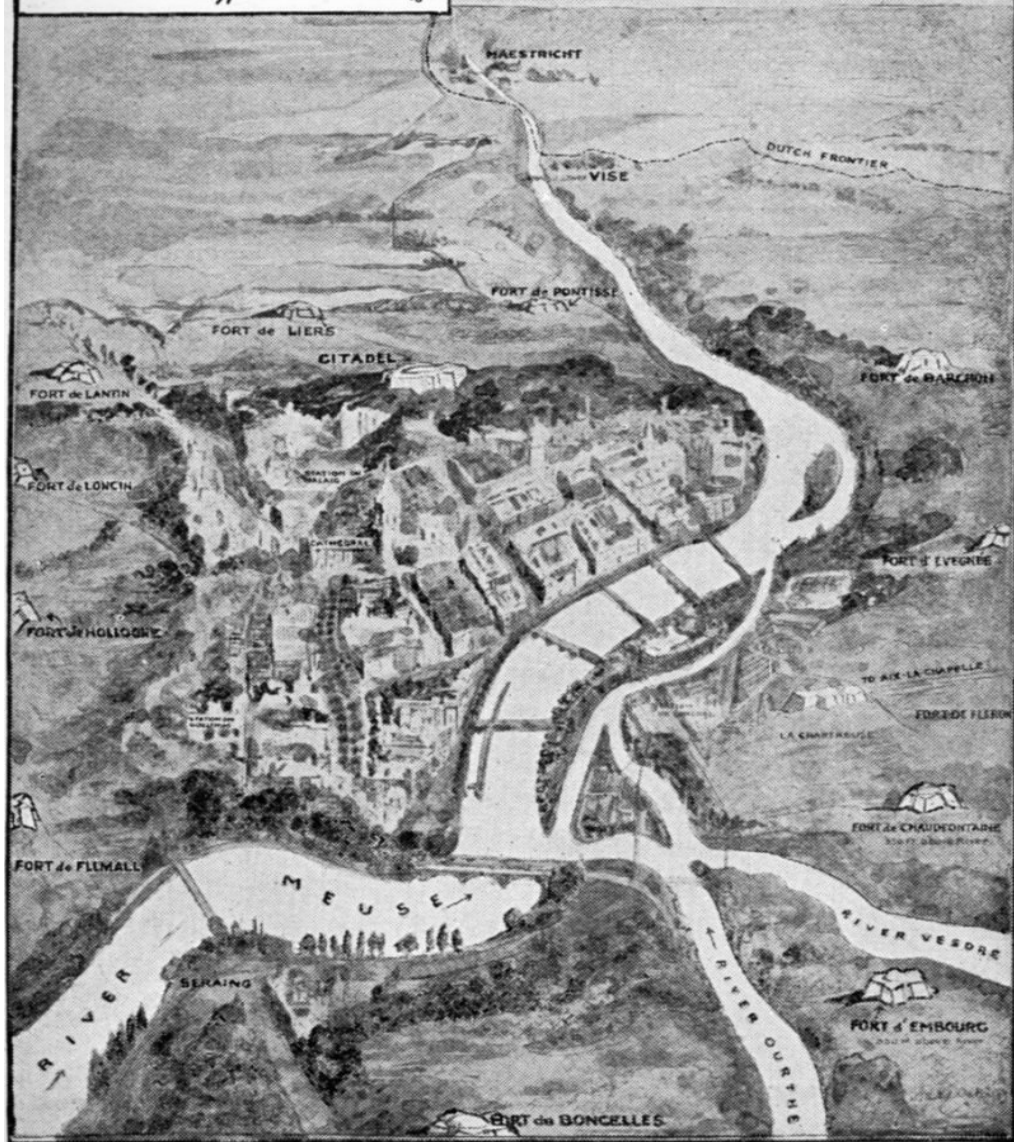
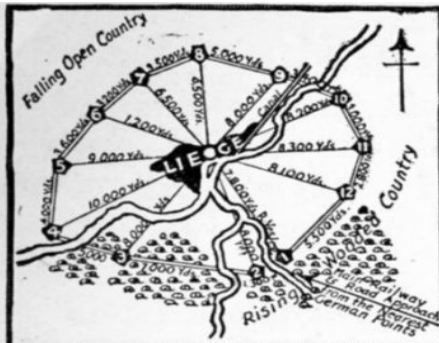
Diagrams illustrating the Construction of a Brialmont Fort

Brialmont's typical fort, the details of which can be seen in the accompanying sketches, is largely an underground structure. The military engineer of the days before artillery piled up his towers and turrets into a stately castle. But with the advent of the artillerist fortresses began to sink into the earth as their best protection. Brialmont's forts are buried in it. His ordinary design is a low mound, surrounded by a deep ditch, the top of the mound hardly showing above its margin. The mound is cased in concrete and masonry, and roofed with concrete, covered with earth and sods. The top is broken by circular pits, in which, working like pistons, the "cupolas," or gun-turrets, slide up and down, with just enough movement to bring the gun muzzles above the level of the ground. Internally the mound is like a gigantic molehill, hollowed out into passages and chambers. In this subterranean structure are the quarters of the small garrison, the machinery for manœuvring guns and turrets, the stores of ammunition and supplies, the electric lighting arrangements, and the ventilating fans. The whole fort is like a low-freeboard turret ship sunk in the ground, and it is fought much as the barbettes of a battleship are fought in action. Its garrison is a crew of engineers and mechanics, who obtain access to it by an inclined tunnel.

Brialmont made of any place to be fortified a ring fortress, surrounding it with such forts as have been described, so as to command the main approaches. He assumed that lines of trenches and redoubts for infantry, as well as gun-pits for artillery, would be constructed in the ground between them, as what he called a "safety-circle," to prevent raids between the forts at night or in misty weather. This important point in his plan seems to have been generally forgotten, while the one weak spot, an infantry defence for the fort itself by means of a parapet lined with riflemen, was zealously clung to by his countrymen—a complication as useless as devising positions for small-arm men round the sides of a Dreadnought.

The Liège defences consisted of six main forts of the pentagonal type, and six lesser forts, or *fortins*, triangular in shape. It is necessary to note these exactly if we are to understand the events which follow. Beginning at the north end, at the point nearest to the Dutch frontier, we find the fort of Pontisse on rising ground close to the canal on the left bank of the Meuse. From this point it is some nine miles to Eysden, the nearest Dutch village; and the undefended gap in the Belgian frontier—to strengthen which no step seems to have been taken—may be put at between five and six miles. This was the gap which the German attack on Visé was intended to seize. South-east across the Meuse stood the fort of Barchon, and south from it the

fortin of Evegnée. South, again, came the large fort of Fléron, commanding one railway line to Aix. South-west lay the two *fortins*, Chaudfontaine and Embourg, on opposite sides of the Vesdre, commanding the main line to Germany *via* Verviers. Westwards in the circle we cross the Ourthe valley, and reach the fort of Boncelles, which commanded the hilly ground between the Ourthe and the Meuse. North from Boncelles, on the plateau beyond the Meuse, stood three important defences—the fort of Flemalle at the south end, the *fortin* of Hollogne, and the vital fort of Loncin, which commanded the junction of Ans and the railways which ran from Liège north and west across the plateau. Lastly, between Loncin and Pontisse lay the two lesser *fortins* of Lantin and Liers.



Liège and its Forts.

The forts made an irregular circle around the city, the average distance of each from the centre being about four miles; the greatest distance between any two forts was 7,000 yards, and the average less than 4,000. In theory they formed a double line of defence, so that if one fell its neighbours to left and right should still be able to hold the enemy. At one or two points the invaders might come under the fire of as many as four forts. The garrison of each was small, for there was no room in them for numbers—some eighty men at the most, engineers, gunners, and a handful of riflemen to hold the parapets. The noise, heat, and confinement made the service the most trying conceivable, and during the attack on Liège the defenders found that they could not swallow food or compose themselves to sleep, even when sleep was permitted. The armaments were two 6-inch guns, four 4.7-inch, two 8-inch mortars, and four light quick-firers for the forts; two 6-inch, two 4.7-inch, one or two 8-inch mortars, and three quick-firers for the *fortins*. Liège mounted a total of some 400 pieces.

The difficulty of the situation at the outbreak of war was that Belgium had not made up her mind as to how her frontier defences were to be used, and hesitated between the view of Liège as a fortress whose resistance could be indefinitely prolonged, and a mere *fort-d'arrêt* to hold up for a day or two the enemy's advance. To prepare the first duly, the forts should have been strengthened by bomb-proof redoubts for infantry placed between them. In peace time they were low green mounds, on the sides of which cattle grazed, and a good deal of scrub had mantled their lower slopes. This was meant to provide material for abattis; but nothing was done in this direction, and when the war began the field of fire was most imperfectly cleared. If, on the other hand, they were meant, as Brialmont intended, for artillery stations in the line of a field army, it was essential that the army should be there to hold the gaps between them.

But on 4th August, the day of the commencement of hostilities, the Belgian army was still in process of mobilization on the line of the river Dyle, covering the advance on Brussels and Antwerp. The church bells were still ringing their summons at midnight, and the dogs were being collected from the milk carts to draw the mitrailleuses. The 3rd Division and the 15th Mixed Brigade were rushed from Diest to Liège, and the Civic Guard of the city took their stand by the side of the regulars. At full strength the force should have numbered over 30,000 men; but as the mobilization was incomplete, it fell short of this number by at least 8,000, and probably was little more than 20,000. The defenders of Liège were in the same

position as the attackers—a “scratch” force, hastily put together and imperfectly equipped. No stranger medley of colour could be found in Europe than such a field army which lacked a field dress—the men of the line in their blue and white; the *chasseurs à pied* with their peaked caps, green and yellow uniforms, and flowing capes; and the Civic Guard, with their high, round hats and red facings. Little can be done in two days to improvise defence; but gangs of colliers and navvies were set to work to dig trenches and throw up breastworks, and the village of Boncelles and various houses, spinneys, and even churches, which obviously obstructed the line of fire, were levelled to the ground. By the afternoon of Tuesday, 4th August, the Belgians held in some strength the line of the south-eastern forts from Boncelles to Barchon, and cavalry patrols covered the gap between Pontisse and the Dutch frontier.

Aug. 4.

The unexpected resistance of Belgium seems to have both irritated and amazed the German people. They believed that they had made Belgium a very fair proposal—“Let us go through your land, and we will compensate you for any damage, and pay you something into the bargain;” and they could not understand why it should be summarily rejected. And yet Belgium had given the world notice of her intentions. In 1911, during the Agadir trouble, she had announced that she would keep inviolate her territory against all comers. King Leopold, whatever his foibles, had striven honestly to give her an army, and under her young king, Albert, she had done much to perfect her defence. She had acquired something, too, more potent than armies—a keen national self-consciousness and a vivid patriotism. For two thousand years she had been the cockpit of Europe. On her soil Cæsar had crushed the resistance of Gaul; France had won her nationhood; the dwellers by the North Sea had fought for liberty against Spain; Louis XIV. had seen his ambitions frustrated; and Napoleon had dreamed his last dream. In such a position, to retain sovereign rights must mean a sleepless vigilance and an infinite sacrifice. When the hour came Belgium was ready, and her faith will be found in the words of her king: “A country which defends itself cannot perish.” Germany forgot that you cannot assess liberty and nationhood in marketable terms, and that there are wrongs for which there is no compensation. She had not reckoned with the Belgian spirit. To the supermen of Prussia it seemed, as Stein said of the Tugendbund, “the rage of dreaming sheep,” and their fury was the measure of their surprise.

The army of Liège was under the command of General Leman. An officer of engineers, and commandant of the Military School, he had worked under Brialmont on the Antwerp and Meuse defences, and was regarded as the foremost living representative of his views. At the outbreak of war he was between fifty and sixty

years of age, a grave, silent man, who inspired respect rather than enthusiasm in his followers.

Obviously, he could do no more than play for time. His business was to make such a fight on the line of the southern forts as would delay the enemy for a day or two. Then the city, in the absence of either redoubts between the forts or a strong field army, must inevitably fall, but its fate did not necessarily mean the end of the resistance. The northern forts could still hold out till the enemy should force the plateau from the city, or, advancing from Visé or Huy, should take them on the flank. This meant time, and till they fell there was no progress by rail from Liège towards the Belgian plain. It was Leman's aim to hold on as long as possible to the forts commanding the railway between Liège and Namur, for by that road the French would come. If three days were gained it would be something; if a week, it would be much; for daily, almost hourly, the little Belgian army looked west for the arrival of its allies of France and Britain.

On Tuesday afternoon Belgian pickets came in touch with the scouts of von Emmich's force, and about 11.30 that night the citizens heard the beginning of a great cannonade. The Germans, coming down the Ourthe and the Vesdre, were attacking the forts of Bonnelles, Embourg, Chaudfontaine, and Fléron with long-range fire over the woods, the guns being laid and the range determined by the map. Their heavy siege pieces had not yet come up, and the fire was high explosive shells from ordinary field artillery. By all accounts it was extraordinarily accurate, shell after shell exploding fairly on the ramparts of the forts. The guns of the forts replied; but it is doubtful if they did much damage, as the German gun positions in that broken country were easily concealed. This artillery duel went on through the night, and about three in the morning of Wednesday, 5th August, infantry fire began in the woods west of the Ourthe between Embourg and Bonnelles. The Germans advanced in close order, after their fashion, aiming at fire effect from the density of their formation. The Belgians, especially the 9th and 14th Regiments of the Line, met the attack with withering volleys, and when dawn came, about four a.m., the infantry battle began. It lasted till eight, when the Germans withdrew, and the Belgians with justice claimed a success. There does not seem to have been any general counter-stroke, probably because of the danger from the German cavalry, which the morning light revealed behind and in the intervals of the German line.

Aug. 5.

Meanwhile early in the day the fort of Fléron was silenced, German shell fire having smashed the machinery of the moving cupolas. This made the task of the defence highly difficult, for it opened up a railway line to the invaders, since the two

adjacent fortresses of Evegnée and Chaudfontaine were too far apart to hold the pass. There were too few men to make a continuous defence of the lines between the forts, and while the position was hotly contested on the afternoon of the 5th and during the whole of the 6th, General Leman had been conscious for some time that it was untenable. The Germans had now brought up their 8.4-inch howitzers, and probably one or two of their 11-inch mortars, which can be used without concrete beds, and the rest of the southern forts were in deadly peril. Shells are said to have crashed through twelve feet of concrete, and the sides were crushed like a child's castle of sand.

Sometime on the 6th the fall of Chaudfontaine opened up the Vesdre route, and a party of German hussars galloped into the city, and made a bold attempt to capture Leman. Evegnée followed, and Barchon in the east. Already by the evening of the 6th Belgian infantry and artillery were falling back on the city. Leman had decided that his troops would be more useful with the field army, and was eager to get them off before Liège should be invested. That the retreat was hurried is shown by the reports of eye-witnesses, who saw the roads lined with dropped arms and accoutrements, and by the facts that large quantities of supplies, an ambulance train, and some twenty engines were left behind in the railway station, and that the Belgians had no time to blow up the twelve Meuse bridges behind them. Only one was destroyed, the Pont des Arches; one other was damaged, which the Germans easily repaired; while the important railway bridge of Val-Benoît was left untouched. But Leman's purpose was accomplished. The troops, with little loss, were withdrawn through the streets and dispatched to the Belgian concentration on the Dyle, while he himself awaited events in the northern forts, which commanded the plateau and the railway lines to France. The defending force, few and unprepared, had made a stand which won for themselves and their nation immortal honour. They had lost heavily; but the German casualties, especially in the Schleswig-Holstein corps, from the nature of their attack, were out of all proportion greater. General von Emmich on the Thursday evening asked for an armistice to bury his dead, but this General Leman refused. In such a strenuous fight against time the fashions of more leisurely warfare were out of place.

Aug. 6.

About 7.30 on the morning of Friday, 7th August, the first German infantry entered Liège. The cannonade had done little harm to the city; only a stray shot had found its way to the river embankment, and a house or two and a chestnut in a *place* had been battered; a gasometer was struck, but the gas had already been drawn off to avoid an explosion. The inhabitants slept securely in their cellars, and there were few

Aug. 7.

casualties among the civil population. The Burgomaster and the Bishop of Liège arranged terms with the enemy, who marched in in good order, parked their guns in the squares, and paid for the supplies requisitioned. The invaders at first were not very numerous—probably not more than 10,000—for the bulk of von Emmich's force was sent to join the larger concentration now taking place on the right bank of the Meuse above and below Liège. They were well-behaved and civil, mostly very young, and looked to Belgian eyes strangely spick-and-span in their new accoutrements and their field-grey, which did not show dust or mud. They were housed in barracks, schools, convents, and other public buildings; discipline was strictly maintained, and the city was admirably policed.

This was on the 7th of August. Forts Evegnée, Chaudfontaine, and Barchon had fallen; Boncelles and Embourg were isolated but untaken; and probably all the forts on the left bank of the Meuse were intact. But the winning of the city and the silencing of the south-eastern forts were not of the first strategic importance. So long as the northern forts held out, Liège remained a terminus and not a junction for the German advance, and Belgium was justified in maintaining that, for all the vital purposes of war, it had not yet fallen. The Legion of Honour, conferred on the city by the French President, was amply deserved.

Those three days' fighting made an impression upon the world out of all proportion to their results. It was an affair between advanced guards, not between main armies, and the first stories of immense German losses proved to be unfounded. The Belgians, considerably less numerous than their enemies, had resisted the German attack for about forty hours, assisted by forts which were only powerful so long as heavy siege artillery was lacking. In itself it was a fine performance, but any campaign will produce a parallel. The true significance of the Belgian stand is that it pricked the bubble of German invincibility. A great nation, which for a generation had given itself up to the study of war, and had boasted throughout the world of its army, found itself held in the gates by a little unmilitary people that it despised. It was much that Belgium should defy Germany; it was more that she should make good her defiance. The triumph was moral—an advertisement to the world that the old simple faiths of country and duty could still nerve the arm for battle, and that the German idol, for all its splendour, had feet of clay.

For the next week a vast quantity of stores poured into Liège, and the real advance of the German northern armies began. In all the country between the Dutch border and the southern limits of Luxemburg the movement proceeded. The hill roads of the Ardennes were choked with troops and convoys, the railways which

the Belgians had destroyed were mended, and over the undamaged lines of Luxemburg the traffic went on without a pause.

On Wednesday, 12th August, there was published in the *Times* a map of the German concentration, which presumably represented the views of the British Headquarters Staff. A telegram from Petrograd, dated 23rd August, gave the Russian view, which in some respects differed. A comparison of the two in the light of subsequent events enables us to suggest the main lines of the operation, and to guess—it can never be more than a guess till General von Moltke publishes his memoirs—at the original German plan of campaign. The “original” plan; for, as we shall see, there is reason to believe that it was afterwards changed in one important particular. It must be remembered that the concentration gives no clue to the arrangement of the line of the first, and still less of the subsequent battles. Commands are from time to time altered, and corps redistributed, while the use of reserve corps, numbered in the same way as those of the first line, makes it almost impossible, in the absence of detailed official news, to determine the exact locality of a corps at any particular moment. Occasionally it would appear as if a corps was split up among several commands. As we shall see later, the cavalry, the infantry, and the rifle battalion of the Prussian Guard appear in widely different parts of the field.

The map on page 109 gives roughly the disposition on the 7th of August, when the advance was beginning. The German force for the invasion of France was organized in six main armies. Beginning in the north, we find the First Army (to which von Emmich’s advanced guards belonged) made up of the 7th Corps (Westphalia), the 10th (Hanover), the 9th (Schleswig-Holstein), and apparently part of the Cavalry of the Guards. To it was added later the 2nd Corps (Stettin). Its commander was General Alexander von Kluck, who had been “Inspector” of the 2nd, 5th, and 6th Corps at Berlin. He was a man of fifty-eight, a Westphalian by birth, who had served as a subaltern in the war with Austria, had been wounded at Metz in 1870, and had long been regarded as one of the best infantry leaders in the army.

The Second Army, composed of the 11th Corps (Cassel), the 3rd (Berlin), and the famous Corps of Prussian Guards, was under General von Buelow, the “Inspector” of the 7th, 9th, and 10th Army Corps at Hanover. These two armies were destined for the invasion of Belgium, and had with them a strong cavalry force of five divisions, including the 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 9th. Their total, exclusive of cavalry, was over 400,000 men.

The Third Army, under Duke Albrecht of Würtemberg, embraced the 4th Corps (Magdeburg), the 12th and 19th Corps (both from Saxony), and the 13th (Würtemberg), and had with it the 3rd and 6th Cavalry Divisions. It was originally

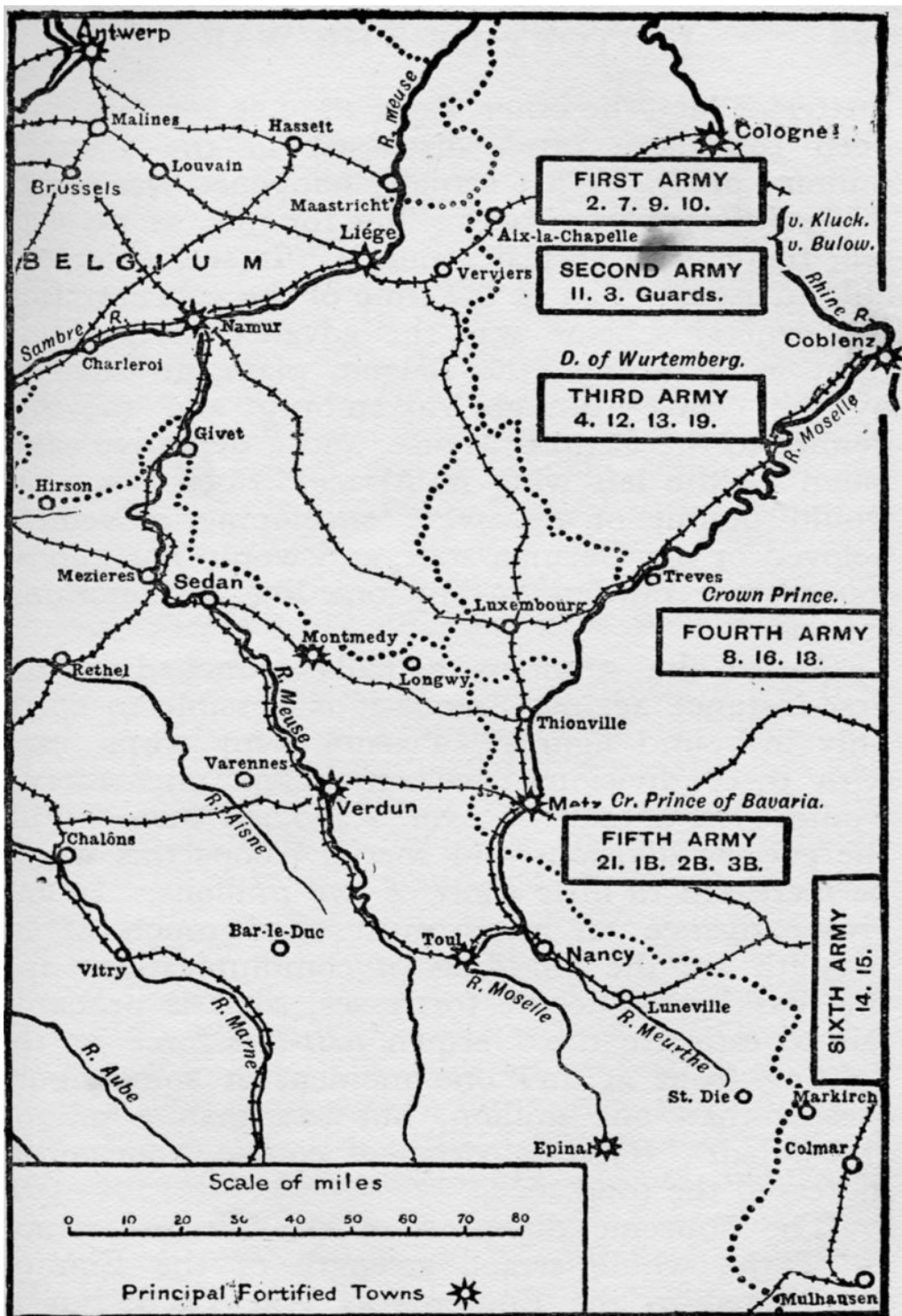
assembled in the Moselle valley, and about this time was pushed forward into the Ardennes.

The Fourth Army was led by the Imperial Crown Prince, a personality disquieting to politicians, and not altogether attractive to foreign observers, but beyond question popular in the army itself. He had with him the 8th Corps (Rhineland), the 16th (Lorraine), and the 18th (Hesse). He was moving west into the south of the Belgian Ardennes, with the town of Neufchâteau as his objective.

The Fifth Army concentrated in and just south of Metz, and was made up of the three Bavarian corps, the 21st Corps (Saarbrück), and the 7th Cavalry Division. Its commander was the Bavarian Crown Prince.

Last came the Sixth Army, assembled in and around Strassburg, and led by General von Heeringen, the "Inspector" of the Prussian Guards and the 12th and 19th Army Corps at Berlin. It contained the 14th Corps (Baden) and the 15th (Alsace).

Such a disposition would point to a plan of operations somewhat as follows:—The First and Second Armies would move through Belgium north of the Meuse valley, cross the Sambre, and so form the right of the German front descending upon Paris and the Marne valley. The centre, made up of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Armies, would advance from the line Metz-Luxemburg-Neufchâteau against the Central Meuse, detailing troops to act against Verdun with the Metz siege train. The Sixth Army would remain more or less on the defence in Alsace, to check any French advance across the Vosges and through the Gap of Belfort. This would mean that the main advance would be that of the centre, with which was the Crown Prince, who would naturally be given the *beau rôle*. The alternative theory is that the Germans intended to mass nearly all their force for a march into France on a wide front through Belgium north and west of the Meuse. It is claimed that this was the plan always announced by the General Staff, but, as a matter of fact, the other, since 1895 at any rate, had been the more often discussed in the German military press. What actually happened was something different from both; but for this, as we shall see, there were special grounds. It seems reasonable to assume that at the time of the concentration the general scheme was the advance of a strong right wing through the Belgian plain, an advance by the centre through Luxemburg and the Ardennes to the Central Meuse, and a defensive campaign by the left wing in Alsace. Such a scheme would permit of the wide enveloping movement beloved of the German staff, and would not impose too great a burden on any one line of communications.



Map showing original German Concentration on the Western Frontier.

As to the numbers actually launched in the first instance against France it is possible to speak only in round figures. Twenty army corps, each with three divisions, two active and one reserve, would give a total of over 1,200,000 men. With the cavalry divisions and special troops this would be increased to little short of two millions. In any great advance an army must shed much of its strength for the guarding of communications and the masking of hostile fortresses, so it is probably fair to estimate the German *first-line* force in the fighting front at any one moment at some figure greater than one million, but less than a million and a half. Reserve corps, of course, enormously increased the total.

The supreme direction of the Western army, as of the whole armed strength of the Empire, was vested in the Emperor as War Lord, but in practice the command was in the hands of the Chief of the General Staff. At the outbreak of war this post was held by Lieutenant-General Helmuth von Moltke, a nephew of the victor of 1870. He was a man of sixty-six, who had served as a subaltern in the Franco-Prussian War, and had been for some time a lecturer in the Berlin Military Academy. In 1891 he became Adjutant to the Emperor, and thereafter he rose rapidly, till, in 1906, he succeeded Count von Schlieffen as Chief of Staff. He was known as a learned and accomplished soldier, and a brilliant commander at manœuvres, while his name seemed to his countrymen a happy augury. The first Moltke had broken the French Empire; the second would shatter the French Republic and the Empire of Britain.

In another part of the Western theatre the first week of war revealed a premature activity. As Germany with half-mobilized troops attacked the Belgian line in the north, France, with troops in the same condition, made a movement against Upper Alsace in the south. The wedge of plain between the Vosges and the Swiss frontier is a natural line of advance against Germany, for it has behind it to the west the French fortified position of Belfort, and it gives easy access to the Upper Rhine. But a serious advance was only possible for a strong field army, for north, guarding the river valley, lay the great German fortresses of Neu Breisach and Strassburg. What happened during this week was an affair of weak advanced guards. It was reported by French aeroplanes that the Germans were holding the right bank of the Rhine, and on the left bank had only small detachments, so it was decided to attempt to occupy the country up to the river. What good a weak occupation could do does not appear, for it was at the mercy of larger masses operating from the German

fortresses.

On the Friday evening, rather late, a French brigade from the division at Belfort crossed the frontier and drove back small German detachments which were entrenched at Altkirch. The pursuing cavalry came into contact with German rearguards, and were unable to press their advantage; but the town was evacuated, and the French entered amid great demonstrations of popular joy. Next morning they continued their way unopposed to Mulhouse, an important manufacturing town without permanent fortifications, and to their surprise found the entrenchments

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deserted. Desultory fighting was carried on with a German force—about a brigade strong—in the neighbouring woods; but the resistance was insignificant, and, unfortunately, gave the French a false idea of their opponents' condition. They were

Aug. 8.

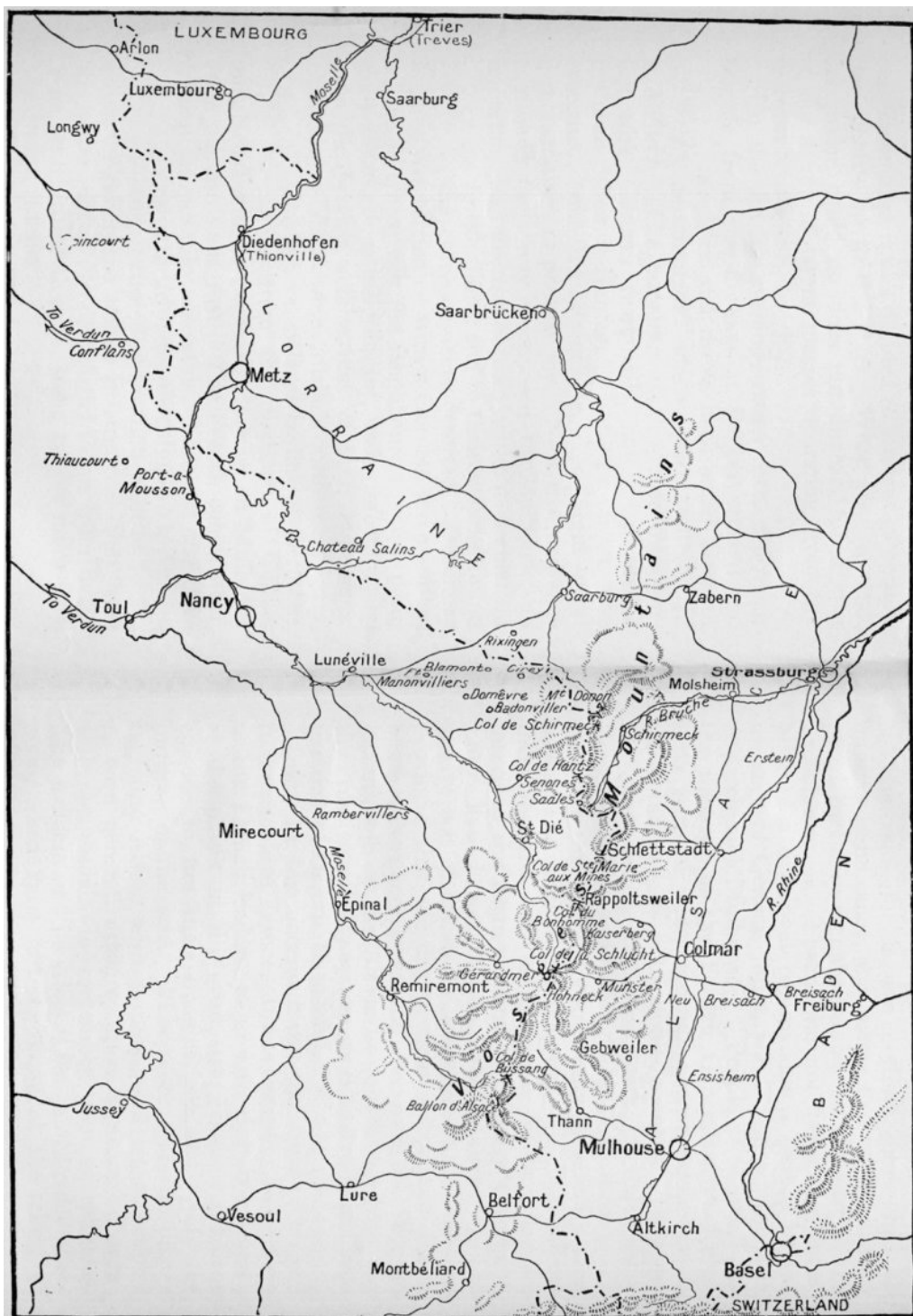
disillusioned next day, Sunday, when large bodies of Germans, coming from the direction of Colmar and Neu Breisach, began to close in on Mulhouse from the north and east. The French

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commander, finding his position untenable, evacuated the town early on Monday morning, 10th August, and occupied a position a little to the south. Finding the enemy in strength—they were the

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better part of the 14th Army Corps from Baden—he returned to Altkirch, some twelve miles from the French frontier.



Alsace-Lorraine.

The raid—for it was nothing more—had no military significance, and seems to have been hampered by faulty reconnaissances on the part of the French airmen. That it was not the sudden enterprise of a divisional commander is proved by the message of General Joffre, which was published in Altkirch and Mulhouse. “People of Alsace,” ran the message of the French Generalissimo, “after forty years of weary waiting, French soldiers again tread the soil of your noble country. They are the pioneers in the great work of redemption. What emotion and what pride for them! To complete the work they are ready to sacrifice their lives. The French nation with one heart spurs them forward, and on the folds of their flag are inscribed the magical names of Liberty and Right. Long live France! Long live Alsace!” The motive was political, an advertisement to the lost provinces that the day of their deliverance was at hand. Nowhere were the memories of 1870 so ineradicable as in Alsace-Lorraine; nowhere was the Prussian military system, as exhibited in incidents like that of Zabern, so hateful.

But the announcement was addressed even more to the people of France. It was necessary, in the view of the French leaders, to give to their countrymen at the outset of the great struggle some dramatic episode to fire their imaginations and typify the purpose of the war. What more dramatic than a raid into Alsace with a message of emancipation? A wise general, drawing upon a nation in arms, will not disdain to remember popular emotions. The incident had its effect. On the Monday afternoon, when Paris had the news of the taking of Mulhouse, but not of its evacuation, there was a great assembly in the Place de la Concorde. The centre of interest was the Strassburg statue, draped these many years with *crêpe*, but bearing on its escutcheon the proud words, “*Qui vive?*”

Aug. 10.

France quand-même! In a reverent silence the signs of mourning were removed. If the tricolour did not yet float above the spires of the Alsatian city, the march of the deliverers had begun.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MUSTER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

The Landing of the British Expeditionary Force in France—Lord Kitchener's Message to the Troops—The Scene at Boulogne—The Response of the Empire—Canada—Australasia—South Africa—The Crown Colonies—India.

The state of war with Germany, officially declared by Britain as from 11 p.m. of Tuesday, 4th August, did not in itself commit us to sending an Expeditionary Force to the Continent, and there is reason to believe that at first the Cabinet were far from unanimous on the desirability of such a step. But the unmistakable trend of public feeling, and the assurances of the French Government that they counted upon our military co-operation, made the expedition inevitable. On 3rd August the army had been mobilized; on 5th August Lord Kitchener, whose return to Egypt had been countermanded at the end of the previous week, was appointed Secretary of State for War; on 6th August the House of Commons in five minutes passed a vote of credit for £100,000,000, and sanctioned an increase of the army by 500,000 men. Urgent preparations were made for the departure of our force. The railways had been taken over by the Government, and troops were hurried down, mostly under cover of night, to various points of embarkation. A very proper secrecy was maintained, and the people of Britain knew nothing of the crossing of the Expeditionary Force till it was over, though full reports were published in American and Italian papers as early as the 9th of August.

Aug. 3.

Aug. 5.

Aug. 6.

The embarkation began on the night of 7th August, as soon as Admiral Jellicoe had guaranteed the safety of the Channel passage. The Aldershot Division was the first to go, and within ten days the whole of the force, something between 150,000 and 160,000 men, had landed at various ports in France. This splendid feat of transportation was performed without the slightest hitch. The main port used was Southampton, but troops were also sent from the other Channel ports, from Avonmouth and the Bristol Channel, from Dublin, and from some of the ports on the south-east coast. Each vessel was in charge of a British naval officer. For the infantry most of the cross-Channel steamers

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were utilized, as well as the Holyhead-North-Wall steamers, the Fishguard boats, most of the vessels of the French, Harwich-Hook of Holland, Antwerp, and Hamburg lines, and a number of east-coast passenger steamers. One great Atlantic liner carried 3,000 men on one journey. The men were packed like Bank Holiday excursionists, for the weather was perfect. For guns, horses, and stores, tramps and minor passenger boats were collected from every port. The time of crossing varied from eight to fifteen hours. There was no covering fleet, the Grand Fleet in the North Sea being sufficient protection; but the British and French navies supplied a number of destroyers as scouts and messengers, and airships and seaplanes from the Naval Air Service kept watch in the sky.

A word should be said of the performance of the British railways. Take the case of the London and South-Western line. It was ordered to make ready within sixty hours to dispatch to Southampton 350 trains, each of thirty cars. It accomplished the work in forty-five hours. During the first three weeks of war there were dispatched and unloaded at the ships' sides seventy-three of such trains every fourteen hours. These trains arrived from every part of the country every ten minutes, and ran up to their scheduled times. It may well be claimed that this was a record in railway history.

The disembarkation on the French coast was managed with a like efficiency. Officers from the French General Staff journeyed to London upon the Tuesday, and the plan agreed upon worked to perfection. It had been arranged that the British force should take its place on the French left; and the first inland point of concentration was Amiens, though some of the later detachments were sent to places farther east as the advance of the French field army developed. On Monday, 17th August, it was officially announced in the English press that the whole of the Expeditionary Force was safely landed in France. Each man carried with him a short message from Lord Kitchener, which admirably summed up the duties of the British soldier in war:—

Aug. 17.

“You are ordered abroad as a soldier of the King to help our French comrades against the invasion of a common enemy. You have to perform a task which will need your courage, your energy, your patience.

“Remember that the honour of the British army depends on your individual conduct. It will be your duty, not only to set an example of discipline and perfect steadiness under fire, but also to maintain the most friendly relations with those whom you are helping in this struggle. The operations in which you are engaged will, for the most part, take place in

a friendly country, and you can do your own country no better service than in showing yourself in France and Belgium in the true character of a British soldier.

“Be invariably courteous, considerate, and kind. Never do anything likely to injure or destroy property, and always look upon looting as a disgraceful act. You are sure to meet with a welcome, and to be trusted; your conduct must justify that welcome and that trust. Your duty cannot be done unless your health is sound. So keep constantly on your guard against any excesses. In this new experience you may find temptations in wine and women. You must entirely resist both temptations, and, while treating all women with perfect courtesy, you should avoid any intimacy.

“Do your duty bravely.

“Fear God.

“Honour the King.

“KITCHENER, Field-Marshal.”

The scene at Boulogne, where not less than 40,000 of the troops disembarked, including the Seaforths, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the 9th Lancers, and much of the Artillery, may be taken as a type of what happened. It was just over a hundred years since a British army had landed to fight in Western Europe, but the scene was very different from that before Waterloo, when officers' wives and friends and idle spectators came over to see the show. Jos Sedley with his carriage, the Bareacres's *ménage*, and the ladies of Captain Osborne and Captain Rawdon Crawley had no counterparts in this severe and businesslike expedition. Since the Monday when war became inevitable much anxiety had been felt about the attitude of Britain. As the French mobilization proceeded, military enthusiasm awoke; it was realized that France was entering upon her greatest struggle, and, though Sir Edward Grey had pledged our help by sea, it was help by land that seemed to the ordinary man to count for most. On the 4th and the 5th, eager eyes watched the destroyers and cruisers in the Channel. Were the English coming, or would they remain secure in their island while their allies were sacrificing homes and fortunes and lives for the common cause?

For a moment the life of an Englishman in Boulogne became difficult, the educated inhabitants looked askance at him, as if Albion had not yet outgrown her perfidy. Only the fisher-folk kept their confidence. They had been to Aberdeen, and Ramsgate, and Plymouth, and their *confrères* there had always told them that the English would come. “Vous allez voir arriver les *Ing*lais bientôt et plus vite que ça!”

At last, on the morning of Sunday, 9th August, two transports were sighted making for the harbour. It was “les *Inglais*” at last, and the fishermen were justified. Instantly opinion swung round to the opposite pole, and the name of Briton was a passport in Boulogne that day. The landing of the troops awakened wild enthusiasm. The geniality and fine physique of the men, and their gentleness to women and children; the cavalryman’s care of his horses; above all the Highlanders, who are heroes of nursery tales in France, went to the hearts of the people. The old alliance with Scotland was remembered, the days when Buchan and Douglas led the chivalry of France. The badges and numbers of the men were begged for keepsakes, and homely delicacies were pressed upon them in return. Many a Highlander was of the opinion which Alan Breck expressed to David Balfour, “They’re a real bonny folk, the French nation.” Our cavalry were encamped at Ostrohove, just above the Villa Josephine of famous memory. But if we seek for dramatic moments, we shall find them in that midnight Mass, celebrated by the English-speaking clergy of Boulogne for our Catholic soldiers, at the Camp Malbrouck round the Colonne de la Grande Armée. The name recalls the greatest of British generals; on that spot Napoleon meditated the invasion of England; and—happier omen—there was first assembled the Grand Army, the army of Ulm and Austerlitz and Jena.

Aug. 9.

The dispatch of the Expeditionary Force was but the beginning of the great muster of the manhood of the British Empire. In Britain old political animosities were laid to sleep, and at a breath the differences not less deep which separated parties and races in the Oversea Dominions passed out of existence. In normal times our Empire is a loose friendly aggregation, more conscious of its looseness than of its unity. The South African War had given it a momentary solidarity of spirit; but with peace the fervour passed, and each colony and dominion went busily on its own road. Workers for union throughout the Empire found themselves faced with many strong centrifugal forces, and had often reason to despair of making their dream a reality. To foreign observers, who could not discern the hidden strength, it seemed as if the Empire were moving towards an amicable dissolution, or, at the best, a weak alliance of independent nations.

This was notably the view held in Germany. Britain, in German eyes, had not the vitality to organize her territories for a common purpose. Canada was drifting towards the United States; Australasia and South Africa towards complete separation; and India was a powder magazine needing but a spark to blow sky-high the jerry-built fabric of British authority. The view was natural, for to Germany

empire meant a machine, where each part was under the exact control of a central power. To her local autonomy seemed only a confession of weakness, and the bonds of kinship an idle sentiment. The British conception of empire, on the other hand, was the reverse of mechanical. We believed that the liberty of the parts was necessary to the stability of the whole, and that our Empire, which had grown “as the trees grow while men sleep,” was a living organism far more enduring than any machine. We had blundered often, but we had never lost sight of the ideals of Burke and Chatham. Professor Cramb has described in eloquent words the spirit of British imperialism at its best:—

“If I were asked, how one could describe in a sentence the general aim of British imperialism . . . I should answer . . . to give all men within its borders an English mind; to give all who come within its sway the power to look at the things of man’s life, at the past, at the future, from the standpoint of an Englishman; to diffuse within its bounds that high tolerance in religion which has marked this Empire from its foundation; that reverence yet boldness before the mysteriousness of life and death, characteristic of our great poets and our great thinkers; that love of free institutions, that pursuit of ever higher justice and a larger freedom, which, rightly or wrongly, we associate with the temper and character of our race, wherever it is dominant and secure . . . To give all men within its bounds an English mind—that has been the purpose of our Empire in the past. He who speaks of England’s greatness speaks of this. Her renown, her glory, it is this, undying, imperishable, in the strictest sense of that word. For if, in some cataclysm of nature, these islands and all that they embrace were overwhelmed and sunk in sea-oblivion, if to-morrow’s sun rose upon an Englandless world, still this spirit and this purpose in other lands would fare on untouched amid the wreck.”

We had created a spiritual bond,

“Which, softness’ self, is yet the stuff
To hold fast where a steel chain snaps.”

By the gift of liberty we had made the conquered our equals and our allies, and the very men we had fought and beaten became in our extremity our passionate defenders.

The response of the Empire is a landmark in our history, far greater, perhaps,

than the war which was its cause. No man can read without emotion the tale of those early days in August, when from every quarter of the globe there poured in appeals for the right to share in our struggle. Canada, the "eldest daughter" of the Empire, had many sections of her people who in the past had disclaimed any responsibility for our foreign policy, and had hugged the notion of Canadian aloofness in a European war. Suddenly these voices died away. She had been passing through a time of severe economic troubles; these were forgotten, and all her resources were flung open to the Mother country. Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier united their forces, and party activity ceased. The Canadian defence scheme provided for a Regular force, called the Permanent Militia, with a peace strength of 270 officers and 2,700 of other ranks; the Active Militia, corresponding to our Territorial Force, with a nominal strength of 2,850 officers and 44,500 men; the North-west Mounted Police, with 650 men; and a large number of rifle associations and cadet corps. As in the South African War, a field force was promptly offered, and a division of all arms was accepted by the British Government. The call for volunteers was responded to with wild enthusiasm. In a few days more than 100,000 men had offered themselves. Old members of Strathcona's Horse and the Royal Canadians clamoured for re-enlistment; rich citizens vied with each other in providing equipment and batteries; and large sums were raised to provide for the dependants of those who were to serve. Every public man in Canada played his part. French-Canadians stood side by side with the descendants of the Family Compact; and the men of the western plains, the best shots and the hardest riders on earth, journeyed great distances to offer their services to the King. One instance may be quoted as a type of this determined spirit. Two hundred frontiersmen from Moosejaw could not be enlisted, as they wanted to go as cavalry, and the cavalry were full. Nothing daunted, they took the road at their own expense and came to Ottawa, where they purchased their own outfits, and announced that if they were not accepted for service they would hire a cattle-ship and sail for Europe. The United States had already displayed, through her press and the utterances of her statesmen, a warm friendship for the British cause; and it is pleasant to note that 60,000 of her citizens offered themselves for enlistment in the Canadian army, while American residents in Canada contributed liberally to relief and equipment funds. The various Canadian steamship companies offered their vessels to the British Government for transport. The Canadian cruisers *Niobe* and *Rainbow* were handed over to the Admiralty for purposes of commerce protection, and two submarines were offered for general service. Newfoundland increased her Naval Reserve strength to 1,000, and sent 500 men to the Expeditionary Force.

Australia and New Zealand, which possessed a system of national service, were

not behind Canada in loyalty. That system was not yet fully developed to the point when it could provide a total of 150,000 trained men; but, in the words of Mr. Fisher, Australia was ready to support Britain with her last man and her last shilling. She placed all the vessels of the Australian navy at the Admiralty's disposal, and undertook to raise and equip an Expeditionary Force of 20,000 men and a Light Horse Brigade of 6,000. The New Zealand Expeditionary Force was fixed at 8,000 of all arms, and 200 Maoris were accepted for service in Egypt. In South Africa the people had had unique experience of war, and both British and Dutch were eager to join the British field army. Many old officers of Boer commandos came to London to enlist, and the home-coming steamers were full of lean, sunburnt young men from Rhodesia bent on the same errand. The chiefs of the Basutos and the Barotses offered their aid; as did the East African Masai, the chiefs of the Baganda, and the emirs of Northern Nigeria. The Union Government released all British troops for service out of South Africa, and, amid immense popular enthusiasm, General Botha called out the local levies for a campaign against German South-West Africa, and put himself at their head. The most brilliant of Britain's recent opponents in the field had become a British general.

Besides these offers of men and money, help in kind was sent from every corner of the Empire. The smaller Crown colonies which could not provide troops could at any rate send supplies. The Canadian Government offered 98,000,000 pounds of flour, to which Manitoba and Ontario added further contributions; Alberta and Prince Edward Island sent oats, Nova Scotia coal, Quebec cheese, New Brunswick potatoes, British Columbia tinned salmon, and Saskatchewan horses. Australia sent wine, butter, bacon, beef, and condensed milk, and South Africa maize. From Barbadoes, the Falkland Islands, the Leeward Islands, and the Windward Islands came gifts of money; tea from Ceylon; sugar from British Guiana and Mauritius. No unit of the Empire, however small or however remote, was backward in this noble emulation.

But it was the performance of India which took the world by surprise and thrilled every British heart—India, whose alleged disloyalty was the main factor in German calculations. There were roughly 70,000 British troops on the Indian establishment, and a native army consisting of 130 regiments of infantry, 39 regiments of cavalry, the Corps of Guides, and ten regiments of Gurkhas, who were mercenaries hired from the independent kingdom of Nepal. The native army was composed of various race and caste regiments, representing the many Indian peoples who in the past century and a half had been brought under the sway of the British Raj. Chief among them were the Sikhs, that warrior caste of the Punjab who resisted us so fiercely at

Aliwal and Sobraon, and since then have stood staunchly by our side in every Asian war. Next in numbers came the Punjabi Mussalmans, and the Pathan and Baluchi regiments, formed from the fighting hill tribes of the North-West Frontier. Among the high-caste Hindus we had the fine Brahman troops, the Dogras of the Punjab, and those martial races the Rajputs and the Mahrattas. The Gurkhas, the little square men in dull green, who could march tirelessly and shoot marvellously, were mountaineers from the Eastern Himalaya, and in creed might be described as Hindus without prejudices. Well-nigh a century of constant fighting, and the comradeship of British officers and men, had made of this army a fighting weapon equal to any of its size in the world. In a war for the existence of the Empire it was inevitable that the Indian army, one of the strongest of the Empire's forces, should be given a share. Moreover, it had an old grudge against the Germans. Indian troops had accompanied the Allies, under von Waldersee, to China in 1900, and had been contemptuously used by German men and officers. The oldest and proudest races on earth, accustomed to be treated on equal terms by English gentlemen, resented the German talk of "coolies" and "niggers," and the memory of an Indian soldier is long.

From the Indian army it was announced that two infantry divisions and one cavalry brigade would be dispatched at once to the seat of war in Europe, while three more cavalry brigades would follow. Meantime the rulers and princes of India had placed their resources at the King-Emperor's call. The twenty-seven larger native states, which maintained Imperial Service troops, offered their armies, and from twelve of these the Viceroy accepted contingents of cavalry, infantry, sappers, and transport, besides a camel corps from Bikanir. Various durbars combined to provide a hospital ship. The Maharaja of Mysore gave fifty lakhs of rupees (£330,000) to go to the equipment of the Expeditionary Force. Large sums of money and thousands of horses came from Gwalior and Bhopal. Little hill states in the Punjab and Baluchistan gave camels and drivers. The Maharaja of Rewa offered his troops, his treasury, and even his private jewels, and asked simply, "What orders has my King for me?" The chiefs of the Khyber and Chitral tribes sent messages proffering help; Kashmir sent money, as did every chief in the Bombay Presidency; while the Maharaja Holkar offered the horses of his army. Tiny statelets, islanded in the forests of Central India, clamoured to share. From beyond the border, Nepal placed her incomparable Gurkhas at the service of Britain, and gave three lakhs of rupees to purchase field guns. And the Dalai Lama, forgetting the march to Lhasa, and remembering only our hospitality during his exile, offered 1,000 Tibetan troops, and informed the King that Lamas through the length and breadth of Tibet were

offering prayers for the success of the British arms and for the happiness of the souls of the fallen. Nor was this all. Every league of Indians throughout the world sent their blessings on the campaign. The long and bitter Nationalist agitation disappeared as if by magic, and men like Mr. Tilak, who had served a sentence of imprisonment for sedition, and political leaders like Mr. Lajpat Rai and Mr. Surendranath Banerjee summoned their countrymen to rally to Britain's aid. The small farmers of the south sent their horses; Bengalis, who could not enlist, organized ambulances and hospitals; and peasant women throughout all India, not content with giving their sons and brothers to the cause, offered the humble jewels which are their only wealth. Such depths of sacrifice are too sacred for common praise. The British soldiers and civilians who had found lonely graves between the Himalaya and Cape Comorin had not lived and died in vain, when the result of their toil was this splendid and unfaltering loyalty.

Almost every Indian chief offered personal service in the field, and when no other way was possible we find the Aga Khan, the spiritual ruler of 60,000,000 souls, volunteering to fight as a private in the ranks. It was wisely decided that some of the great princes should accompany their men, and show by their presence in the West that India and Britain were one. To read the list of those selected is to see as in a pageant the tale of British India. First came Sir Pertab Singh, a major-general in the British army, who long ago swore that he would not die in his bed, and now, at seventy years of age, rode out to the last and greatest of his wars. With him went other gallant Rajputs, the Maharajas of Bikanir and Jodhpur; the young Maharaja of Patiala, the head of the Sikhs; the chiefs of the great Mohammedan states of Bhopal, Jaoram, and Sachin; the Maharaja of Kisangarh; the Raja of Ratlam; the Malik Umar Hayat; and the brother of the young Maharaja of Cooch Behar. Every great name in India was represented in this chivalry; and never in India's history had such a muster been seen. Chiefs whose ancestry went back to the days of Alexander, and whose forefathers had warred against each other and against Britain on many a desperate field, were now assembled with one spirit and one purpose and under one king.

The effect upon the people of Britain of this amazing rally of the Empire was a sense of an immense new comradeship which brought tears to the eyes of the least emotional. For, consider what it meant. Geographically it brought under one banner the trapper of Athabasca, the stockman of Victoria, the Dutch farmer from the backveld, the tribesman from the Khyber, the gillie from the Scottish hills, and the youth from a London back street. Racially it united Mongol and Aryan, Teuton and Celt; politically it drew to the side of the Canadian democrat the Indian feudatory whose

land was still mediæval; spiritually it joined Christianity in all its forms with the creeds of Islam, Buddha, Brahma, and a thousand little unknown gods. The British Empire had revealed itself at last as that wonderful thing for which its makers had striven and prayed—a union based not upon statute and officialdom, but upon the eternal simplicities of the human spirit. Small wonder that the news stimulated recruiting in England. Every young man with blood in his veins felt that in such a cause and in such a company it was just and pleasant to give his all.

And what shall we say of the effect of this muster upon our allies across the Channel? We can learn dimly from the French papers the profound impression it made upon an imaginative people. No longer, as in 1870, did France stand alone. The German armies might be thundering at her gates, and the fields of Belgium soaked in blood, but the avenger was drawing nigh. The uncounted man-power of the British Empire was beating to arms, and the ends of the earth were hastening to her aid.

CHAPTER V.

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR AT SEA.

The British Navy—The German Navy—The Austrian Navy—The French Navy—The Russian Navy—Relative Strength of Britain and Germany—Nature of German Seaboard—German Strategy—British Fleet placed on a War Footing—Admiral Sir John Jellicoe—The First Shots in the North Sea—The *Goeben* and the *Breslau*—Destruction of German Commerce—Japan declares War.

The landing of the British Expeditionary Force in France and the utilization of the resources of the Empire depended upon our retaining a sufficient control of the sea-routes of the world. The security of British territory and the provision of food for our people were in the keeping of our navy. Further, since our chief antagonist was the second greatest of the Sea Powers, the war must be conducted by water as well as by land. "It is upon the navy," it is set forth in the Articles of War, "that, under the good Providence of God, the wealth, prosperity, and peace of these islands and of the Empire do mainly depend." We must briefly consider the naval position of the different combatants at the beginning of August.

The British navy at that date had reached a point of efficiency both in quality and quantity which was unprecedented in its history. It is true that the growth of German sea-power had relatively reduced its pre-eminence, but the existence of a bold claimant for the Empire of the Ocean had stimulated the spirit of our fleet, and perfected its organization for war. This is not the place to enter into the interminable discussions which since 1906 had raged around the subject. The attempts at reduction, happily frustrated, may well be relegated to oblivion. Ever since Lord Selborne's period at the Admiralty a steady advance may be noted in training and equipment. The establishment of the Royal Fleet Reserve and the Volunteer Naval Reserve, the provision of North Sea bases, the admirable work done by the Committee of Imperial Defence, the development of armament and of battleship designing, the immense improvement in gunnery practice, the revision of the rates of pay, the opening up of careers for the lower deck, and the provision of a naval air service, are landmarks in the advance. Much was due to Lord Fisher and the other Sea Lords; something was due, also, to the civilian First Lords, Mr. M'Kenna and Mr. Winston Churchill. The latter especially flung himself into the work of his

department with a zeal and intelligence which were of incalculable value to the country in the hour of need. In the Navy Estimates of March 1914, Parliament sanctioned over fifty-one millions for naval defence—the largest sum ever granted for the purpose.

The Home Fleet, available for the war in the North Sea, was arranged in three units. The First Fleet was divided into four battle squadrons, together with the flagship of the commander-in-chief. The first squadron was made up of eight battleships—Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts—seven of which carried ten 12-inch guns, while one, the *Marlborough*, had ten 13.5-inch guns, besides secondary armaments. The second squadron contained eight super-Dreadnoughts, each armed with ten 13.5-inch guns. The third squadron was composed of eight pre-Dreadnoughts of the *King Edward VII.* class, carrying four 12-inch, four 9.2 inch, and ten 6-inch guns. The fourth squadron consisted of three Dreadnoughts, each carrying ten 12-inch guns, and one pre-Dreadnought, carrying four 12-inch and ten 9.2-inch guns. Attached to the First Fleet was a battle-cruiser squadron of four ships, three of which carried eight 13.5-inch guns, and the fourth eight 12-inch guns; the second cruiser squadron of four armoured cruisers; the third cruiser squadron of four cruisers of the *Devonshire* class; the fourth cruiser squadron of four ships of the *Monmouth* class, and one light cruiser, the *Bristol*; the first light cruiser squadron; a squadron of six gunboats for mine-sweeping; and four flotillas of destroyers, each with a flotilla cruiser attached. This, the first line of defence of our shores, had behind it the Second Fleet, which had two battle squadrons, the first consisting of eight pre-Dreadnoughts and the second of six. It contained also the fifth and sixth cruiser squadrons; a mine-layer squadron of seven vessels; four patrol flotillas consisting of destroyers and torpedo-boats; and seven flotillas of submarines. Behind the Second Fleet came the Third, containing two battle squadrons, mainly composed of comparatively old ships, and six cruiser squadrons.

Our strength outside home waters may be very roughly summarized. In the Mediterranean fleet we had three battle cruisers, four armoured cruisers, four ordinary cruisers, and a flotilla of seventeen destroyers, besides submarines and torpedo boats. In Eastern waters we had a battleship, two cruisers, and four sloops in the East India squadron; a battleship, two armoured cruisers, two cruisers, a number of gunboats, eight destroyers, besides submarines and torpedo boats, in the China squadron; and four cruisers in the New Zealand division. The Australian fleet showed a battle cruiser, three cruisers, three destroyers, and two submarines. Various cruisers and gunboats were stationed at the Cape, the west coast of Africa, and the east and west coasts of America, while four armoured cruisers and one

ordinary cruiser patrolled the Western Atlantic.

To arrive at our total naval strength we must add the two destroyers purchased from Chile, and the two Turkish battleships, building in England, which were commandeered by the British Government at the outbreak of war. This would give us the following figures for the principal classes:—

BATTLESHIPS AND BATTLE CRUISERS.

Super-Dreadnought type	14
Dreadnought type	18
Pre-Dreadnought types (1895-1908)	38
Super-Dreadnoughts completing	3
	—
Total	73
Armoured cruisers (1901-1908)	34
Cruisers (1890-1914)	87
Destroyers (1893-1914)	227
Torpedo-boats (1885-1908)	109
Submarines (1904-1913)	75

The German navy, the second in the world, was a creation of the past fifteen years, deliberately undertaken for the purpose of challenging British supremacy. The chief begetter was an obscure naval officer called Tirpitz, who in 1897 succeeded Admiral von Hollmann as Naval Minister. With the support of the Emperor, he began to wring money for the navy out of a reluctant Treasury, and in the face of a jealous army; and, by dint of a skilful press campaign, succeeded in arousing in the German people a new enthusiasm for maritime power. At the outbreak of war he had held office for fifteen years, and had built up a navy which in *matériel* and *personnel* was second only to one—a marvellous performance for so short a period. The High Sea Fleet consisted of twenty-one battleships, thirteen of them of the Dreadnought type, four battle cruisers, eight light cruisers, and eighty torpedo boats. The total naval strength was—

BATTLESHIPS AND BATTLE CRUISERS.

Dreadnought type	13
” (completing)	3

Pre-Dreadnought (1891-1908)	22
Old types (1889-1893)	8
	—
Total	46

Armoured cruisers (1892-1913)	40
Cruisers (1893-1910)	12
Destroyers (1889-1913)	152
Torpedo-boats (1887-1898)	45
Submarines	40

The German navy was originally regarded as a branch of the army; naval strategy was conceived of only as an auxiliary to land strategy, and ships were units for coast defence. It had been the task of the modern German sea-lords to emancipate the fleet from the military tradition. The result was that the navy had become a far more democratic profession than the sister service, and had drawn to it many able men of middle-class birth who were repelled by the junkerdom of the army. It was manned chiefly by conscription; but about a quarter consisted of volunteers, chiefly dwellers on the coast and on the Frisian and Baltic islands, and men who had deliberately made it their career. The term of service for conscripts was three years, and the training, concentrated in so short a space, was strenuous and highly specialized. The officers were almost to a man professional enthusiasts; and our own sailors, who had fraternized with them in foreign ports, had borne witness to their efficiency and seamanlike spirit.



Map of Naval Bases of the Belligerent Powers.

The navy of Austria-Hungary had expanded in recent years like that of her ally. Under the inspiration of Admiral Montecuccoli naval expenditure was trebled in the last ten years, and an elaborate shipbuilding programme undertaken. On the outbreak of war the fleet comprised fifteen battleships, three of them being Dreadnoughts, two armoured and nine light cruisers, fifteen destroyers, fifty-eight torpedo boats, and six submarines. The Dual Monarchy possessed three main naval stations in the Adriatic—Pola, the fleet's headquarters, Trieste, and the Hungarian port of Fiume—while an additional station had been established at Sebenico in Dalmatia.

The French navy had in the matter of invention given the lead to the world, but till recently its size had not kept pace with the quality of its officers, and it had dropped from second to fifth place among the navies of the world. When Admiral Boué de Lapeyrère became Minister of Marine a great upward movement began, and this was continued under M. Delcassé, who insisted that France must possess a fleet to give her indubitable supremacy in the Mediterranean. When Admiral Boué de Lapeyrère became commander-in-chief of the navy he gathered about him a brilliant coterie of young flag-officers, and sea-training and gunnery made rapid strides. At the beginning of the war France had twenty-four battleships, including ten

Dreadnoughts, armed with 12-inch guns, twenty-four cruisers, eight light cruisers, eighty destroyers, 140 torpedo boats, and some fifty submarines, the two last classes representing the very latest types. Her principal base was Toulon on the Mediterranean, and she had also Rochefort on the Bay of Biscay, Brest and Lorient on the Atlantic, Cherbourg on the Channel, as well as Ajaccio and Bonifacio in Corsica, Algiers and Oran in Algeria, and Bizerta in Tunis.

Russia, after the war with Japan, was faced with the problem of constructing her navy anew, and by August 1914 the reconstruction was far from complete. The Navy Bill of 1912 had provided for the expenditure of £50,000,000 on a building programme to be completed in 1917, and she had aimed at creating a powerful Baltic battle fleet, which should be scarcely inferior to any power Germany could place in those waters. But this policy was not given time to mature. On the outbreak of war she had in the Baltic only four Dreadnoughts, ten armoured cruisers, two light cruisers, eighty destroyers, and twenty-four submarines, and a fleet of about half the strength in the Black Sea. Its bases were Kronstadt, an ice-bound port in winter, the minor ice-free base of Libau, and Sveaborg for torpedo craft. The projected ice-free base of Reval was not yet completed.

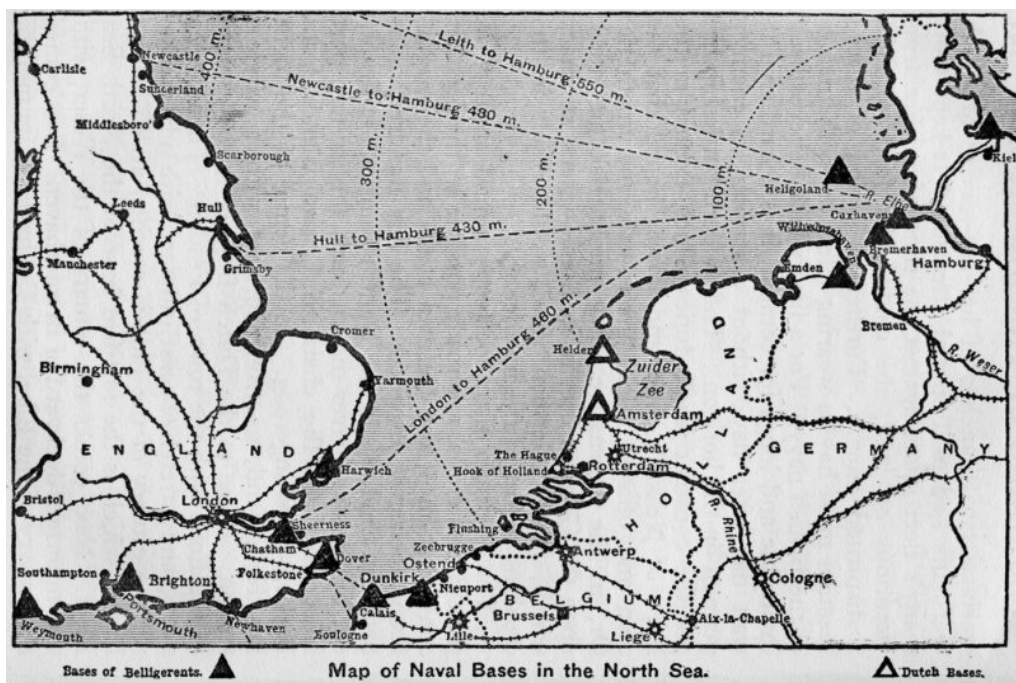
The mere enumeration of ships does not give any real clue to the effective naval strength of a Power at any one moment, since much depends upon where the fleets are chiefly concentrated. To take the Mediterranean first, the union of France and Britain made the Allies easily superior there; for, if Italy remained neutral, the Austrian navy could be shut up securely in the Adriatic. This superiority was needed, if France were to transport her African troops in safety and British commerce were to be free to continue the Suez Canal route to India and the East. But the vital theatre of the naval war was the North Sea and the Baltic, where Germany had all her fleet, except one battle cruiser (the famous *Goeben*), two armoured cruisers, and a few light cruisers.

The German seaboard is divided by the peninsula of Denmark into two completely separate areas—the North Sea and the Baltic coasts. The entrance to the Baltic was virtually closed to an enemy from the west, as the Sound and the Great Belt had been mined by Denmark, a neutral, and an enemy's fleet was forbidden to seek neutral pilotage. At the same time, passage between the two seas was possible for Germany by means of the Kiel Canal, widened in 1914 so as to admit the largest battleships, and running from Kiel Bay on the Baltic to the estuary of the Elbe. A certain portion of the German fleet must remain in the Baltic to watch

the Russian fleet and protect the north coast of Prussia; but this portion need not be fixed, but could be added to or subtracted from at pleasure.

The strength of Russia lay chiefly in torpedo craft, and the German Baltic fleet was, therefore, likely to be composed of fast cruisers and destroyers. At the outbreak of war it seems to have consisted of nine of the older battleships, several armoured, and one or two smaller cruisers, and a number of destroyers, from which it would appear that Germany contemplated using the Baltic as an exercise ground, since the high seas were forbidden her.

The German High Sea Fleet was inferior to the British Home Fleet, so far as capital ships were concerned, by more than 40 per cent., and this inferiority was much greater in the class of cruisers and destroyers. It was, therefore, the aim of Admiral von Ingenohl to avoid a battle, until he had reduced our lead by the slow attrition which submarines, mines, and the casualties of the sea might be expected to produce. The policy of a sudden raid—that “day” which German naval officers had regularly toasted, under the inspiration of Admiral Livonius’s heroics—was made almost impossible by the manner in which war broke out and the complete preparedness of the British at sea. The Fabian line of strategy had many advantages from the German point of view. It gave ample scope for the ingenuity and boldness of mine-layers and submarines, two branches of her sea-service to which Germany had paid special attention. It kept Germany’s fleet intact against the time when, her arms victorious on land, she could sally forth to fight a dispirited enemy. Further, a period of forced inaction must have a wearing effect upon the nerves of the British navy. For a fleet which believes itself invincible and longs for combat, it is a hard trial to wait day after day without descrying an enemy’s pennon on the horizon. The modern battleship has not the constant small duties which existed in the ships of Nelson’s time, and it was hoped that the men and officers might grow stale and apathetic. Or, in the alternative, they might risk an attack upon the German fleet in its home waters, an attack which, in the German view, would result in the crushing defeat of the invader.



Map of Naval Bases in the North Sea.

The German plan, perfectly sound strategy in the circumstances, was made possible by the peculiar configuration of the German coast, and the magnificent shelter it provided. The few hundred miles between Emden and the Danish frontier are deeply cut by bays and river mouths, and the western part is screened by the chain of Frisian islands from Borkum to Wangeroog. In the centre of the bight lies Heligoland, a strong fortress with a wireless station. Close to the Dutch frontier is the estuary of the Ems, with the town of Emden. Then comes a low, sandy stretch of coast, indented with tidal creeks, till the estuary of the Jade is reached at Wilhelmshaven, which is the fortified base of the North Sea Fleet. Next comes the estuary of the Weser, with the important dockyard of Bremerhaven. Last comes the estuary of the Elbe, with Cuxhaven at its mouth, opposite the debouchment of the Kiel Canal, and at its head the great city and dockyard of Hamburg. Each estuary is a network of mazy channels among the sands, requiring skilful piloting, and in themselves a strong defence against a raid. There is, further, the screen of the islands, behind which operations could take place unnoticed, and there is the Kiel Canal to furnish a back-door to the Baltic. The coast is followed by a double line of railway from Hamburg to Emden, which taps no populous district and carries no traffic, but is meant solely for strategic purposes. This Frisian corner was the key to German

naval defence. Visitors had always been shepherded away from vital points, and the notion of espionage there had given the German people sleepless nights. Captain Bertrand Stewart, an English Territorial officer—the first to give his life in this war—was condemned to three years' imprisonment in a fortress on the charge of visiting various towns and islands where he had never set foot; and so feverish was public and official feeling in Germany on the subject that the evidence of a single and much discredited spy was sufficient to secure this officer's conviction without a word of German protest.

At the great review of the British fleet in July two hundred and sixteen ships of war passed before the King—only half the total number, but in itself the most powerful fleet ever mustered in British waters in a state of instant readiness for battle. Though diplomacy had not yet broken down, the conduct of Germany had given the chiefs of the navy much to think about. It had been reported on good authority that the German fleet was being placed on a war footing, that certain German liners which could be used as transports or auxiliary cruisers had altered or cancelled their sailings, and that German naval officers in foreign countries had been recalled. No sooner was the review over than our work of preparation began. The squadrons went to the stations appointed to them, took in war stores, and sent ashore whatever might impede them in battle. On Monday, 3rd August, at the memorable Cabinet meeting which decided British policy, Mr. Churchill was able to inform his colleagues that that morning the last steps had been taken, and that the whole sea power of Britain was in readiness for war.

Aug. 3.

From that moment the fleet disappeared. Dwellers on our southern and eastern coasts in the bright weather of early August could see an occasional cruiser or destroyer speeding on some errand, or an escorted mine-sweeper busy at its perilous task. But the great battleships had gone. Somewhere out on the blue waters, or hidden in some nook of our northern or western shores, lay the vigilant admirals of England.

The British fleet had not fought a great battle at sea since Trafalgar. Since those days, only a century removed in time, we had changed the conditions of naval warfare more than they had changed between Themistocles and Nelson. The old wooden walls, the unrifled guns, the boarders with their cutlasses, belonged to an earlier world. We had no longer to scour the ocean for the enemy's fleet. Wireless telegraphy, aerial reconnaissance, and swift destroyers brought us early news of a foe. The gun power of a modern battleship would have wrecked the Spanish

Armada with one broadside, and the enemy could now be engaged at a distance of many miles. Sea fighting was no more the clean and straightforward business of the old days. Destruction dwelt in every element when there was no sign of a hostile pennon. Aircraft dropped bombs from the clouds; unseen submarines, like sword-fish, pierced the hull from the depths; and anywhere might lurk those mines which destroyed, like some convulsion of nature, with no human enemy near. We had to fight under new conditions, with new strategy and new weapons, with far greater demands on the intellect and a far more deadly strain on the nerves. Most things had changed, but two things remained unaltered—the cool daring of our sailors and the conviction that the seas were the unquestionable heritage of our race.

To the command of the fleet there had been appointed Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, with Rear-Admiral Charles Madden as his Chief of Staff. Those who shared R. L. Stevenson's view as to the racy nomenclature of British seamen must have found something reassuring in the name of the new commander-in-chief. Admiral Jellicoe had served as a lieutenant in the Egyptian War of 1882. Specializing in gunnery, he had become a commander in 1891, and was one of the few survivors of the ill-fated *Victoria*, which went down off the Syrian coast. He became a captain in 1897, and served on the China station, commanding the Naval Brigade and acting as chief staff officer at the Peking expedition of 1900, where he was severely wounded. Thereafter he became successively Naval Assistant to the Controller of the Navy, Director of Naval Ordnance and Torpedoes, Rear-Admiral in the Atlantic Fleet, a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty, and Controller of the Navy, Vice-Admiral commanding the Atlantic Fleet, Vice-Admiral commanding the Second Division of the Home Fleet, and second Sea Lord of the Admiralty. He brilliantly distinguished himself by the command of the "Red" Fleet at the naval manœuvres of 1913. Rear-Admiral Madden, his Chief of Staff, who was also his brother-in-law, had already served with him at the Admiralty. Sir John Jellicoe was one of the officers chiefly responsible for the modern navy of Britain, and enjoyed not only the admiration and complete confidence of his colleagues, but a peculiar popularity among all grades of British seamen. His nerve and self-possession were not less conspicuous than his professional skill, and in the wearing months ahead of him he had need of all resources of mind and character.

Those who expected a speedy and decisive Trafalgar in the south end of the North Sea were doomed to disappointment. Admiral von Ingenohl was too wise a commander to indulge in quixotic adventures. But the day after the declaration of war the first shots were fired. German mine-layers, there is reason to believe, had been busy in various pacific guises for the past week, dropping mines over a wide

area extending from opposite Harwich to far up in the Scottish waters. On Wednesday, 5th August, the mine-layer *Koenigen Luise* was overtaken by the destroyer *Lance* and sunk in six minutes. On Thursday morning the British light cruiser *Amphion*, Captain Cecil Fox, struck one of the mines laid by the *Koenigen Luise*, and foundered, with serious loss of life, though the captain, the principal officers, and the larger half of the crew were saved. On Sunday, the 9th, German submarines attacked a cruiser squadron of the main British fleet, without doing any damage, and one submarine was sunk by the protected cruiser *Birmingham*, which steamed straight for it, and ran it down.

Aug. 5.

Aug. 6.

Aug. 9.

Meantime during the week rumours came from the Baltic of a German success off the Aland Isles and the sinking of a Russian battleship, rumours which proved later to be unfounded. On 2nd August, however, the German cruiser *Augsburg* had made an attack on the port of Libau, but the bombardment was weak, and the damage done was insignificant. The aim of such a movement was to force Russia to keep a considerable number of men on the Baltic coast. There was always the danger that Germany might make an attempt on Petrograd by way of Finland.

Aug. 2.

It was in the Mediterranean that during that week the naval interest was keenest. At the outbreak of war two German warships, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, were off the Algerian coast. This can scarcely have come about by accident, and it is not improbable that when these ships received their first sailing orders Germany calculated either upon the assistance of Italy or the neutrality of Britain, and intended her finest battle cruiser to assist in the one case Italy and Austria against France and Britain, or in the other Austria against France. The *Goeben* was the fastest armoured vessel in the German fleet, displacing 22,640 tons, attaining a speed of 28 knots, and carrying as armament ten 11-inch, twelve 5.9-inch, and twelve 21-pounder guns. The *Breslau* was a fast light cruiser, with about the same rate of speed, and a displacement of 4,478 tons. She was the vessel sent by Germany to Albanian waters to join the international squadron which kept the unfortunate Mpret in countenance. Both of these ships had specially great coal capacity, and the *Breslau* could cover 6,000 knots without taking in fresh fuel. They were, therefore, admirably suited for commerce destroyers, and had they continued at large might have done much to embarrass the sea-borne trade of the Allies.

They began by firing a few shots into the unprotected Algerian coast towns of Bona and Philippeville, but did little harm. They then turned north-west, with the object, apparently, of running for the Strait of Gibraltar, but were headed off by the

British fleet. They seem to have shown their pursuers a very clean pair of heels, and early on Wednesday morning, 5th August, appeared at Messina. There they went through a somewhat theatrical performance. The captains and officers made their wills, and deposited their valuables, including signed portraits of the Kaiser, with the German consul; the decks were cleared for action, and with the bands playing "*Heil dir im Siegerkranz*," sailed out—so said the German papers—under a blood-red sunset. But the blood was only in the sunset, for they sought not battle but safety.

Aug. 5.

Escaping by some mischance our fleet, and going at full speed eastward, they encountered, off Cape Matapan, a British cruiser, the *Gloucester*, a ship slightly larger than the *Breslau*, which, with great gallantry, attempted to engage, and damaged the plates of the *Goeben* and the smoke stack of the *Breslau*. But the superior speed of the Germans brought them through. They were next heard of in the Dardanelles at the end of the week. Presently they had reached Constantinople, where they passed into the power of the Turkish Government, and thereby began that disquieting of the diplomatic relations of the Porte which was to end in war. It was not a brilliant achievement for Germany's chief battle cruiser, and for the moment it gravely lowered the prestige of the untried German navy.

But more important than any isolated incident was the swift and methodical sweeping in of the German mercantile marine, which began on 4th August. The blockade, which the more sober of German naval writers had always feared, had come to pass. In every quarter of the globe our cruisers spread their net. German merchantmen in the ports of the Empire were detained, and hundreds of ships were made prizes of in the high and the narrow seas. Some escaped to the shelter of neutral ports, especially those of the United States, but none got back to Germany. In a week German sea-borne commerce had virtually ceased to exist. Without striking a blow, by the sheer menace of our omnipresent navy, we had annihilated the trade of the enemy and protected our own. A few German cruisers and armed merchantmen were still at large, but their number was too small and their life too precarious to affect our commerce. The Government very properly began by guaranteeing part of the risks of maritime insurance; but soon the rates fell of their own accord to a natural level, as it became clear how ample was our security. It was calculated at the outbreak of war that British losses in the first six months might rise to 10 per cent. of vessels engaged in foreign trade. A return issued in the beginning of October showed that of our mercantile marine we had lost up to that date only 1.25 per cent., while Germany and Austria had lost each 10 per cent. of their total shipping.

It is true that no Power has complete command of the sea so long as a hostile fleet remains undestroyed. But if the hostile fleet chooses to shut itself up in port, then, for all practical purposes, and until it comes forth, the command lies with the fleet that keeps the open water. The German fleet behind Heligoland, and the Austrian in Pola, might as well not have existed for all the influence they had on the oceans of the world. Every sea except the Baltic was a *mare clausum* to our enemies, and presently in the Pacific appeared a new ally. On 15th August Japan delivered an ultimatum to Germany, in order, as she put it, to safeguard general interests as contemplated in the Agreement of Alliance between herself and Great Britain. She asked for (1) an immediate withdrawal from Japanese and Chinese waters of all German armed vessels, and (2) the delivery at a date not later than 15th September of the leased territory of Kiao-chau, in order that it might be restored to China. The wheel had come full circle with a vengeance. After the war with China, Germany had interposed to rob Japan of the fruits of her victory, and, on the plea of murdered missionaries, had forced from China the Kiao-chau lease. Now the tables were turned on the aggressor. Japan required an answer by noon on 23rd August, and, not receiving it, promptly declared war, and proceeded to the investment of the Tsingtau peninsula.

Aug. 15.

Aug. 23.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STAND OF BELGIUM.

The German Advance into Belgium—Capture of River Crossings at Huy and Visé—Skirmishes at Haelen, Cortenaeken, Tirlemont, and Enghezee—The Fall of the Last Forts of Liége—The Capture of General Leman—Retreat of the Belgian Army from the River Dyle—German Occupation of Brussels—German Movements in Northern Ardennes—Battle of Dinant—French Offensive in Alsace and Lorraine—Occupation of the Vosges Passes—Capture of Saarburg—German Counter-Offensive and French Retreat.

On 7th August the German advanced guards were in possession of the town of Liége, with the forts silenced which commanded the valleys of the Ourthe and Vesdre, and a clear road, therefore, open from Aix and the Rhine.

On that day, and on the Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, the main armies of von Kluck, in which von Emmich was a corps commander, moved towards Liége, and artillery, stores, and ammunition were accumulated in the city. Meantime, under desultory fire from Belgian outposts, the river at Visé had been bridged by a series of pontoons, and the 2nd Cavalry Division crossed, together with several batteries of field guns. Once the covering cavalry were on the Belgian side, Visé became the centre of a vast transportation movement. By the bridges of Liége and the pontoons of Visé the bulk of von Kluck's army, and much of his heavy artillery, were brought into Belgian soil.

Aug. 7.

Meanwhile detachments from the 2nd Army, under von Buelow, which had concentrated south of von Kluck, were feeling their way up the Meuse valley towards Namur. On Wednesday, the 12th, its advanced guards seized the town of Huy, which stood half-way between Namur and Liége, and was out of the danger zone of the forts of both cities.

Aug. 12.

The old citadel, long dismantled and used as a storehouse, had no guns wherewith to command the bridge; and though Belgian detachments offered some resistance, the Huy crossing was soon in German hands. Part of von Buelow's troops marched up the right bank of the Meuse, but others may have come by rail through the Ardennes from Malmedy. The capture of Huy put the invader astride of the main line from Aix to France by way of Liége; but at present it was little use to him, since the northern

forts of Liège still commanded its most vital point. It gave him, however, a branch line, running direct north from Huy across the plain to Landen and the heart of Belgium.

On Sunday, the 9th, German cavalry had advanced on the east to various points well inside the frontier. The method was the same in most cases.

Cavalry, often preceded by scouts in armed motor cars, entered a town, seized certain prominent citizens as hostages, lowered the

Aug. 9.

Belgian flag, and demanded supplies. The cavalry had only emergency rations, and no supply wagons. There was a good deal of terrorizing, but few serious outrages,

for they had not yet felt the spirit of Belgian resistance. We hear of the 35th Uhlans, from Danzig, at Tongres early on Sunday morning. On Monday, the

10th, the 4th Cavalry Division, coming from Visé, continued the German line to the left, and on Tuesday the German front ran from

Aug. 10.

Hasselt on the right through St. Trond to Waremmé. Meanwhile the Belgian army, under General Selliers de Moranville, reinforced by the troops withdrawn from

Liège, and numbering some 100,000 men, was drawn up along the line of the river Dyle, with Louvain as its headquarters. Various detachments, chiefly cavalry, had

been thrown forward to form an irregular screen against the German advance. On the 11th, word had come of a French movement across the

Sambre, and the Belgian right was extended in the direction of Enghezee, to join hands with it. But the rumour was unfounded; the

Aug. 11.

French mobilization was still in process, and the French commander had decided not to move a brigade till it was completed.

On Wednesday, the 12th, the German cavalry screen came into touch with the Belgians at various places. Its right advanced from Hasselt, down

the little river Gethe, towards the small unfortified town of Diest, with the object of outflanking the Belgian field force on the Dyle. At

Aug. 12.

the village of Haelen, a mile or two south-east of the town, they encountered a Belgian cavalry division and a mixed brigade, some 10,000 in all, which had

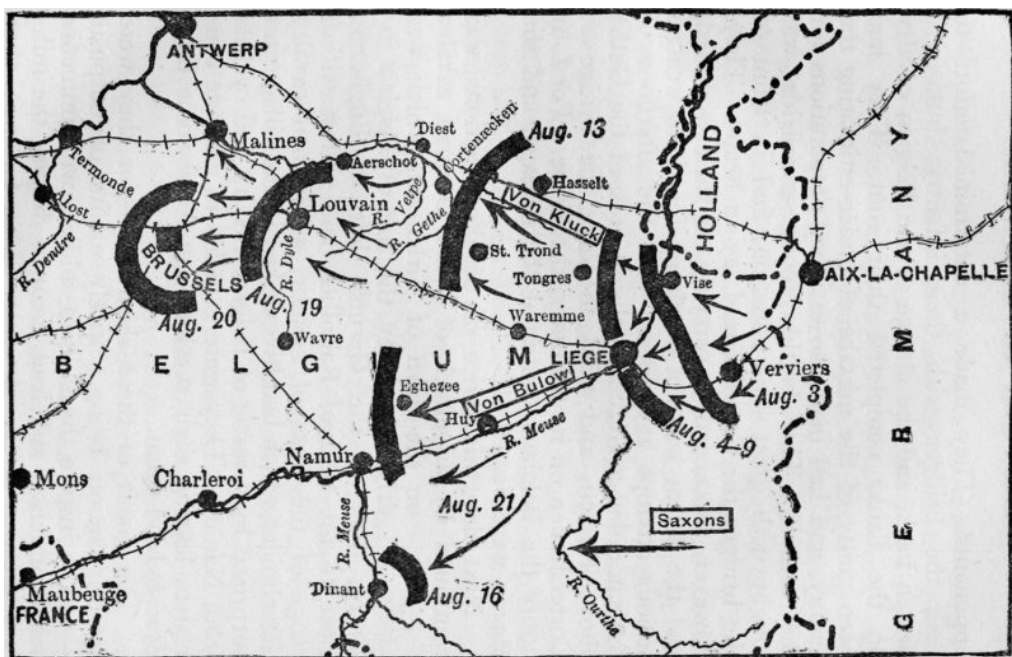
barricaded the river bridges. The Germans were a detachment of cavalry, with some machine guns, and a weak brigade of infantry in support, in numbers probably a little

less than their opponents. They made a determined effort to rush the bridges with their infantry, but were beaten back, and the charge of the Belgian cavalry on the

flanks completed their rout. They had been guilty of the mistake of under-estimating the enemy, and had made no artillery preparations for the assault. This battle among

cornfields was fought with great determination, and in front of the bridges the German dead lay in heaps. They, however, succeeded in carrying off their wounded,

and the defeat was not crushing, for there was no serious attempt at pursuit. On the afternoon of the same day a German column crossed the Gethe above Haelen, and tried to force the bridge at Cortenaecken on its tributary, the Velpe. For four hours the Belgians contested the passage, and the enemy were beaten off.



Map illustrating the War in Belgium (August 9-20).

Next day this series of desultory actions was continued by an attack of 2,000 German cavalry on the town of Tirlemont, which was driven back by the fire of Belgian infantry. Far on the German left, at Enghezee, close to the field of Ramillies, and almost within range of the forts of Namur, a German cavalry detachment which had bivouacked in the village was surprised by a sortie of Belgian cavalry and cyclists from Namur. They were expelled in extreme confusion, leaving their machine guns and some forty dead behind them.

Aug. 13.

The result of these skirmishes—for they were scarcely more, being entirely affairs of outposts—was to inspire the Belgian soldiers with immense self-confidence, and lead them to despise the military prowess of the invaders. Man for man, they had proved themselves superior to the renowned Uhlans, and the clumsiness of German cavalry tactics roused their contempt. The Belgian plain was not the best ground for cavalry work, and the small number of infantry employed by

the enemy was of little use against the well-chosen Belgian positions. Yet it must be admitted that these five days of skirmishing had achieved the end which the German commander intended. The cavalry had acted as a true screen, and had moved right up to the edge of the Dyle line. Telegrams from Belgium during that week implied that no German infantry in any strength had crossed the Meuse, which proved that the screen had done its work; for at that very moment, when the great armies of von Kluck and von Buelow were placing their last troops on Belgian soil, the Belgians still rated the force inside their frontier at a couple of cavalry divisions and a few oddments of foot and artillery.

We must return to Liège, which was now the key to the situation. Up till the 13th of August the Germans left the remaining forts in peace. The huge 42-centimetre howitzers, destined for Namur, were already moving along the western roads behind the cavalry screen, drawn each in three parts by forty horses or thirteen traction engines. The smaller 28-centimetre (11-inch) guns, which they considered sufficient for Liège, were already in position, the scarp of the northern plateau was in their power, and only Fort Loncin, controlling the railway junction of Ans, prevented the armies moving north-westwards on the predetermined plan. On the 13th the fortress of Embourg was shelled. On the 14th the Fort of Bonnelles, between the Ourthe and the Meuse, was summoned to surrender, and, on its refusal, was bombarded for twenty-four hours. The electric light apparatus was destroyed, and through the night the defenders fought on in a suffocating darkness. By six o'clock on the morning of the 15th the concrete chambers began to fall in, several of the cupolas were smashed, and shells penetrated the roof and burst inside the fort itself. Surrender was inevitable, and the gallant commander hoisted a white flag, after a resistance of eleven days. Nothing was left of the fort but a heap of ruins.

Aug. 13.

Aug. 15.

Meanwhile the bombardment of Fort Loncin, which General Leman stubbornly held for Belgium, was continued without rest. It was commanded by reverse fire; that is to say, the 11-inch howitzers were trained on it from the direction of the city, and all the pentagonal forts of Brialmont are weak on the side which at normal times is not that which fronts the enemy. The exact date of its fall cannot be determined, but it was not later than the 15th, or more than a day earlier. The heavy shell fire, as at Bonnelles, smashed the cement framework and the cupolas, and seems to have exploded the magazine, for the whole fort blew up. The few defenders left alive were half dead from suffocation. Only one shot was fired, by a man with his left hand, his right having been blown

Aug. 14-15.

away. General Leman was found unconscious, his body pinned by falling beams, and his life in grave danger from poisoning by noxious fumes. He was carried to General von Emmich, whom he had met two years before at manœuvres. His captor congratulated him on his heroic resistance, and gave him back his sword. "I thank you," was the answer of this soldier of few words. "War is a different sort of job from manœuvres, *mon Général*. I ask you to bear witness that you found me unconscious."

The resistance of Fort Loncin had delayed the main advance for at least a week. With its fall the Germans held the great railway running through Liège, which at Ans sends one line along the north bank of the Meuse to Namur and France, and another north-west to Brussels and Antwerp. On the 15th the main force of the 1st and 2nd German Armies was hurried along these routes,

Aug. 15.

and four army corps moved against the Belgian lines. The invaders came on like a tide, the cavalry screen fell away, and the Belgian field armies now realized what was before them. Their only hope was the French; but the French were not ready, though about this time French cavalry crossed the Sambre and came in touch with the Belgian right somewhere in the neighbourhood of the field of Waterloo. On the 14th the Belgians had withdrawn from the river Gethe, and had fought a stubborn rearguard action at Aerschot. On the 16th the main force of von Kluck came in contact with the Belgian right at Wavre, and attempted an enveloping movement, which for the moment was checked. Next day, Monday, the 17th, the German centre and right advanced at a great speed, overwhelmed Tirlemont with their artillery, and drove the inhabitants of the villages along the Gethe in panic towards Brussels. Some attempt was made to delay the enemy at Louvain itself, but the irresistible surge of the German masses swept the defenders from the line of the Dyle. In numbers, both of men and guns, the Belgians were hopelessly overpowered, and nothing remained but to order a general retirement. This began on the 19th, and its line was down the Dyle by Malines to the shelter of the great fortress of Antwerp. The Belgian field force was not broken, but it had lost heavily, especially

Aug. 16.

at Louvain, and it stood in imminent risk of envelopment unless it found a sanctuary. It withdrew, therefore, as Brialmont had always foreseen, inside the Antwerp forts, leaving the open city of Brussels to the enemy. King Albert's Government had retired to Antwerp as early as the 17th.

Aug. 17.

Aug. 19.

There was some talk for a moment of defending Brussels. The Civic Guard was under arms, and trenches were being dug across the roads to the east and south. But

wiser counsels prevailed. A fortnight's experience of war had revealed German methods; it was doubtful whether the Civic Guards would be regarded as qualified combatants, and it was certain that resistance would mean the destruction of a beautiful city. Accordingly, the Guard was disarmed, and M. Max, the Burgomaster, was empowered to arrange a peaceful occupation.

About eleven o'clock on Thursday, 20th August, an officer with a detachment of Hussars, bearing white flags, rode up to the Louvain gate, and was met by the Burgomaster and four sheriffs. M. Max was conducted to the generals at the head of the columns, and was bidden remove his scarf of office as a preliminary to discussion. In return for the free passage of German troops through the city, and the garrisoning of 3,000 men in the local barracks, the Germans promised to pay in cash for all requisitions, to ensure the safety of the inhabitants, to respect public and private property, and to leave the management of city affairs to the municipality. The Burgomaster was warned that any act of hostility would be visited with condign punishment. About two o'clock the sound of cannon and military music was heard, and the van of the army of occupation appeared on the Chaussée de Louvain. The number of troops that entered was estimated at something under 40,000, the equivalent of an army corps. They were of all arms, and included such famous cavalry regiments as the Brunswick Death's Head Hussars and the Zieten Hussars, as well as some of the siege howitzers and about one hundred motor cars armed with quick-firers. Each battery and regiment was preceded by its band, which played German national airs. The men marched to a quick step, but when they reached the great square in front of the Gare du Nord the infantry broke into the old Prussian parade-step, the legacy of Frederick the Great, to show how calmly they took the business of war. The troops were, of course, fresh troops, which had not been engaged in the recent fighting, so the smartness of the men can scarcely have impressed any intelligent observer.

Aug. 20.

The commander of the force was General Sixtus von Arnim, who had previously commanded the 4th Corps (Magdeburg). He left the Belgian flag flying on the Hôtel de Ville, but hauled down those of the Allies. He placarded the city with a stern proclamation against acts of aggression on the part of civilians, and presently it was announced that Germany had imposed upon Brussels a war indemnity of £8,000,000. The occupation in force lasted only for a day. While the newcomers were busy at their parade-step, von Kluck's right was wheeling northwards, detailing a force to mask Antwerp; and several divisions of cavalry, accompanied by motor cars bearing infantry and machine guns, were sweeping westwards in the direction of Bruges and Ghent, lifting supplies and terrorizing the countryside. Observers in

Brussels wired their estimate of the total German force as at the most 200,000, and this was accepted in Britain as the maximum of the armies advancing against the line of the Sambre. But whole corps of the Germans never went near the Belgian capital. Huge bodies of men were passing unnoticed along the north bank of the Meuse towards Namur, while Belgium had eyes only for Brussels and Antwerp; and south of the river, in the leafy woods of the Ardennes, where aerial reconnaissance was at a disadvantage, another army was moving swiftly towards the Allied front in the north.

On or about the 13th of August the German 4th Army, under the Imperial Crown Prince, advancing from Luxemburg, occupied the important town of Neufchâteau, in the Southern Ardennes, in preparation for an advance against the line Mezières-Sedan-Montmédy. About this time there seems to have been a change in the German dispositions, the reasons of which we can only guess. Perhaps the cavalry and aircraft reconnaissance had revealed new merits in the Ardennes as a theatre for a movement unsuspected by the enemy. Perhaps the resistance of Belgium had convinced the German General Staff that the right wing of the invasion of France must be heavily reinforced. Perhaps they had got some inkling of the French strategical plans, which anticipated the chief assault from Luxemburg and Northern Lorraine, and were resolved to disappoint them. Germany does not readily change a predetermined scheme, and, whatever the reasons, they must have seemed cogent to the Emperor and his advisers.

Aug. 13.

It is possible that one explanation may be found in the bitterness which the unexpected intervention of Britain inspired in German breasts. The sending of our Expeditionary Force, on the secrecy of which we had prided ourselves, was known in full detail to the German Staff not later than 10th August. In an order to his generals, alleged to have been given at Aix on 19th August, the Emperor declared: "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 to walk over General French's contemptible little army." It is almost certain that this order was apocryphal, but undoubtedly it represented the feeling of the Emperor and his Staff. The caprice of the War Lord was not to be disregarded, and the immense access of strength to the German right may have had the purpose of flinging the bulk of the armies of von Kluck and von Buelow against the British on the Allied left.

Whatever the explanation, there is no reason to doubt that the army of

Württemberg was pushed farther north than was originally intended, and its westward course was laid through the Central Ardennes towards the line Rocroi-Mezières. Further, at least three reserve corps were sent north of the Meuse, and added to the armies of von Kluck and von Buelow; and the two Saxon corps originally allotted to the Duke of Württemberg were sent to the north of that army, where they formed a subsidiary force commanded by General von Hausen, a man of sixty-eight, who had begun his military service at Sadowa. His army was further strengthened by the 11th (Reserve) Corps, and a portion of the Guards' cavalry. It is probable that the Guard Corps were originally destined for the Crown Prince, but they were now definitely allotted to von Buelow and the right wing. The Ardennes, as we have seen, afford, from their wooded character, a peculiar immunity from aerial reconnaissance, and though between the 10th and the 15th of August the French were concentrating strongly on the west bank of the Central Meuse, they seem to have sent out no feelers into the hilly country across the river. The conditions were ideal for an advance by German light columns, in order to test the enemy's strength on the river line, for, in case of a check, pursuit would not be easy among the deep-cut glens.

The Saxon army advanced by Laroche, Marche, and Achène towards Dinant and Namur. The advance was purposely made slow, until the fall of Fort Loncin opened the way for the great movement of the German right, which began on 15th August. But on that day some of the cavalry from the 3rd and 6th Divisions, and a Jaeger battalion, with strong artillery supports, made a vigorous effort to take the town of Dinant, which stands on the Meuse some eighteen miles south of Namur. The town lies on both sides of the river, with high limestone cliffs on the eastern bank, crowned by an old citadel. On the west bank the houses straggle up a wooded hillside. The Germans attacked about six in the morning, at a time when the only French troops in the town were a part of one line regiment. They sent a detachment of cavalry to occupy the suburbs on the east bank, while they made an assault upon the citadel, which they took about 10 a.m. The French infantry held the bridge, firing from behind its solid limestone abutments—not the best of positions, for reinforcements had to advance over ground swept by a fire from the cliffs. The German flag was hoisted on the citadel, and this was the chief target for the French rifles.

Aug. 15.

About two o'clock supports arrived. A French infantry regiment drove the cavalry out of the western suburbs, and two French batteries coming from the west and north-west bombarded the citadel, one of the first shots cutting the German flag in two. Presently the citadel was evacuated, and the Germans slowly retired along the cliffs to the south, while a vigorous artillery duel was kept up across the little

town. By six in the evening the Germans were moving off in the direction of the river Lesse, pursued by French infantry and *chasseurs à pied*, and with their rear screened by their cavalry. French cavalry of any sort seems to have been conspicuous by its absence. There was no great loss on either side, but the honours remained with the French, who were much the stronger in artillery. In an ordinary campaign Dinant would have ranked as an engagement of some note, but in this war of gigantic battles it was the merest side-show. Its importance lay chiefly in the fact that it inaugurated that offensive move east of the Central Meuse by the French centre, during the next week, which corresponded with the advance of the French left across the Sambre.

Of far greater moment to the general campaign was the French offensive now developing in Lorraine and Alsace. Its object was by an attack upon the German left to prevent a movement from Metz, which might have had the effect of turning the right flank of the whole northern half of the French position. Incidentally, it had a political bearing on the feeling of the people of the lost provinces; and if it succeeded, and the bridge heads of the Upper Rhine were captured, it would seriously interfere with the communications of the 5th and 6th German Armies. As we have seen, the first enterprise of the French in Alsace had failed, and by Monday evening, 10th August, the raiding force had retired to within a few miles of the frontier. But this had been little more than a reconnaissance, and by this time the reports of airmen had convinced the French headquarters that the 6th German Army, under von Heeringen, was the weakest of the German forces, and would have difficulty in holding the country between the Vosges and the Rhine. Accordingly, General Pau, commanding the French army of Alsace, not less than three corps strong, together with General de Castelnau, commanding the army of Lorraine, initiated a general offensive on the whole line from Nancy to Belfort.

For five days—till Saturday, 15th August—the main effort was directed to seizing the passes of the Vosges. These had been occupied by weak German outposts, and their capture was necessary to safeguard the flank of any advance from Belfort or Nancy. On the French side long river glens lead up to the summit, but on the east there is a steep descent towards the Alsatian plain. The first to be taken was the Ballon d'Alsace, at the south end of the range, which carried with it the control of the Col de Bussang. Farther north they took the Hohneck and Schlucht passes, which brought them to the great central boss of the ridge. Here the task became more difficult, as the approach from the French side was now steep, and the hillsides were densely

Aug. 10-15.

wooded, while on the gentler slopes of the Alsatian side the Germans had field fortifications held by heavy guns. There was some sharp fighting, in which the Chasseurs Alpains played a notable part, and successively the Col de Bonhomme and the Col de Sainte-Marie were taken. The last and most difficult was the Pass of Saales, on which they advanced from Sainte Dié. They won it by occupying the plateau of Blacques, and this gave them not only the possession of Mont Donon, the great northern *massif* of the Vosges, but allowed them to enter the valley of the Bruche, which led directly to Strassburg.

The Germans attempted to counter this stroke by an offensive from the north, which began on Tuesday, 11th August. One force, the vanguard of the Crown Prince's army, moved towards Spincourt, on the river

Aug. 11.

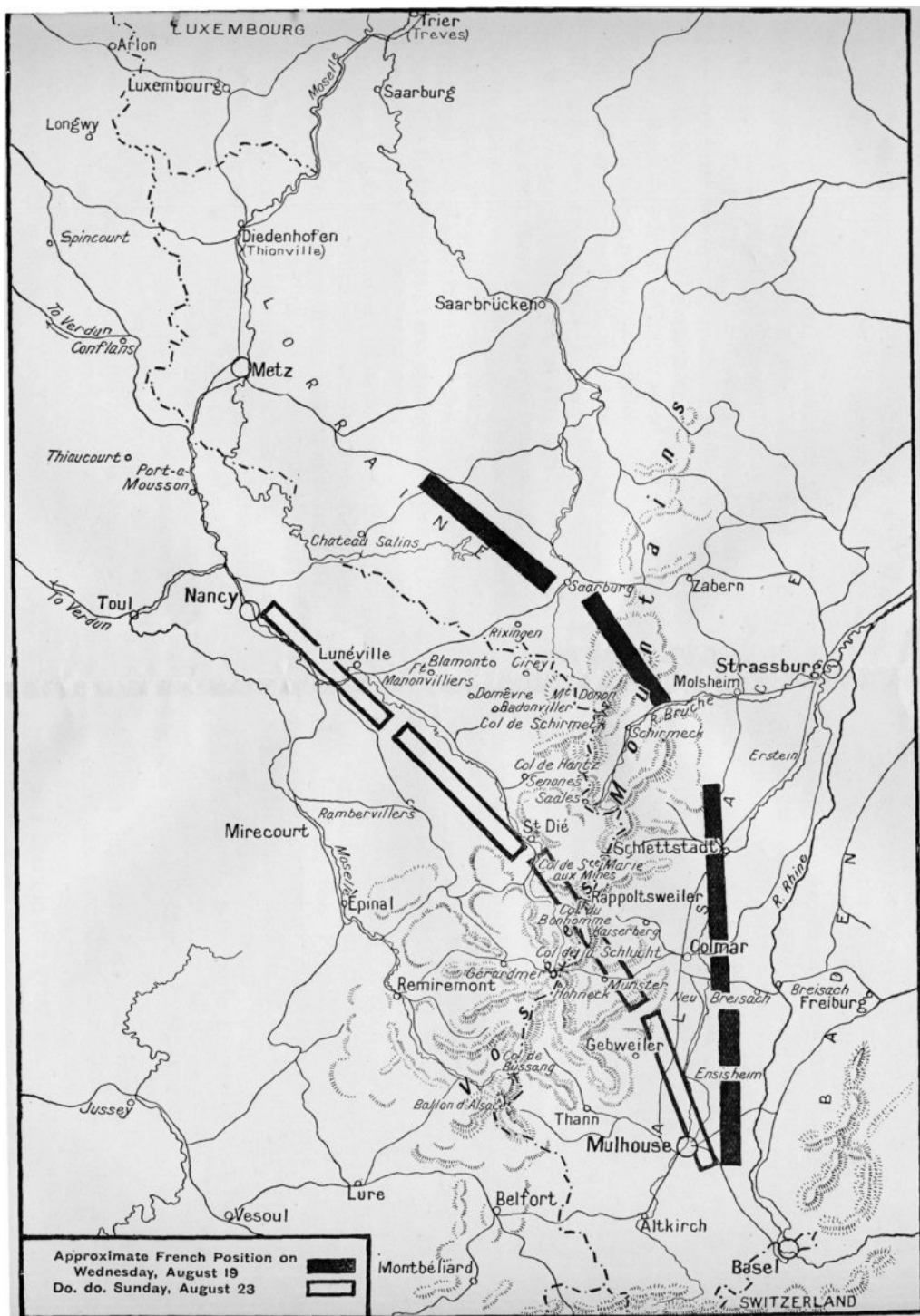
Othain, where it was driven back by French troops from Montmédy. Another, from Metz, moved south towards Blamont, which is about ten miles east of Lunéville, close to the western spurs of Mont Donon. This, too, was driven back by General de Castelnau's left wing. Meanwhile, in the extreme south, the main French force had won a conspicuous success in Upper Alsace. They took Dannemarie and Thann, and wedged the Germans between the Rhine and the Swiss frontier. Mulhouse was reoccupied, twenty-four guns and many prisoners were taken, and the way was open for an advance against Colmar. On

Monday, the 17th, French columns were moving down the hill glens of the Vosges into Alsace, and next day they occupied a point of great strategical importance, the town of Saarburg, which stands on the railway half-way between Metz and Strassburg. On Wednesday, the 19th, the

Aug. 17.

French army of the south was in a very strong position. It had overrun Upper Alsace almost as far as the Rhine, while the army of Lorraine held the whole line of the Vosges, and had its left wing between Château Salins and Saarburg.

Aug. 19.

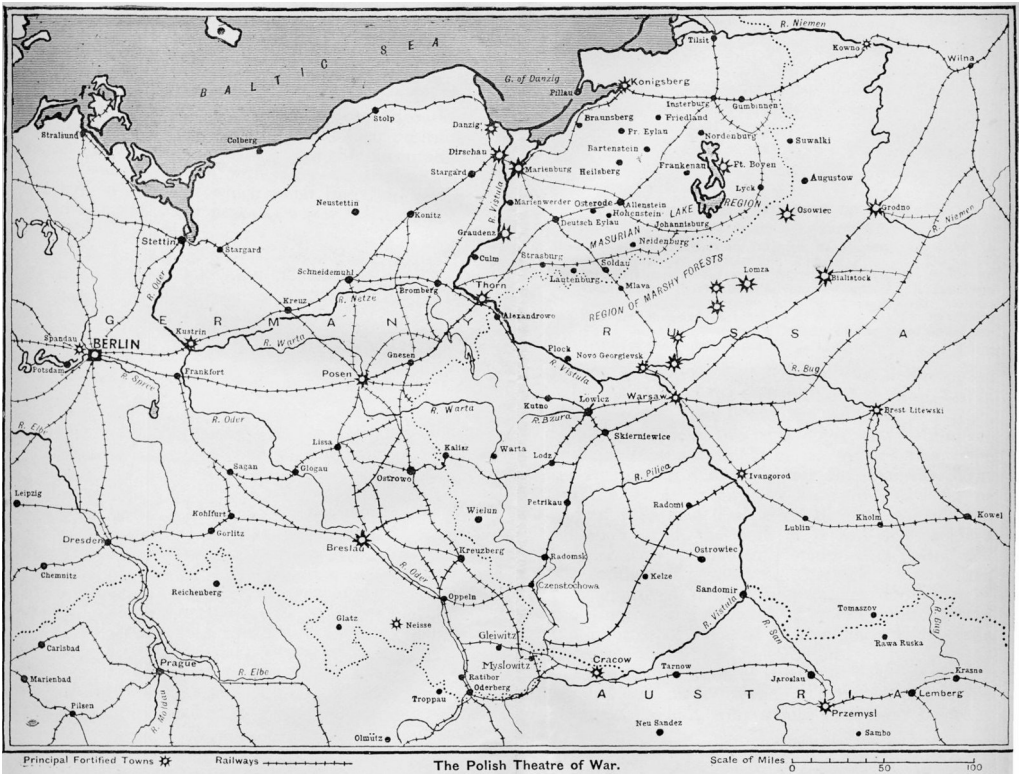


The Fighting in Alsace-Lorraine, August 11-22.

Two days later, however, the counter-offensive came with crushing force. The German 5th Army, based on Metz, sent a large force—probably four corps—against the French left. It moved towards the frontier, with its centre between Château Salins and Dieuze, its right towards Pont-à-Mousson, and its left on the railway between Lunéville and Saarburg; while a detached force drove the French out of the last-named town. On the 21st the whole French left was routed, with great losses of guns and prisoners. What happened is doubtful; there were rumours of a panic in the 15th Corps; but it is clear that before this attack, in which they were heavily outnumbered, the French were compelled to retire, and the retreat of the left compelled the falling back of the centre, in case it should be isolated. Mont Donon and the northern passes of the Vosges were evacuated, and the French retired behind the river Meurthe, resting their left on Nancy. The Bavarians occupied Lunéville, and advanced on Nancy, pushing out their right to the barrier forts north of Toul. On Saturday, 22nd August, the day when the German offensive in the north was advancing to the Sambre, the French offensive in the south had been sharply checked. General Pau still held Mulhouse and most of Upper Alsace, and a portion of the Southern Vosges, but the precarious position of his left made it certain that he would soon be compelled to fall back behind the shelter of the Epinal-Belfort fortress barrier.

Aug. 22.

This day—22nd August—marked the end of the three weeks' period of mobilization, frontier fighting, and preliminary concentration which is inevitable as a prelude to a great war. So far the German armies had failed to make that sudden and irresistible movement into the heart of France which had been the proclaimed intention of the General Staff. At only one point had they pierced the French frontier, and there only for a few miles. But their position, except for the delay in time, was highly favourable. France was threatened with six great armies, and was still in doubt at which point the main attack would be made. The next day was to bring enlightenment.



The Polish Theatre of War.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EASTERN THEATRE OF WAR.

Russian Mobilization—Configuration of Eastern Theatre—The Frontier Forts—German and Russian Plans of Campaign—Rennenkampf's Advance into East Prussia—Battle of Gumbinnen—Samsonov's Advance—German Advance from Posen—Austrian Advance into Southern Poland—Russian Counter-Offensive against Lemberg—Russia proclaims Polish Autonomy—Serbia's Campaign—Battle of Shabatz—Battle of the Jadar—Situation on 21st August.

The German mobilization was, according to the plans of the General Staff, the speediest in Europe. The French, on the same calculation, would take at least two days longer, and the Russian anything from a fortnight more. At one time, when the Russian army in peace was distributed throughout the whole empire, its strength could not be concentrated in a less period than six weeks; but for some years the bulk of it had been made a frontier army, permanently stationed in Poland and the south-west provinces. Strategic railways had been improved, though the projected duplication of the Russian lines was still far from completion, and the reforms of General Sukhomlinov had greatly decreased the time of mobilization.

The configuration of Russia, as has been already pointed out, made invasion a thankless task. The strongest modern army would melt away before it reached Petrograd or Moscow. But with the Russian field forces stationed in Western Poland an opportunity was given to Germany and Austria of striking a blow without the handicap of insuperable natural obstacles. A glance at the map will show that Russian Poland projects into the territory of the Teutonic League in a great salient, which is roughly 200 miles from north to south and 250 from east to west. This land is a monotonous, wind-swept plain, through which from south to north flows the river Vistula. About the centre stands the capital, Warsaw, one of the strongest citadels in Europe, and around Warsaw lies the group of fortresses which is called the Polish Triangle. The southern apex is Ivangorod, on the Vistula; the eastern, Brest Litovski; the northern, Warsaw itself, while to the north-west lies the advanced fort of Novo Georgievsk. This triangle is a fortified region with three fronts, two towards Germany and one towards Austria, and the various fortresses are fully linked up with railways.

The southern frontier of Russian Poland is a purely artificial one, for there is no continuous barrier till from fifty to one hundred miles south of it, where the range of the Carpathians protects the plains of Hungary against attacks from the north. Galicia is simply a flattened terrace at the base of this range, watered by the Upper Vistula and its tributaries, the Wisloka, the San, and the upper streams of the Bug. But in the north of Russian Poland, between the river Narev and the sea, is a country where campaigning is difficult. It is mainly swampy forest, but as it nears the Baltic coast it becomes a chain of lakes and ponds, with woodland of birch and pine between them. On the very edge of the sea, along the river Pregel and the large lagoon called the Frisches Haff, there is a belt of firmer land, which of old was the main highway between Prussia and Muscovy. This is the German province of East Prussia, a district unfriendly to the invader, as Napoleon found in his campaign of Friedland and Eylau.

East of the Polish salient, and dividing it from Russia proper, lies a curious piece of country around the river Pripet. It is a vast tangle of streams, ponds, and marshes, covering some 30,000 square miles, and is called the Marshes of Pinsk, from the chief town of the neighbourhood. This district bars the march of armies, and a way must be taken to the north or south. On the north the road lies along the valleys of the Narev and the Niemen, where are found a chain of fortified crossings. South, on the side towards Galicia, there are the three fortified towns of Lutsk, Dubno, and Rovno.

The salient of Russian Poland is, therefore, defended on its western side by the Polish Triangle, on the north by the chain of forts along the Narev and Niemen, on the south by the forts south of Pinsk, and on the east by the great marshes of the Pripet. Its communications with Russia pass north and south of these marshes. Only on the Galician side and the front towards Posen does the nature of the land offer facilities for offensive campaigning.

The German frontier defences consist of the Silesian fortresses of Breslau and Glogau, guarding the line of the Oder; the strong city of Posen on the Warta, opposite the point of the Russian salient; and a powerful line of forts on the Lower Vistula, guarding the road from East to West Prussia. Thorn on the Vistula, and Danzig at its mouth, hold the river valley; while Graudenz, much strengthened of late years, forms a link between them. Dirschau and Marienburg guard the road and railway crossings of the Vistula delta. The northern entrance to the Frisches Haff lagoon is guarded by Pillau, and at its eastern end, at the mouth of the Pregel, stands Koenigsberg, the second strongest of German fortresses, barring the coast road and railway to Russia. In Galicia the true Austrian line of defence is the Carpathians, but

north of it are the fortified city of Cracow, the old capital of Poland, and the great entrenched camp of Przemyśl.

It is important, in spite of the uncouth topography, to grasp the configuration of this great frontier district, for it determined the initial strategy of the campaign. Russia was bound to assume the offensive, in order to relieve her Allies who were bearing the brunt of the German onslaught in the West. Her natural line of attack was through Posen, for that angle of her frontier was only 180 miles from Berlin. There was another reason: the salient of Poland went racially much farther west than the Warta, and included the bulk of the province of Posen and a considerable part of West Prussia. Germany had never been successful with her resident aliens, and she had been peculiarly unsuccessful with her Poles, all her schemes of Prussianization and land settlement having ended in something very like a fiasco. In moving westwards by the Posen route, Russia would be moving among a race who, in spite of all they had suffered from the Empire of the Tsars, still preferred a Slav to a Teuton. But this direct western advance obviously could not be made until its flanks had been safeguarded by the conquest of East Prussia and Galicia—until the Russian armies, that is to say, could be deployed safely on a front which we may define by the Lower Vistula, the Warta, and the Upper Oder. Russia's first task, therefore, was to defeat the Germans in East Prussia and the Austrians in Galicia.

The initial German scheme was to contain Russia on her frontiers till such time as the defeat of the Allies in the West allowed large armies to be brought eastwards. Austria, however, who was not fighting, like Germany, on two fronts, was given the task of invading Russian Poland from the south. The Teutonic League had no intention of seriously invading Russia; they knew the difficulties too well. But when fortune allowed them to take a vigorous offensive, they hoped to overrun Russian Poland, as Moltke had advised half a century before, cut off the salient west of the Pripet Marshes, and possibly to create out of it a new Polish kingdom, under the royal house of Saxony, to act as a buffer state between Germany and her formidable eastern neighbour. To effect this they proposed a converging movement upon Warsaw from north, south, and west, and hoped that a considerable part of Western Poland, and possibly the capital itself, might be in their hands before the slow Russian mobilization was completed.

The Russian mobilization began about 29th July, and was completed, so far as the first armies were concerned, by the beginning of the third week of August. The first armies only, for Russia brings her men on in successive waves, each some 2,000,000 strong. When the first fighting began in the East, her forces were arranged as follows:—Facing East Prussia, and operating from the military base of Vilna, was

the army of the Niemen, four corps strong. The army of Poland, consisting at full strength of fifteen army corps, occupied a wide front, from the Narev in the north, behind the Polish Triangle, to the Bug valley. A third army, numbering some six army corps, which we may call the army of Galicia, was based on the frontier towns south of the Pinsk Marshes, and its line of advance was southwards into the country between Lemberg and the river Sareth. The first Russian concentration, it should be noted, was well behind the Polish Triangle, and only the flanks of it were ready for an early movement. These flanks were, in the north, the army of the Narev, moving in the direction of Mława, and, in the south, a southern army based on the line of the Bug. The Polish Triangle was well garrisoned, and in front of it to the west were covering troops, intended to delay any German advance from Posen.

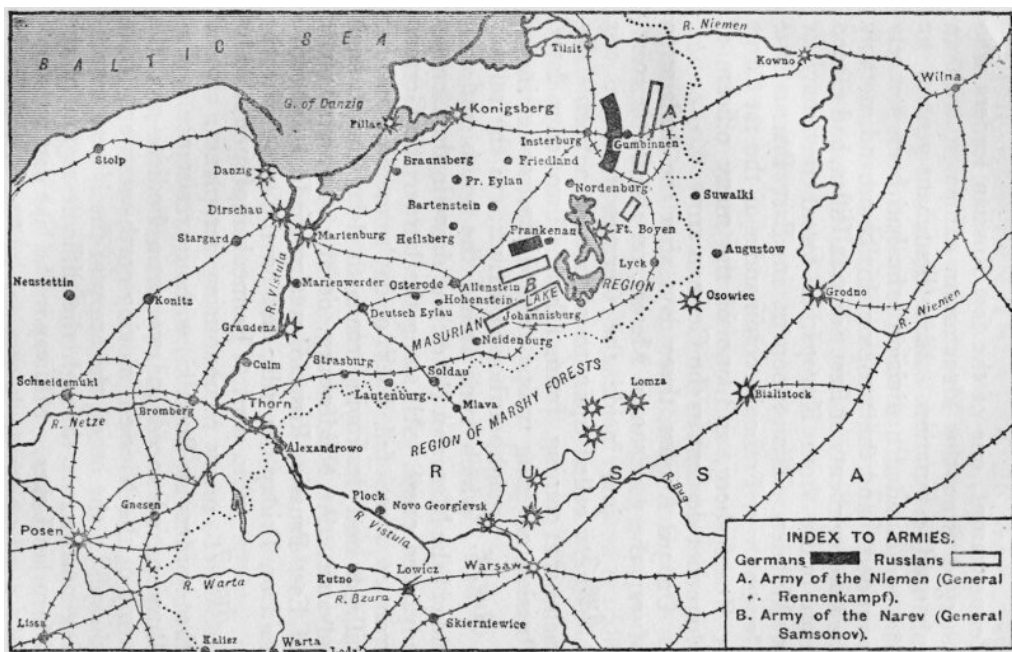
The Russian Commander-in-Chief was the Grand Duke Nicholas, a huge man of over six feet seven inches in height, simple and straightforward in temperament, and wholly devoted to his profession. As Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd area he had done more than any living man for the remaking of the army. Nor had other members of the imperial family been behindhand. The Grand Duke Sergius Mikhailovitch, as Inspector-General of Ordnance, had brought the artillery to a high pitch of efficiency, and the Grand Duke Alexander had been the creator of the new air service. The Russian Generalissimo had with him a brilliant Staff, most of whom had learned the art of war in the bitter school of the Manchurian campaign. The chief of the General Staff was General Nicholas Yanuschkevitch, in whom Russia believed that she possessed a second Moltke. But the main strength of the Russian command lay in the half-dozen army commanders, whose names will figure much in this history—men who had been taught their trade in an unsuccessful war, and who for years had prepared themselves soberly and assiduously for this day of trial.

The German force on the frontier in the early days of August can only be guessed at. In East Prussia it was probably four corps, with cavalry, including the 1st Corps (Koenigsberg) and the 20th (Allenstein), with the rest Landwehr troops. Along the Posen frontier were stationed the 17th Corps (Danzig), the 5th (Posen), and the 6th (Breslau), with three or four corps of reserves and several divisions of cavalry. Altogether we may estimate the force at not less than 500,000 men, of whom about 200,000 belonged to the first line. They were a containing force for the moment rather than a field army. Austria had assembled north of the Carpathians a force of nearly 1,000,000, divided into two armies, with reserves. Her Commander-in-Chief was General Conrad von Hoetzendorff.

Readers of Kuropatkin's *Memoirs* will remember the list of lessons from the war with Japan which he recommended to the attention of his countrymen. It was the

product of a year of failure and defeats. No man in his past career had judged more shrewdly the strategic dangers of Russia's position in both East and West, and no man could point out weaknesses with more authority. Kuropatkin was disgraced, but the lesson he urged was not forgotten. Cavalry must be taught that it was not for ornament but for use, and must learn to fight as obstinately as infantry; the training and character of the officers must be improved; unnecessary red tape must disappear; the education of the common soldier must be seen to; the organization of Reserves must be reformed; above all, rifle fire must be given a prominent place, and the field artillery reorganized both in guns and mode of training. No one of these points had been neglected in the nine years that followed the Treaty of Portsmouth, and the result had been an extraordinary advance in keenness and efficiency in all arms and ranks of the service. Russian gunners were now on a level with those of any European army, and the heavy field artillery, with its 10.6-centimetre and 15-centimetre Schneider guns and howitzers, was likely to prove a surprise to the enemy. The cavalry had exchanged its manoeuvre glossiness for field efficiency, and was trained equally to use the *arme blanche* and to act as mounted infantry. But the greatest improvement was in the Staff and the co-ordinating of commands. Never again, as in Manchuria, would corps commanders fight a series of unrelated and unfruitful battles.

The first blow was struck on the frontier of East Prussia, where the mobilization was completed during the first week of August. The commander of the army of the Niemen was General Rennenkampf, one of the few Russian leaders who emerged from the Manchurian campaign with an enhanced reputation. As a lieutenant-general he had commanded a division; he had been severely wounded; and the troops of his command, notably the two regiments of East Siberian Rifles, had earned high praise from Kuropatkin for their behaviour at Mukden. His opponent in East Prussia was General von François, commander of the 1st Corps at Koenigsberg, and one of the many officers of Huguenot descent in the German army.



Situation in East Prussia before the Battle of Gumbinnen.

On 3rd August, three days after the declaration of war, the garrison of Memel, on the Baltic coast, just inside the German frontier, was called upon to push back a hostile detachment coming from Libau. Two days later, Russia's covering troops crossed the frontier in the neighbourhood of Lyck, cut the railway which runs round the south and east side of the Masurian Lakes, and drove in the German advanced posts. All along the border the German frontier force fell back a day's march, burning villages and destroying roads to delay the Russian advance. At Neidenburg, on the southern border of East Prussia, Russian cavalry made an abortive raid on Friday the 7th; and on the same date the main army of Rennenkampf, preceded by many reconnoitring aeroplanes, crossed the border at Suwalki without resistance. The Russians advanced in two main bodies—one, the army of the Niemen, moving north-westwards from Suwalki; the other, the army of the Narev, marching northwards through the difficult region of the Masurian Lakes. Midway in the lake district stands the little Fort Boyen, where a railway line crosses the swamps. The Russians seized this, but as a whole kept further westwards in the firmer country just east of the Allenstein-Insterburg Railway.

Aug. 3.

Aug. 5.

Aug. 7.

The town of Insterburg stands at the confluence of the rivers Inster and Pregel,

and at the junction of the railways that run west from Koenigsberg and south from Tilsit. Obviously it was the most important strategic position in that neighbourhood, and to cover it General von François made his first stand at Gumbinnen, a town on the railway some ten miles due east. It is a country of great woods of pine, interspersed with fields of rye, and studded with windmills, and thousands of trees were felled by the Germans to make abattis for the entrenched position. About Sunday, 16th August, Rennenkampf came in touch with the enemy.

Aug. 16.

The tactical movements of the battle of Gumbinnen, which lasted till the 20th, are by no means clear. It seems to have been mainly a frontal attack, in which the Russian troops, all of the first line, rushed the positions held by the Germans, mainly of the second line, after an artillery duel in which the Russian guns had a clear superiority. There was also a flank movement aimed at the Insterburg railway, the success of which ultimately determined the issue. The result was the defeat and the retirement of the Germans, though, as at Gravelotte, the defeated army seems to have taken a considerable number of prisoners. Von François abandoned the position, already entrenched, covering Insterburg junction, and fell back on Koenigsberg.

Aug. 20.

The last part of his retreat seems to have been hasty, for the roads were strewn with abandoned shells; and the result of Gumbinnen was not in itself sufficient to warrant so rapid a flight. For the true reason we must look to the movements of the Russian army of the Narev, under General Samsonov, which, as we have seen, was meantime advancing from Mława through the country west of the main Masurian Lakes. Samsonov, who had commanded the Siberian Cossacks with great distinction at Liao-Yang, had one of the great popular reputations in the Russian army. He had with him a large force, probably five army corps, as the Germans reported; but they were strung out on a wide front, running from Johannisburg to Soldau. His northern march at first was unimpeded, and he advanced through the fringes of the lake district with as much speed as the tangled nature of the country allowed. On the 20th his vanguard came upon the 20th German Corps, strongly entrenched on a line between Frankenau and Orlau, at the north-west end of the lakes, and about forty-five miles south-south-east of Koenigsberg. The Russians advanced as at Gumbinnen, using their artillery to cover the attack, and forcing the position with hand grenades and the bayonet. At 11 a.m. on the 21st, the Germans found their right completely turned. Their left fled to the south-west, abandoning guns and wagons, and the rest retreated in great disorder towards Koenigsberg. Cossacks pursued them vigorously, and many prisoners were taken.

These two victories virtually put out of action the first field army of East Prussia, all that was left of it being now shut up inside the Koenigsberg lines. The Russians occupied Tilsit, where Napoleon and Alexander of Russia once signed the treaty for the partition of the world, and marched on Koenigsberg, driving in the outlying posts. Advanced cavalry moved in the direction of Danzig, and East Prussia up to the Vistula was for a moment at the mercy of the conqueror. Troops were left to invest Koenigsberg, and presently Allenstein, with its airship station, had been taken. East Prussia, the sacred land of the German squirearchy, was overrun with the enemy, and thousands of refugees flocked towards Berlin. On the 27th a fête was held in Petrograd, and by the sale of flags £20,000 was raised, which sum was to be given to the first Russian soldier who entered Berlin. The opening round of the fight in the East had left Russia an unquestioned victor.

Aug. 27.

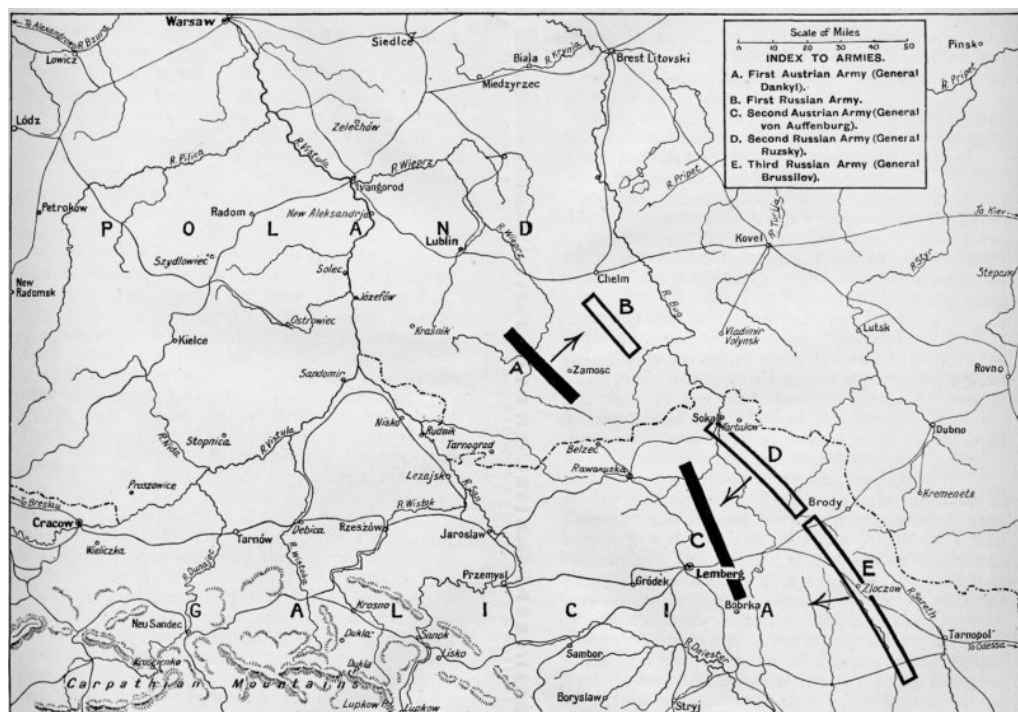
The scene changes to the southern part of this theatre of war. On the Posen side the Germans, early in August, occupied the three towns of Kalisz, Czestochowa, and Bendzin, just inside the Russian frontier. The second was probably taken to provide a rallying-point for that Polish revolt against Russia for which Germany fondly hoped; for Czestochowa is one of the great religious centres to which pilgrims journey from every part of Poland, whether Russian, Austrian, or German. Presently they seized the Polish mining district of Dumbrovna, on the Silesian frontier, and, helped by the fact that their railway gauge was extended beyond the border-line, proceeded to transport coal to Germany. But on the Posen side there was no serious German advance during August. The German strategy for the moment was concerned with flanking movements.

In Galicia, however, the month of August saw a campaign of the highest importance. The Austrian forces were divided into two main armies, which we may call the 1st and 2nd. The 1st Army, based on the fortress of Przemyśl, was destined for the invasion of Russian Poland on a front extending east and west from the Vistula to the town of Tomasov. The 2nd Army was drawn up at right angles to the 1st, its front running from the upper waters of the Bug as far south as the town of Halicz, and its base for supplies being the city of Lemberg. Its aim was to protect the flank of the 1st Army from a turning movement by the Russians from the direction of the fortresses south of the Przypil Marshes. Each army was probably at least 300,000 men strong, and there seem to have been considerable reserves massed just north of the Carpathians.

On 10th August the 1st Army, under General Dankl, crossed the Polish frontier,

moving towards Krasnik. It established contact with the enemy a few days later, about thirty miles south of the town of Lublin. The great Russian concentration in Western Poland, fixed, as we have seen, at fifteen army corps for a beginning, was not yet complete, and the fighting force consisted of two armies on its flanks, one under General Samsonov, north of the Polish Triangle, whose doings we have just observed, and a second just south of that fortress area. It was this latter force which encountered the 1st Austrian Army, and, being considerably outnumbered, gave way before it, retreating very slowly eastward towards the valley of the Bug, with its left protected by the fortress of Zamosc. The Austrians claimed a victory, but it was no more than a strategic retirement, as was presently made clear.

Aug. 10.



Situation in Galicia and Southern Poland at the end of August.

For, on 14th August, a second Russian army, under General Ruzsky, based on the fortresses of Lutsck and Dubno, began to move south over the frontier, capturing the town of Sokal, and annihilating the 35th Regiment of the Austrian Landwehr, which acted as frontier guard. This army advanced slowly on a wide front, menacing the left of the 2nd Austrian

Aug. 14.

Army, under General von Auffenberg, which was based on Lemberg. By the 20th it was only some thirty miles from that city, moving slowly, and fighting every yard of the way. Meantime a third Russian army, under General Brussilov, had come westwards from Kiev, and was moving against the right of the 2nd Austrian Army by way of Tarnopol and the valley of the Sereth. This advance, too, was hotly contested, and on the 23rd was momentarily checked, the Austrians capturing two quick-firers and several ammunition wagons. Four days later the forces of Brussilov and Ruzsky were in touch, moving upon Lemberg and the 2nd Austrian Army in a vast semicircle. The position at the end of the month was, therefore, somewhat as shown in the inset map between pages 184 and 185. The line of battle extended 200 miles from the Vistula to the Dniester. The 1st Austrian Army was slowly driving back the Russians towards the line of the Bug, while, farther west, its flanking force, the 2nd Army, was being assailed from north and east by superior Russian forces. The position was highly precarious for Austria. Her 2nd Army was in imminent danger of capture or destruction, and its fall would mean that the flank and rear of the 1st Army would be at the mercy of the victors.

Aug. 20.

Aug. 23.

On 15th August a political event took place which had a vital bearing on the war. The Grand Duke Nicholas issued to the inhabitants of Russian Poland a proclamation offering, on behalf of the Emperor, that self-government which had been the object of a century's agitation. The proclamation is worth quoting in full.

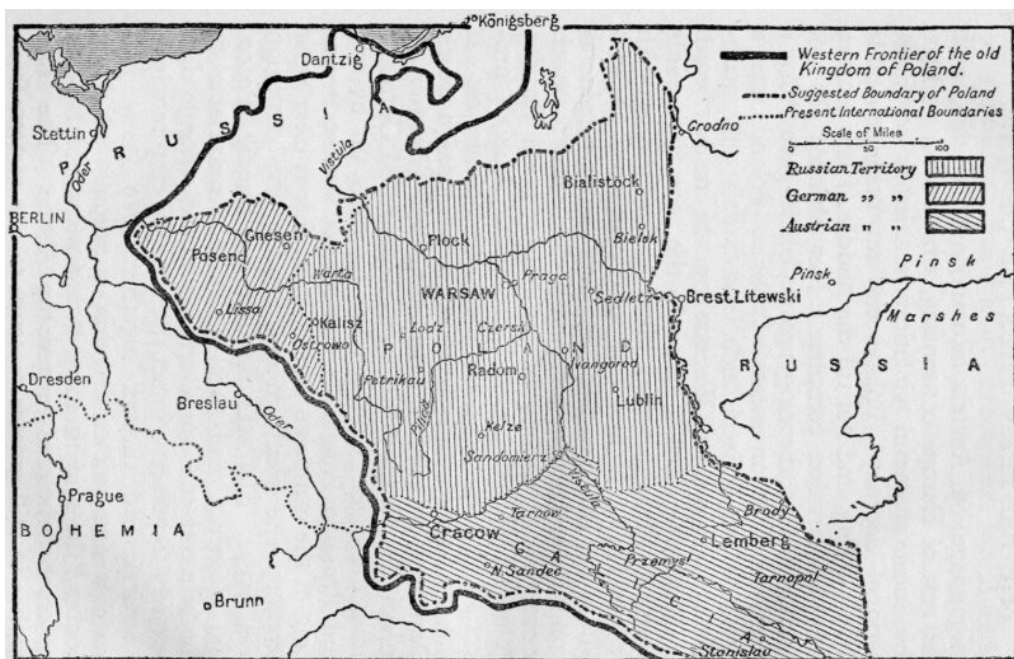
Aug. 15.

“Poles! The hour has sounded when the sacred dream of your fathers and your grandfathers may be realized. A century and a half has passed since the living body of Poland was torn in pieces, but the soul of the country is not dead. It continues to live, inspired by the hope that there will come for the Polish people an hour of resurrection and of fraternal reconciliation with Great Russia. The Russian army brings you the solemn news of this reconciliation, which obliterates the frontiers dividing the Polish peoples, which it unites conjointly under the sceptre of the Russian Tsar. Under this sceptre Poland will be born again, free in her religion and her language. Russian autonomy only expects from you the same respect for the rights of those nationalities to which history has bound you.

“With open heart and brotherly hand Great Russia advances to meet you. She believes that the sword, with which she struck down her

enemies at Gruenwald, is not yet rusted. From the shores of the Pacific to the North Sea the Russian armies are marching. The dawn of a new life is beginning for you, and in this glorious dawn is seen the sign of the Cross, the symbol of suffering and of the resurrection of peoples.”

In the old proud days Poland had been a great kingdom, with Prussia as a vassal state. Then evil times came, till in 1772 began those acts of public brigandage by Austria, Russia, and Prussia, with the rest of Europe consenting, which form perhaps the most shameful violation in history of international decency. Poland was an unconscionable time a-dying, and not till the middle of last century was the partition complete. Her plunder did not greatly benefit the brigands. Galicia gave Austria many anxious moments, Prussian Poland was a thorn in the Kaiser’s side, and Russia only maintained her rule in Warsaw by the ready sword. Of the three, Russia stood in the most favourable position, for she was a Slav power dealing with fellow-Slavs. Home Rule for Poland was an idea which the Emperor had long had under consideration. Now he was committed to it, and to much more; for he was bound not only to make Russian Poland a self-governing State under Russia’s protection, but to reconstitute its old boundaries. It was the answer to the anti-Russian campaign which Germany had been conducting in Warsaw. It meant that, if the Allies won, Austria and Germany must disgorge. Galicia must be given up by one and Prussian Poland by the other. At the beginning of the campaign Russia had made it clear what territory she would demand when the campaign was over. She was fighting for Danzig, Posen, and Cracow; and such a demand meant war to the bitterest end, for Germany would struggle desperately to preserve intact the artificial empire which Bismarck had thrown together. We know Bismarck’s own views on this question. “Nobody doubts,” he said in 1894, “that we would have to be crushed before we gave up Alsace. The same applies in still greater measure to our eastern frontier. We cannot dispense either with Posen or Alsace, with Posen still less than with Alsace. . . . Munich and Stuttgart are not more endangered by a hostile occupation of Strassburg or Alsace than Berlin would be by an enemy in the neighbourhood of the Oder. . . . How our existence could shape itself if a new kingdom of Poland were to be formed nobody has yet had the courage to inquire.”



Poland, Past and Future.

Before we leave the Eastern theatre we must note the strenuous campaign waged by Serbia and Montenegro upon the Austrian flank. War had been declared by Austria against Serbia on 28th July, and there began at once a bombardment of Belgrade by batteries from the opposite shore of the Danube and by monitors on the river. The bulk of the Serbian army evacuated the capital, and took up a strong position on the hills to the south, while the Serbian Government withdrew to Nish. The main Austrian forces were massed on the north bank of the Danube just below Belgrade, and on the line of the river Save west of the city, while the bulk of the 15th and 16th Corps were stationed on the Bosnian frontier, especially along the line of the Drina.

July 28.

The war with Russia prevented Austria at first from giving much attention to the Serbian campaign. Her two first line corps were withdrawn from Bosnia and sent north, and she attempted to hold Serbia with a force which cannot have been much beyond 100,000 men, and in which the majority of the troops must have belonged to the second line. The history of the next few weeks is that of desultory and unrelated fighting, such as Balkan wars have often shown. In a country of sharply cut mountain valleys the armed peasantry of Serbia were more than a match for their enemy. An attempt to cross the Danube east of Belgrade was repulsed with great loss, one

Austrian regiment being virtually wiped out. On the 6th the Austrians lost two guns in an assault on Obrenovatz, just west of Belgrade. There was some fighting on the 7th near Vishegrad, the fortified Bosnian frontier town on the Drina. Next day the Austrian fleet bombarded Antivari, Montenegro's single seaport, and the Montenegrins crossed the Bosnian border.

Aug. 6.

Aug. 7.

Aug. 8.

On the 12th a strenuous effort to invade Bosnia was made by a combined Serbian and Montenegrin force. They concentrated at Plevje, on the border of the sanjak of Novi-Bazar, and advanced on Vishegrad in three columns. They captured a number of villages, but did not take Vishegrad, or make great progress towards their objective, Serajevo. Meantime the Montenegrins conducted two independent expeditions—one against the ancient and beautiful city of Ragusa, on the Dalmatian coast; and the other against the Austrian forts on the Bocce di Cattaro, where they had the assistance of the Allies' fleet.

Aug. 12.



The Servian Theatre of War.

The most serious fighting during the month was along the line of the Lower Save, more especially the struggle for Shabatz, the river crossing there, and the connecting railway with Losnitza on the Drina. On 16th August, after a heavy bombardment from the northern bank, the Austrians took Shabatz. On the 17th the Serbians won an important victory in the neighbourhood of the town, defeating an Austrian force estimated at 80,000, but probably considerably less, and capturing many guns and prisoners. On the same day a strong Austrian force from Bosnia, the equivalent of two army corps, under General Potiorek, crossed the Drina, and took the towns of Lesnitza and Losnitza, its object being to co-operate with the Shabatz army, and pen the Serbians up in the triangle of land between the Save, Drina, and Jadar. On the 18th the Serbians, under the Crown Prince, having overthrown the enemy at Shabatz, attacked the Bosnian army on both banks of the Jadar, and after four days' hard fighting completely defeated it. The fire of their Creusot guns began what the rifle and the bayonet completed, and the troops, which had learned their trade at Kumanovo, Uskub, and Monastir, drove the Austrians with great loss across the Drina, and took quantities of prisoners and artillery. Among the beaten forces was the 8th Corps from Prague, which suffered especially, and generally the Austrians seem to have put their Slav regiments in the forefront of the fighting. This series of actions, occupying five days, was at first called the Battle of Shabatz, but it is divisible into two quite independent battles, Shabatz and the Jadar.

Aug. 16.

Aug. 17.

Aug. 18.

By the 23rd the Serbians claimed with truth that they had cleared the enemy out of their country. Their counter-attack in Bosnia had not prospered very fast, for it was too weak in artillery to make way against the fortresses. Nevertheless the path was now prepared for a movement across the Danube against Semlin and the road to Budapest, when they should be strong enough to make it.

Aug. 23.

If we take the 22nd of August as a view-point, we may sum up the fighting in the Eastern theatre as follows:—In East Prussia the Russians had won a considerable victory at Gumbinnen, and shut up the bulk of the German force in Koenigsberg; while another army, under Samsonov, was hastening westwards to complete the destruction of the army corps west of the Masurian Lakes, which would pave the way to an advance on the Lower

Aug. 22.

Vistula. Farther south, the German army from Posen had only advanced a few miles inside the Russian frontier, and had occupied three towns. On the Galician border the 1st Austrian Army, taking the offensive in Southern Poland, had won several minor successes near Lublin, and was driving its opponents towards the line of the Bug. But the 2nd Austrian Army was being menaced by two Russian forces coming from the north and east, the right wing of which was by the 22nd only some thirty miles from Lemberg. In the extreme south Serbia, by the 22nd, had defeated the enemy within her borders, and, along with the Montenegrins, was slowly advancing into Bosnia.

On the same day in Western Europe the German forces were closing in upon Namur, the German right was wheeling towards the Sambre, and the first shells were dropping among the coalpits of Charleroi. We must return to that struggle, on which for the moment the whole might of Germany was centred.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST CLASH OF THE GREAT ARMIES.

German and French Strategic Ideas—The French Generals—General Joffre's Plan—Disposition of the French Armies—The British Force—Sir John French and his Generals—Position of Namur—Its Defences—Belgian Plan of Defence—The Attack begins—Fall of the Forts and withdrawal of General Michel—The Germans enter the City—The Allies' Blunder.

To a German commander-in-chief the general strategy of an invasion of France was determined by two considerations. The first was the nature of the "out-march" imposed upon him by the lie of the frontier. The second was the necessity for that immediate disabling blow—that "battle without a morrow"—consequent upon a war waged simultaneously in two separate theatres.

The Eastern frontier of France may be divided into three parts:—First, the frontier line from Belfort to Verdun, with the gaps in the centre between Toul and Epinal, and in the north between Verdun and the Ardennes, left purposely in order to "canalize" the stream of invasion; secondly, the line of the Central Meuse; and, thirdly, the Belgian border on the line Maubeuge-Valenciennes-Lille. A general advance against all parts of the frontier would move with different speeds in each section. In the first it would be likely to beat for some time against the fortress-barrier, and in the second the difficult territory of the Ardennes, culminating in the trench-like vale of the Meuse, is scarcely suitable for rapidity in great armies. Only in the third section, where the country is open and the fortresses far apart, could real speed of movement be attained. Such differences in possible pace pointed to an enveloping movement by the German right as the strategy most likely to succeed. The same conclusion was indicated by the necessity for a crushing blow at the earliest possible moment.

The enveloping attack is conventionally supposed to be the favourite device of the German Staff, and the diagrams published in the press, which showed the opposing lines as thin snakes of black, the outer curving gradually around the inner, have stamped the idea on the public mind. But the German Staff were familiar with

all strategical ideas, and were not inclined to be doctrinaire about any one of them. No doubt the lesson of the 1870 war had impressed upon them the value of an envelopment in which each army comes to face its own capital; but that envelopment must depend upon the local situation at any one moment, and could not be decided on beforehand.

The enveloping movement, properly speaking, did not belong to the whole line of battle, but might be applied in the centre, the left centre, and the right centre, as well as against a flank. "It is not intended," wrote von der Goltz, in describing it, "to attack the whole of the enemy's army with the bulk of one's own, but only with a part of it. Only we must not leave the part of the enemy's army which is not to be pressed quite unemployed." The plan would be used when occasion offered in different sections of the battlefield; and it certainly did not mean that Germany proposed to string out her forces very thin on a line of 150 miles on the chance of outflanking an enemy whose line was only 130 miles long.

We may call the idea the dominant conception of German strategy in one sense, and one sense only: the outflanking of the Allied left gave the best chance of an immediate and decisive blow. To pierce their line—an equally decisive operation—would have been difficult at any part between Belfort and Mezières. But it was by no means impossible, since the railways of Belgium were at Germany's command, to place such a force on her right wing as would crumple up and envelop the Allied flank opposed to it. While the whole German line advanced, the vital task would be that of von Kluck and von Buelow. Elsewhere we shall consider the value of Germany's main tactical and strategical persuasions; here it is sufficient to note that the preliminary strategy of the campaign can be explained far more simply by the exigencies of her position than by any supposed academic preference.

The case was the same with France. She was compelled, to begin with, to fight on the defensive. She did not know where the chief blow would be delivered, and it was her business to be prepared at all points. "Engage the enemy everywhere, and then see," had been one of Napoleon's maxims of war, and the inheritors of the Napoleonic tradition had taken it to heart. It is the aim of the defensive as soon as possible to wrest the initiative from the enemy, and this can best be done by a counter-offensive when the enemy's offensive has failed. To succeed in the scheme demands powerful reserves, ready at the psychological moment, and in the proper place.

France, like Germany, was not hide-bound by any strategical formula. She had studied Napoleon to advantage, but rather in the spirit than the letter, and she realized that a strategy suited to little armies of 60,000 was out of place in dealing

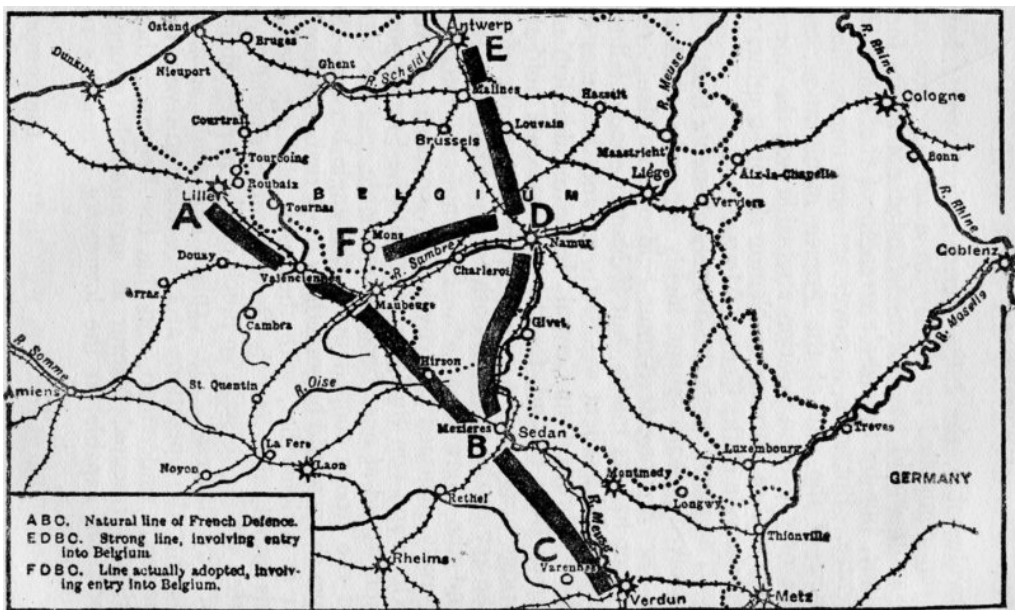
with millions. At the same time she held, probably with truth, that there were none of the eternal principles of war which Napoleon did not know, and she was prepared to apply some of his favourite devices, which her General Staff had brilliantly elucidated, when the right occasion arrived. These devices—let it be said again—were meant for local application, not for the total line of battle; and it is surely fantastic to see in General Joffre's main strategy, as some writers have done, the strict application of Napoleon's "pivoting square," or "lozenge," which worked wonders at Jena. In what may be called the local strategy—that is, the strategy used by one army in its own corner of the battlefield—Napoleon's conception, as we shall see, was sometimes used. But in her main strategical purpose France did as Germany did, and used the only plan available to her. This was a general feeling of the enemy's strength along the whole front, a retirement where necessary, and the accumulation of reserves—what is technically called the "mass of manœuvre"—to be flung in as any weakness displayed itself in the enemy's line. For handling these reserves France had certain special advantages in the large extent of friendly country behind her front, and her admirable network of railways. In the event of the great German attack failing, it was believed that the same defensive resources would be less open to the enemy, since behind his front he had a hostile Belgium and a knot of hill country, with poor communications.

When M. Millerand, to whom the modern army of France owes much, went to the War Office, he relied especially on three officers for the working out of his scheme of reform. The great and well-deserved popular reputations of the day belonged to those generals like Gallieni, Lyautey, and d'Amade, who had in recent times distinguished themselves in North Africa and Madagascar and Tonkin. M. Millerand's three were almost unknown to the man in the street. One was an engineer officer, Joffre by name, who had done good work in colonial fortifications. The second was Pau, like Joffre a southerner, who had left an arm on the battlefields of 1870. He was adored by the rank and file, who called him "le premier troupier du monde," but politics and society knew him not. The third was de Castelnau, a man of singular gentleness and nobility of spirit, with a mathematical brain which excelled in problems like mobilization. Pau and Joffre were alike candidates for the post of Chef d'Etat Major-General,^[1] which carried with it the supreme command in war; but among the three there was no rivalry. Two were staunch anti-clericals, de Castelnau was a devout Catholic, and in France these differences go deep; but in their public life they worked single-heartedly together to perfect the French army against the great day.

Contact having been established with the enemy in Lorraine and Alsace, it

remained to feel the strength of the masses advancing on the German centre and right. The natural disposition of the French armies lay along the Central Meuse and the line Lille-Maubeuge, just inside the French frontier. Such a disposition had the advantage of giving a line curving gently from west to east, with four fortified positions at regular intervals along it. The advantage of a fortress in a line of battle is not that it forms a shelter behind which troops can retire, but that it provides a defended gap which, within the radius of its guns, can be held by comparatively small numbers. An isolated fortress has been proved of little use against modern artillery, but a fortress which is merely a firing point in the battle front is in a different position, for the field army has to be defeated before the full strength of the invaders' artillery can be brought to bear upon it. Such a line had the further advantage that it would pivot on Verdun, the strongest of French fortified areas, and would, therefore, be able to move forward or backward, with the certainty that its right flank could not be turned. Nor did it show any dangerous salient against which the enemy could put forth a special effort.

General Joffre's original plan was, therefore, to concentrate in the north on this fortress line running through Maubeuge. But at some date before 20th August he resolved to push forward his front into Belgium. The reason for this decision we can only conjecture. The spectacle of the Belgians' heroic resistance and their constant appeals for aid to France and Britain may have compelled a move which on purely military grounds was obviously inadvisable. A glance at the map will explain why. Had the Allies been able to advance well into Belgium before 15th August and join with the Belgian field army in holding the line Antwerp-Namur, then the position would have been highly favourable. Their left flank resting on Antwerp would have been invulnerable, the huge German right would have been compelled to deploy in a narrow area, and Namur would have been defended not by its forts alone, but by the whole strength of the Allied left centre. But such a movement was impossible in view of the rate of the French mobilization, and the only Belgian position attainable was the line of the Sambre, turning at Namur sharply southwards up the vale of the Central Meuse.



Map showing Alternative French Dispositions
on the Frontier.

The map reveals the dangers of such a front. It involved a sharp salient, highly exposed to flank attacks. So long as Namur held out, no doubt this salient had its merits, but if Namur should fall the point of the salient was destroyed and the forces on the Sambre and the Central Meuse would be liable to attack from behind, for the enemy would hold the bridge-heads of the rivers. Namur was, therefore, the key of the situation both for the French defence and the German attack. So long as it stood it gravely menaced the enveloping movement of von Kluck and von Buelow; if it fell, the French position would at once become untenable, and the state of the troops cooped up in the angle between the two rivers would be something more than precarious. It is curious that, with the result of Liège before his mind, the French Generalissimo should have been willing to stake so much on the impregnability of any fortress. The explanation would seem to be that the operations at Liège were still very imperfectly understood, and that the Belgian authorities represented Namur as an infinitely stronger position, capable, at the lowest, of a month's resistance.

Beginning at Verdun, we can trace the component parts of the main Allied line. Facing the Crown Prince's advance from Neufchâteau was the 3rd Army under General Ruffey, stretching from Montmédy by Sedan to Rocroi. Farther north, holding the valley of the Central Meuse, was the 4th Army of General de Langle de Cary. In the angle of the Sambre, and crossing the river to a point north of Charleroi,

lay the 5th Army of General Franchet d'Esperey.^[2] West of this, on the line Condé-Mons-Binche, were the British, under Field-Marshal Sir John French, forming the extreme left wing of the Allied front. A French cavalry corps of three divisions, under General Sordêt, was in reserve behind Maubeuge; and far to the west, at Arras, in echelon to the main line, was a Territorial Corps, consisting of the 61st and 62nd Reserve divisions, under General d'Amade. The French "mass of manoeuvre" was at this moment on the Lorraine frontier and south and west of Paris, too far away to be able to act as immediate reserves. The notion of the resisting force of Namur had fatally dominated the mind of the French General Staff.

A word must be said on the French generals.^[3] General Franchet d'Esperey on the outbreak of war was commander of the 1st Army Corps at Lille. He had won a high reputation in the French colonies, having commanded the forces in Western Morocco in the critical years from 1911-13. General Fernand de Langle de Cary was a man of sixty-five, and was therefore on the retired list before General Joffre recalled him to the colours. He had been aide-de-camp to Trochu in the war of 1870, and at his retirement was a member of the Superior Council of War. General Ruffey was also a member of the Superior Council. He was succeeded later in the command of the 3rd Army by General Maurice Sarrail, who had successively commanded the 8th and the 6th Corps. General Albert d'Amade was familiar to British officers as one of the French *attachés* on the British Headquarters Staff during the South African War. He had spent some time at the French Embassy in London, had won high distinction in Western Morocco, had commanded successively the 3rd Corps at Clermont and the 6th at Châlons, and had sat in the Superior Council. General François Sordêt was one of the best known of cavalry leaders. He had commanded the 10th Corps at Rennes, and had sat in the Superior Council as Inspector-General of Cavalry.

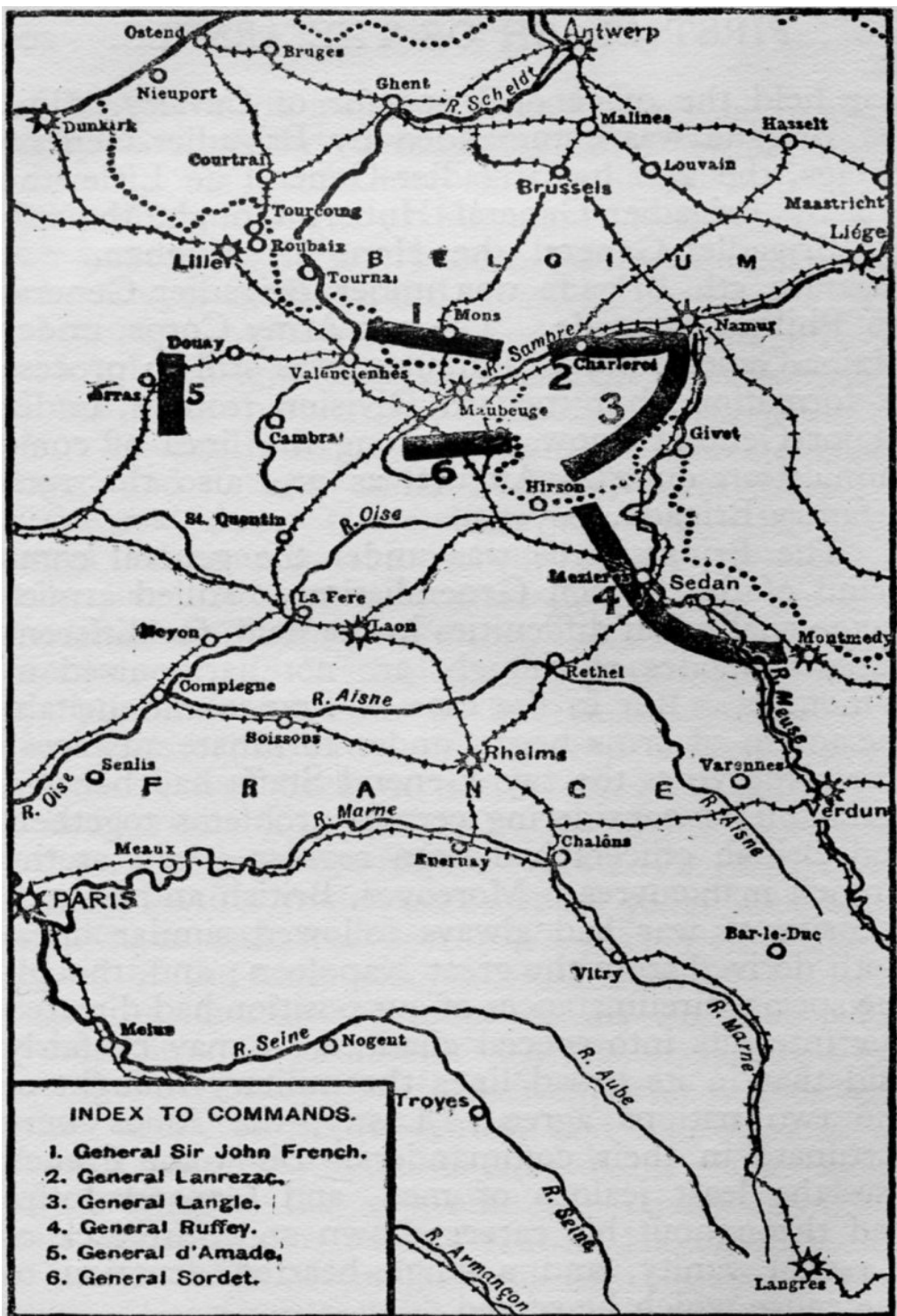
The British army, which had only got into position on the evening of Friday, 21st August, consisted at this time of two army corps and one cavalry division. The Commander-in-chief, Field-Marshal Sir John D. P. French, had long been considered the best field officer on the British active list. He had served in the Sudan Expedition of 1884-85, and had afterwards held high cavalry commands at home, till, in 1899, he was sent to command the cavalry under Sir George White in the Natal campaign. His was, perhaps, the chief reputation made by the South African War. His brilliant work in the Colesberg district, his relief of Kimberley, and his handling of the cavalry in Lord Roberts's advance on Pretoria, marked him out a soldier of exceptional knowledge, judgment, and energy. He commanded the 1st Army Corps from 1901 to 1907, after which he held for four years the post of

Inspector-General of the Forces, till in 1911 he became Chief of the Imperial General Staff. In 1913 he was made a field-marshal. He was, in the fullest sense of the word, a scientific soldier, immersed in his profession, and familiar with the latest military thought of Europe. What was even more important, he was a born leader of men; of tried courage, coolness, and sagacity.

The 1st Army Corps was under the command of Sir Douglas Haig, a cavalryman like Sir John French, and one of the youngest of British lieutenant-generals. Its 1st Division was under Major-General Lomax, and its 2nd under Major-General Monro. To the 2nd Army Corps had been originally appointed Lieutenant-General Sir James Grierson, but he had died suddenly after the landing of the Expeditionary Force in France. His death was a grave loss to the British army, for no officer was more popular, and none so immensely learned in all branches of the profession of arms. From 1882 onwards he had been in nearly every British war, and had written the standard books on the Russian, German, and Japanese armies. He knew Germany intimately, and few foreigners could judge so truly her strength and weakness. We may well regret that one of the most accomplished Staff officers of the day was not spared to prove his worth in his first high fighting command. He was succeeded by General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, who had done brilliant work in South Africa, and had held the Southern command at home since 1912. The 2nd Corps embraced the 3rd and 5th Divisions, the former under Major-General Hubert Hamilton, and the latter under Major-General Sir Charles Fergusson. The Cavalry Division was commanded by Major-General Allenby, who at the outbreak of war held the office of Inspector of Cavalry. The 1st Brigade was commanded by Brigadier-General Briggs, the 2nd by Brigadier-General de Lisle, the 3rd by Brigadier-General Hubert Gough, the 4th by Brigadier-General the Hon. C. Bingham. A separate 5th Brigade was under Brigadier-General Sir Philip Chetwode. The 3rd Army Corps, under Major-General W. P. Pulteney, was still in process of formation, but the 4th Division from it, under Brigadier-General Snow, was along the lines of communication on 21st August, as was also the 19th Infantry Brigade.

The British force was under the general command of the French Generalissimo. Allied armies have usually had difficulties in the field, for different national modes of thought are not harmonized in a moment. But in the case of France and Britain the union of arms began under fortunate auspices. For some years the two General Staffs had been in the habit of considering certain problems together, and British officers had been regular guests at the French manœuvres. Moreover, British and French theories of war had always followed similar lines. Both derived from the great Napoleon; and, though the special circumstances of our position had directed

our interests into special channels, it may be fairly said that in its broad lines the military thought of the two nations agreed. Lastly, the Allies were fortunate in their commanders. Sir John French was the least jealous of men, and General Joffre had throughout his career shown an entire lack of personal vanity, and a single-hearted devotion to the cause which he served.

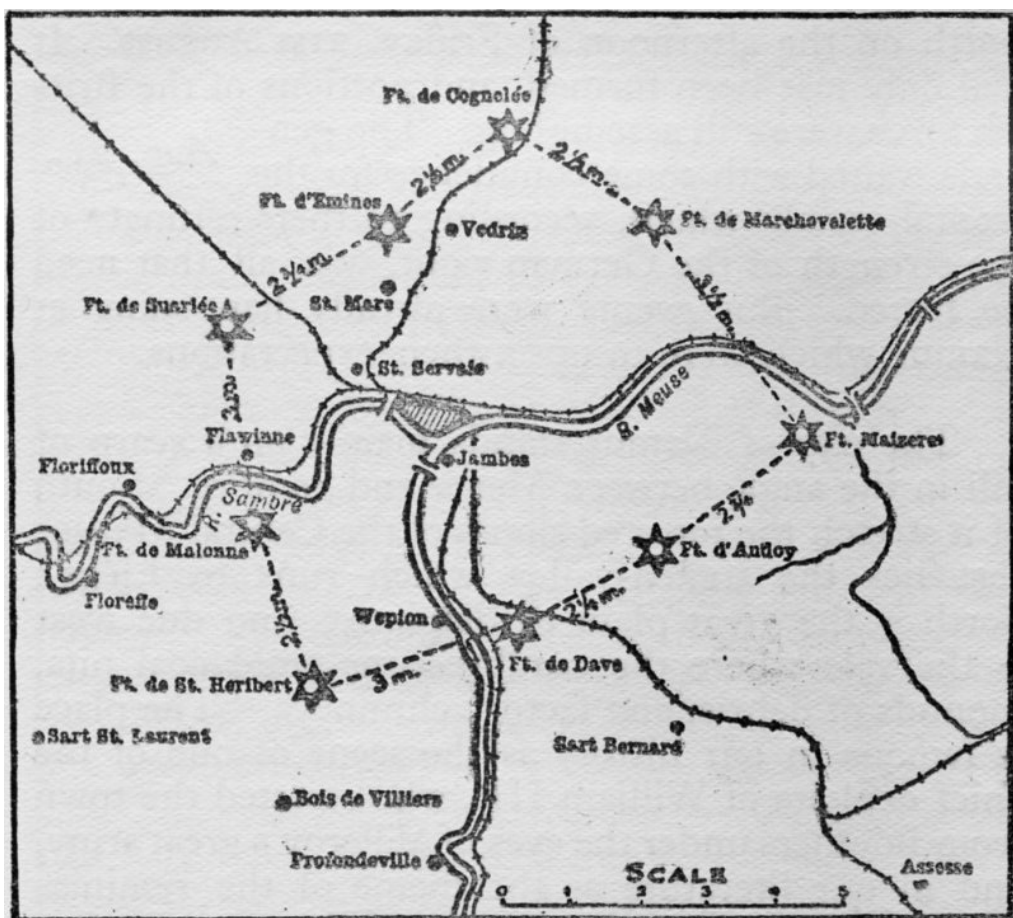


Map showing Disposition of Allied Line on Friday,
August 21.

Such was the position of the Allied line in the north on the afternoon of Friday, 21st August. It had only just been formed, and portions of the British force were still assembling. The generals waited with some confidence for the frontal attack, which, according to their estimate of the strength of the German right, was all that need be feared. But events were already happening at Namur which were to upset their expectations.

Aug. 21.

The city of Namur stands mainly on a scarp of hill in the angle between Meuse and Sambre. South of it stretch the forested slopes of the Central Meuse; east lies the trench-valley which runs to Liège; north is the great plain of Belgium; and due west is the vale where the Sambre runs amid coal pits, mounds of debris, and factory chimneys. The place is famous in our history as the scene of one of the chief exploits of William III., who wrested the town from Boufflers under the eyes of Villeroy's great army, and in our literature as the theme of the reminiscences of Uncle Toby in "Tristram Shandy." Its fortifications had been one of Brialmont's masterpieces. Following the same lines as at Liège, he had given it a ring of four forts and five *fortins*, mounting altogether 350 pieces. These forts were at a distance from the city of from two and a half to five miles, and were on the average about two and a half miles distant from each other. Beginning in the north, Cognelée defended the railway to Brussels, while Marchovelette occupied the space between it and the Meuse. In the south-west angle made by the rivers stood the three forts of Maizeret, Andoy, and Dave. Between the Meuse and the Sambre were St. Héribert and Malonne, and north of the Sambre, between that river and Fort Cognelée, stood the forts of Suarlée and Emynes. All were of the familiar Brialmont type, and the armament was the same as at Liège.



Plan of Namur Forts.

The Belgian garrison had ample notice of the German intentions. For ten days the great siege trains—now including, perhaps, one or two of the famous 42-centimetre howitzers^[4]—had been crawling painfully westwards over the cobbled Belgian roads. Namur was held by the 4th Division of the Belgian army, under General Michel—a total of, perhaps, 26,000 men. Though convinced that the place was impregnable, they devoted much time before the enemy appeared to strengthening the defence. Large areas were mined, the field of fire was cleared, entrenchments for infantry were constructed between the forts, and barbed wire entanglements, highly electrified, were erected at the approaches. It should be remembered that General Michel did not expect to defend Namur alone. Long before the first shot was fired he hoped to have the Allies at his back. The blue tunics of the Chasseurs d'Afrique had been seen for some days on Belgian soil,

squadrons of French dragoons were on the road to Brussels, and French infantry and artillery were only eighteen miles off at Dinant. General Michel seems to have been well aware that the forts alone could not repel the enemy. Remembering one lesson of Liège, he gave special attention to the intermediate infantry. Where he was weak was in his intelligence department, for he does not seem to have been informed of the German movements on both sides of the Meuse. A siege train on the march is a very vulnerable thing, and with a division of infantry at his command, a blow should have been struck before ever the German guns were settled on their emplacements.

For a day or two before the 20th of August the weather along the Meuse had been close and misty—the summer heat-haze common in that valley. The Germans—von Buelow's left wing—came along the north bank of the Meuse from the direction of Liège, and a considerable body crossed at the little town of Andenne, where they joined the Saxon army moving on the southern bank. Late on the evening of Thursday, 20th August, the howitzers were in position under the screen of haze, some three miles from the Belgian trenches. Now at last General Michel learned his mistake. He had let the enemy get too close—an enemy who would not be guilty of von Emmich's blunder at Liège, but would use the full strength of his artillery before he launched his infantry.

The first shots were fired on that sultry Thursday evening, and the fire was directed on the trenches between Forts Cognelée and Marchevelette. Through the whole night it continued with amazing accuracy, and since the Germans were out of range of the Belgian guns there was no means of replying. The unfortunate Belgians had no chance for a rush with the bayonet, as at Liège—they had simply to wait and suffer; and after ten hours, whole regiments having been decimated, the thing became insupportable. Early on the morning of Friday, the 21st, the infantry withdrew from the trenches, and the Germans entered within the ring of the forts, taking up a position on the ridge of St. Marc, just north of the city.

Aug. 20.

Meantime the forts Marchevelette and Maizeret had fallen. Maizeret had received shells at the rate of twenty a minute, and had only been able to fire ten shots in reply. Marchevelette held out longer, but after seventy-five of its garrison had been slain it, too, surrendered. About the same time—that is, early on the Friday morning—the German army on the right bank of the Meuse directed a terrific bombardment against Forts Andoy, Dave, St. Héribert, and Malonne. The first three were silenced after an attack of two hours, and a German force was pushed across the Meuse into the southern part of the angle between it and the Sambre. All that day an infantry battle continued, for the

Aug. 21.

Belgians hoped for a French advance from Dinant to their relief. But, as we shall see, the French at Dinant had their hands full with their own affairs. On the Saturday morning 5,000 French troops, mostly Turcos, arrived from the west, but they were too late to give much assistance. That day, when the skies were darkened by an eclipse of the sun, panic reigned in Namur. Incendiary bombs were dropped by German aeroplanes, and stray shells crashed into the outlying buildings. The weather was heavy with thunder, and Nature and man combined to create pandemonium.

Aug. 22.

Some time on the Saturday General Michel, seeing that resistance was futile, and desiring, like General Leman at Liège, to save his force for the field army, drew off many of his troops by the western route, which was still open. No provision had been made for a retreat, and it soon became a case of *sauve qui peut*. Only the north-western forts were standing, and the infantry battle in the angle between the rivers had resulted in the defeat of the French and Belgians. The Germans coming from the south joined with those on the ridge of St. Marc, and so were able to take in the rear the defenders of the trenches between Forts Emines and Cognelee. The Belgians in the river angle were compelled to escape as best they could, and their only outlet was to the south-west. The Germans had shut the gate at Bois de Villers, but the 8th and 13th Belgian Regiments hacked a road through, and managed to reach Philippeville. On their way they found themselves entangled with a French army coming south from the Charleroi direction, and had their first news of the retreat of the whole Allied line. Eventually, by way of Hirson, Laon, and Amiens, they came in seven days to Rouen, whence they took ship to Ostend, and joined the main Belgian forces.

On Sunday afternoon the Germans entered Namur, singing their mechanical part-songs. The advanced guard narrowly escaped destruction, for the Germans north-east of the city, unaware that their troops had entered from the south, kept shelling the Citadel and the Grande Place. That night Namur was set afire in parts, whether by accident or design no one knew. Next day General von Buelow entered the place, and with him the new military Governor of Belgium, Field-Marshal von der Goltz, who was described by an observer as “an elderly gentleman covered with orders, buttoned in an overcoat up to his nose, above which gleamed a pair of enormous glasses.” The conquerors did not behave badly. They took hostages, demanded the surrender of all arms, and issued, after the German fashion, a vast number of proclamations. Presently the great armies surged southwards, and left the occupation of the city to reservists.

Aug. 23.

The last stand of the Belgians was made at the north-west segment of the

fortress ring. The infantry which lined the trenches between Fort Suarlée and Emines seem to have held out gallantly till the morning of Tuesday, 25th August, when they left their positions, and moved southwards to the woods on the north bank of the Sambre. There they were surrounded, and surrendered to the number of 800 early on the 26th. Forts Suarlée and Emines resisted till the next day, when they were more or less blown to pieces.

Aug. 25.

Aug. 26.

The first shot had been fired on the evening of 20th August; by the next night five or six forts had fallen; by the 23rd the Germans held Namur, and by the 25th the last forts had gone. So much for the impregnable city. The shade of Boufflers must have rejoiced at so fantastic a consummation.

Namur, it is now clear, was one gigantic mistake. A campaign was hinged on its invincibility, without any attempt to make that invincibility certain. The lesson of Liège was completely neglected. The defence showed a fatal supineness in not keeping touch with the enemy; for, once he had been allowed to get within range, their task was hopeless. No provision was made for retreat, and vast quantities of guns and stores were left undestroyed in German hands. About 12,000 from the garrison made their way to Antwerp, so the fall of the city cost Belgium some 14,000 men. It was to cost the Allies more, for the loss of their pivot brought a million men to the verge of disaster.

[1] The Conseil Supérieur de la Guerre deals with all questions relating to the organization of the army and its preparation for war. It includes from ten to twelve generals, entrusted with special departments (inspection, leadership of manœuvres, etc.), in time of peace, who are destined to take command of the various armies in time of war. Its president is the Minister of War; its vice-president the Chief of the General Staff (the future generalissimo).

The following generals were members of the Council when war broke out:—

Général de division	Joffre.	Vice-president.
”	”	Galliéni. } Of the Colonial Army.
”	”	Archinard. }
”	”	Michel.

”	”	de Castelnau.
”	”	Sordêt.
”	”	d’Amade.
”	”	Ruffey.
”	”	Valabrègue.
”	”	Dubail.
”	”	Laffon de Ladébat.

Rapporteurs (not members of the Council):—

Général de division	Belin.
”	”
	Ebener.

In time of war, the Commander-in-chief rules supreme, and has an entirely free hand in the choice of army commanders, as was seen in the case of Generals Maunoury and de Langle, who were recalled to active service, and Foch, Sarraill, and Franchet d’Esperey, who were at the head of army corps at the outset of the war.

[2] General d’Esperey, according to the *Bulletin des Armées*, did not take command of the 5th Army till shortly before the Marne. At Charleroi and for some days after it seems to have been commanded by General Lanrezac.

[3] Army Corps commanders at the outbreak of war:—

No.	Headquarters.	Commanders.
I.	Lille.	Franchet d’Esperey.
II.	Amiens.	Gérard.
III.	Rouen.	Sauret.
IV.	Le Mans.	Boëlle.
V.	Orleans.	Brochin.
VI.	Châlons.	Sarraill.
VII.	Besançon.	Bonneau.
VIII.	Bourges.	de Castelli.
IX.	Tours.	Dubois.
X.	Rennes.	Defforges.

XI.	Nantes.	Eydoux.
XII.	Limoges.	Roques.
XIII.	Clermont-Ferrand.	Alix.
XIV.	Lyons.	Pouradier-Duteil.
XV.	Marseilles.	Espinasse.
XVI.	Montpellier.	Taverna.
XVII.	Toulouse.	Poline.
XVIII.	Bordeaux.	de Mas-Latrie.
XIX.	Algiers.	Moinier.
XX.	Nancy.	Foch.
XXI.	Epinal.	Legrand.
Colonial Army Corps	Paris.	Vautier.
Tunisian Division	Tunis.	Pistor.

The Senegalese and Moroccan battalions form special divisions. The Turcos (Algerian native infantry) are included in the XIX. Army Corps (Algiers) and the Tunisian division.

[4] The 42-cm. howitzers are nearly as mysterious as the movements of the Prussian Guard. They were not at Liège, and almost certainly not at Antwerp; and General Michel declared afterwards that they were not at Namur, the only guns there being the 28-cm., of which there were 32. There is evidence that the bigger guns were taken to Namur, whether they were used or not, and they were certainly taken to Maubeuge, though apparently not fired there. Four of them got into difficulties on the way back.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.^[1]

Speech delivered by the Secretary for Foreign Affairs (SIR EDWARD GREY) in the House of Commons on Monday, August 3, 1914.

Last week I stated that we were working for peace, not only for this country but to preserve the peace of Europe. To-day—events move so rapidly it is exceedingly difficult to state with technical accuracy the actual state of affairs—it is clear that the peace of Europe cannot be preserved. Russia and Germany, at any rate, have declared war with each other. Before I proceed to state the position of His Majesty's Government and what our attitude is with regard to the present crisis, I would like to clear the ground, that the House may know exactly under what obligations the Government is, or the House can be said to be, in coming to a decision in the matter. First of all, let me say very shortly that we have consistently worked with a single mind, and with all the earnestness in our power, to preserve peace. The House may be satisfied on that point. We have always done it; and in these last years, as far as His Majesty's Government is concerned, we shall have no difficulty in proving we have done it. Through the Balkan crisis, by general admission, we worked for peace. Well, the co-operation of the Great Powers of Europe was successful in working for peace in the Balkan crisis. It is true that some of the Powers had great difficulty in adjusting their point of view. It took much time, labour, and discussion before they could settle their differences, but peace was secured because peace was their main object, and they were willing to give time and trouble rather than accentuate differences.

^[1] Reprinted by permission of the *Times*.

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WAR.

In the present crisis it has not been possible to secure the peace of Europe, because there has been little time, and there has been a disposition, at any rate in some quarters, on which I will not dwell, to force things rapidly to an issue, to the great risk of peace. As we now know, the result of that is that the policy of peace, as far as the Great Powers generally are concerned, has failed. I do not want to dwell on that or to comment upon it and say where the blame seems to us to lie, and which

Powers were most in favour of peace and which were most disposed to risk or endanger peace, because I would like the House to approach this crisis in which we now are from the point of view of British interests, British honour, and British obligations, free from all passion. We shall publish papers as soon as we can regarding what took place last week when we were working for peace; and when those papers are published I have no doubt that to every human being they will make it clear how strenuous and genuine and whole-hearted our own efforts for peace were, and they will enable people to form their own judgment upon what forces were at work which operated against peace.

BRITISH OBLIGATIONS.

Now I come first to the question of British obligations. I have assured the House, and the Prime Minister has assured the House more than once, that if any crisis such as this arose we should come before the House of Commons and be able to say that it was free to decide what the British attitude should be—that we would have no secret engagement to spring upon the House and tell the House that because we had entered into that engagement there was an obligation of honour on the country. I will deal with that point and clear the ground first. There have been in Europe two diplomatic groups—the Triple Alliance and what has come to be known for some years as the Triple Entente. The Triple Entente was not an alliance; it was a diplomatic group. The House will remember that in 1908 there was a crisis, a Balkan crisis, which originated in the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Russian Minister, M. Izvolsky, came to London—his visit had been planned before the crisis broke out—and I told him definitely then that this being a Balkan affair I did not consider that public opinion in this country would justify us in promising him anything more than diplomatic support. More was never asked from us, more was never given, and more was never promised. In this present crisis up till yesterday we had also given no promise of anything more than diplomatic support. Up till yesterday no promise of anything more than diplomatic support was given.

THE ALGECIRAS CONFERENCE.

Now to make this question of obligation clear to the House I must go back to the Morocco crisis of 1906. That was the time of the Algecirias Conference. It came at a time very difficult for His Majesty's Government, when a General Election was in progress. Ministers were scattered all over the country, and I was spending three days a week in my constituency and three days at the Foreign Office. I was asked

whether if that crisis developed and there were war between France and Germany we would give armed support. I said then that I could promise nothing to any foreign Power unless it was subsequently to receive the whole-hearted support of public opinion here when the occasion arose. I said that in my opinion if a war were forced upon France then on the question of Morocco—a question which had just been the subject of agreement between this country and France—an agreement exceedingly popular on both sides—if out of that agreement war were forced upon France at that time the public opinion of this country, I thought, would rally to the material support of France. I expressed that opinion, but I gave no promise. I expressed that opinion throughout that crisis, so far as I remember, almost in the same words to the French Ambassador and the German Ambassador. I made no promise and I used no threat.

NAVAL AND MILITARY CONSULTATIONS.

That position was accepted by the French Government, but they said to me at the time, and I think very reasonably, "If you think it possible that public opinion in Great Britain might, when a sudden crisis arose, justify you in giving to France the armed support which you cannot promise in advance, then, unless between military and naval experts some conversations have taken place, you will not be able to give that support, even if you wish to give it, when the time comes." There was force in that. I agreed to it and authorized the conversations to take place, but on the distinct understanding that nothing which passed between the military and naval experts should bind either Government or restrict in any way their freedom to come to a decision as to whether or not they would give their support when the time arose. I have told the House that on that occasion a General Election was in progress. I had to take the responsibility without the Cabinet. It could not be summoned, and an answer had to be given. I consulted Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, the then Prime Minister. I consulted Lord Haldane, who was Secretary for War, and I consulted the present Prime Minister, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer. That was the most I could do. It was authorized, but on the distinct understanding that it left the hands of the Government free whenever a crisis arose. The fact that conversations between naval and military experts took place was later on—I think much later, because that crisis had passed and ceased to be of importance—brought to the knowledge of the Cabinet. Another Morocco crisis, the Agadir crisis, came, and throughout that I took precisely the same line as in 1906.

Subsequently, in 1912, after a discussion of the situation in the Cabinet, it was decided that we ought to have a definite understanding in writing, though it was only in the form of an unofficial letter, that these conversations were not binding on the freedom of either Government. On November 22, 1912, I wrote to the French Ambassador the letter which I will now read to the House, and I received from him a letter in similar terms in reply. The letter which I have to read will be known to the public now as the record that, whatever took place between military and naval experts, they were not binding engagements on the Government. This is the letter:—

“My dear Ambassador,—From time to time in recent years French and British naval and military experts have consulted together. It has always been understood that such consultation does not restrict the freedom of either Government to decide at any future time whether or not to assist the other by armed force. We have agreed that consultation between experts is not and ought not to be regarded as an engagement which commits either Government to action in a contingency which has not yet arisen and may never arise. The disposition, for instance, of the French and British fleets respectively at the present moment is not based on an engagement to co-operate in war. You have, however, pointed out that if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power it might become essential to know whether in that event it could depend on the armed assistance of the other. I agree that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power or something which threatened the general peace, it should immediately discuss with the other whether both Governments should act together to prevent aggression and to preserve peace, and, if so, what measures they would be prepared to take in common.”

A STARTING POINT

That is the starting point for the Government with regard to the present crisis. I think it makes it clear that what the Prime Minister and I have said in the House of Commons was perfectly justified as regards our freedom to decide in a crisis what our line should be—whether we should intervene or abstain. The Government remained perfectly free, and *a fortiori* the House of Commons remained perfectly free. That I say to clear the ground from the point of view of obligations, and I think it was due to prove our good faith to the House of Commons, that I should give that full information to the House now and say, what I think is obvious from the letter I

have just read, that we do not construe anything which has previously taken place in our diplomatic relations with other Powers in this matter as restricting the freedom of the Government to decide what attitude they shall take now or restricting the freedom of the House of Commons to decide what their attitude shall be. I will go further and say this: that the situation in the present crisis is not precisely the same as it was on the Morocco question. In the Morocco question it was primarily a dispute which concerned France. It was a dispute, as it seemed to us, fastened upon France out of an agreement subsisting between us and France and published to the whole world, under which we engaged to give France diplomatic support. We were pledged to nothing more than diplomatic support, but we were definitely pledged by a definite public agreement to side with France diplomatically on that question.

FRENCH DESIRE FOR PEACE.

The present crisis has originated differently. It has not originated in connection with Morocco or in connection with anything as to which we have a special agreement with France. It has not originated in anything which primarily concerns France. It originated in a dispute between Austria and Servia. I can say this with the most absolute confidence, that no Government and no country had less desire to be involved in the dispute between Austria and Servia than the Government and country of France. They are involved in it because of their obligation of honour under their definite alliance with Russia. It is only fair to say that that obligation of honour cannot apply in the same way to us. We are not parties to the Franco-Russian Alliance. We do not even know the terms of it. So far I have, I think, faithfully and completely cleared the ground with regard to the question of obligations.

OUR ATTITUDE TO FRANCE.

I now come to what the situation requires of us. We have had for many years a long-standing friendship with France. I remember well the feeling of the House and my own feeling, for I spoke on the subject when the late Government made their agreement with France—the warm and cordial feeling resulting from the fact that these two nations who had had perpetual differences in the past had cleared those differences away. I remember saying that it seemed to me that some benign influence had been at work to produce the cordial atmosphere which had made that possible. But how far that friendship entails obligations—and it has been a friendship between the two nations ratified by the nations—how far that friendship entails obligations, let every man look into his own heart and feelings and construe the extent of the

obligations himself. I construe it myself as I feel it, but I do not wish to urge upon anybody else more than their feelings dictate as to all that they should feel about the obligations. The House individually and collectively may judge for itself. Now I speak from the point of view of my own personal feeling. The French fleet is in the Mediterranean. The northern and western coasts of France are absolutely unprotected. When the French fleet came to be concentrated in the Mediterranean there was a situation very different from what it used to be, because the friendship which has grown up between the two countries has given France a sense of security that there is nothing to be feared from us. Her coasts are absolutely undefended. Her fleet is in the Mediterranean, and has for some years been concentrated there, because of the feeling of confidence and friendship which has existed between the two countries.

“WE COULD NOT STAND ASIDE.”

My own feeling is this—that if a foreign fleet, engaged in a war which France had not sought and in which she had not been the aggressor, came down the English Channel and bombarded and battered the undefended coasts of France, we could not stand aside and see such a thing going on practically within sight of our eyes, with our arms folded, looking on dispassionately, doing nothing; and I believe that would be the feeling of this country. There are times when one’s own individual sentiments make one feel that if these circumstances actually did arise that feeling would spread with irresistible force throughout the land. But I want to look at the thing also without sentiment from the point of view of British interests; and it is on that that I am going to base and justify what I presently am going to say to the House. If we are to say nothing at this moment, what is France to do with her fleet in the Mediterranean? If she leaves it there with no statement from us as to what we will do she leaves her northern and western coasts absolutely undefended, at the mercy of a German fleet coming down the Channel to do as it pleases in a war which is a war of life and death between them. If we say nothing, it may be that the French fleet will be withdrawn from the Mediterranean. We are in the presence of a European conflagration. Can anybody set limits to the consequences which may arise out of it? Let us assume that to-day we stand aside in an attitude of neutrality, saying: “No, we cannot undertake and engage to help either party in this conflict”; let us assume that the French fleet is withdrawn from the Mediterranean. The consequences of what has already happened in Europe are tremendous, even in countries which are at peace—in fact, equally whether countries are at peace or at war. Let us assume that

out of that come consequences unforeseen, which make it necessary at a sudden moment that in defence of vital British interests we should go to war. And let us assume—which is quite possible—that Italy, who is now neutral, because as I understand she considers that this war is an aggressive war, and that the Triple Alliance, being a defensive alliance, her obligations do not arise—let us assume that consequences which are now not foreseen should make Italy, perfectly legitimately consulting her own interests, depart from her attitude of neutrality at a time when we are forced in defence of vital British interests to fight ourselves. What will be the position in the Mediterranean then? It might be that at some critical moment those consequences would be forced upon us when the trade routes in the Mediterranean might be vital to this country. Nobody can say that in the course of the next few weeks there is any particular trade route the opening of which may not be vital to this country. What will be our position then? We have not kept a fleet in the Mediterranean which is equal alone to deal with a combination of other fleets in the Mediterranean, and as that would be the very moment when we could not detach more ships for the Mediterranean we might have exposed this country, from our negative attitude at the present moment, to the most appalling risk.

ASSURANCE OF BRITISH PROTECTION.

In these circumstances, from the point of view of British interests, we felt strongly that France was entitled to know at once whether or not, in the event of an attack upon her unprotected northern and western coasts, she could depend on British support. In that emergency and in these compelling circumstances yesterday afternoon I gave to the French Ambassador the following statement:—

“I am authorized to give the assurance that if the German fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against the French coast or shipping the British fleet will give all the protection in its power.”

This assurance is, of course, subject to the policy of His Majesty's Government receiving the support of Parliament, and must not be taken as binding His Majesty's Government to take any action until the above contingency or action of the German fleet takes place. I read that to the House not as a declaration of war on our part, not as entailing immediate aggressive action on our part, but as binding us to take aggressive action should that contingency arise. Things move very hurriedly from hour to hour, fresh news comes in, and I cannot give this in any very formal way; but

I understand that the German Government would be prepared if we would pledge ourselves to neutrality to agree that its fleet would not attack the northern coast of France. I have only heard that shortly before I came to the House, but that is far too narrow an engagement for us.

THE NEUTRALITY OF BELGIUM.

And, sir, there is the very serious consideration, becoming more serious every hour—there is the question of the neutrality of Belgium. I shall have to put before the House at some length what our position in regard to Belgium is. The governing factor is the Treaty of 1839, but this is a Treaty with a history which has accumulated since. In 1870, when there was war between France and Germany, the question of the neutrality of Belgium arose and various things were said. Amongst other things Prince Bismarck gave an assurance to Belgium—that confirming his verbal assurance—he gave in writing a declaration which he said was superfluous in reference to the Treaty in existence—that the German Confederation and its allies would respect the neutrality of Belgium, it being always understood that that neutrality would be respected by the other belligerent Powers. That is valuable as a recognition in 1870 on the part of Germany of the sacredness of these Treaty rights. What was our own attitude? The people who laid down the attitude of the British Government were Lord Granville in the House of Lords and Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons. Lord Granville on the 8th of August used these words. He said:—

“We might have explained to the country and to foreign nations that we did not think this country was bound either morally or internationally, or that its interests were concerned in the maintenance of the neutrality of Belgium; though this course might have had some convenience, though it might have been easy to adhere to it, though it might have saved us from some immediate danger, it is a course which Her Majesty’s Government thought it impossible to adopt in the name of the country with any due regard to the country’s honour and the country’s interests.”

Mr. Gladstone spoke as follows two days later:—

“There is, I admit, the obligation of the Treaty. It is not necessary nor would time permit me to enter into the complicated question of the nature of the obligation under that Treaty. But I am not able to subscribe to the doctrine of those who have held in this House what plainly amounts to the

assertion that the simple fact of the existence of a guarantee is binding on every party to-day irrespectively altogether of the particular position in which it may find itself at the time when the occasion for acting on the guarantee arises. The great authorities upon foreign policy to whom I have been accustomed to listen, such as Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston, never to my knowledge took that rigid and, if I may venture to say so, that impracticable view of a guarantee. The circumstance that there is already an existing guarantee in force is of necessity an important fact, and a weighty element in the case, to which we are bound to give full and ample consideration. There is also this further consideration, the force of which we must all feel most deeply, and that is the common interest against the unmeasured aggrandizement of any Power whatever.”

Well, sir, the Treaty is an old Treaty—1839. That was the view taken of it in 1870. It is one of those Treaties which are founded not only on consideration for Belgium, which benefits under the Treaty, but on the interests of those who guarantee the neutrality of Belgium. The honour and interest is at least as strong to-day as it was in 1870, and we cannot take a more narrow view or a less serious view of our obligations and of the importance of those obligations than was taken by Mr. Gladstone’s Government in 1870.

ATTITUDE OF FRANCE AND GERMANY.

Well now, sir, I will read to the House what took place last week on this subject. When mobilization was beginning I knew that this question must be a most important element in our policy, a most important subject for the House of Commons. I telegraphed at the same time in similar terms to both Paris and Berlin to say that it was essential for us to know whether the French and German Governments respectively were prepared to undertake an engagement to respect the neutrality of Belgium. These are the replies. I got from the French Government this:—

“The French Government are resolved to respect the neutrality of Belgium, and it would only be in the event of some other Power violating that neutrality that France might find herself under the necessity, in order to assure the defence of her security, to act otherwise. This assurance has been given several times. The President of the Republic spoke of it to the King of the Belgians, and the French Minister at Brussels has spontaneously renewed the assurance to the Belgian Minister of Foreign

Affairs to-day.”

From the German Government the reply was:—

“The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs could not possibly give an answer before consulting the Emperor and the Chancellor.”

Sir Edward Goschen, to whom I had said it was important to have an answer soon, said he hoped the answer would not be too long delayed. The German Minister for Foreign Affairs then gave Sir Edward Goschen to understand that he rather doubted whether they could answer at all, as any reply they might give could not fail in the event of war to have the undesirable effect of disclosing to a certain extent part of their plan of campaign. I telegraphed at the same time to Brussels to the Belgian Government, and I got the following reply from Sir Francis Villiers:—

“The Minister for Foreign Affairs thanks me for the communication and replies that Belgium will, to the utmost of her power, maintain neutrality, and expects and desires other Powers to observe and uphold it. He begged me to add that the relations between Belgium and the neighbouring Powers were excellent, and there was no reason to suspect their intentions, but that the Belgian Government believed that in the case of violation they were in a position to defend the neutrality of their country.”

GERMAN ULTIMATUM TO BELGIUM.

It now appears from the news I have received to-day, which has come quite recently—and I am not yet quite sure how far it has reached me in an accurate form—that an ultimatum has been sent to Belgium by Germany, the object of which was to offer Belgium friendly relations with Germany on condition that she would facilitate the passage of German troops through Belgium. Well, sir, until one has these things absolutely definitely up to the last moment, I do not wish to say all that one would say if one was in a position to give the House full, complete, and absolute information upon the point. Sir, we were sounded once in the course of last week, as to whether if a guarantee was given that after the war Belgian integrity would be preserved that would content us. We replied that we could not bargain away whatever interests or obligations we had in Belgian neutrality. Shortly before I reached the House I was informed that the following telegram had been received

from the King of the Belgians by King George:—

“Remembering the numerous proofs of your Majesty’s friendship and that of your predecessor, and the friendly attitude of England in 1870 and the proof of friendship you have just given us again, I make a supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of your Majesty’s Government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium.”

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION.

Diplomatic intervention took place last week on our part. What can diplomatic intervention do now? We have great and vital interests in the independence of Belgium, and integrity is the least part. If Belgium is compelled to submit to allow her neutrality to be violated, of course the situation is clear. Even if by agreement she admitted the violation of her neutrality, it is clear she could only do so under duress. The smaller States in that region of Europe ask but one thing; their one desire is that they should be left alone and independent. The one thing they fear is, I think, not so much that their integrity should be interfered with, but their independence. If in this war which is before Europe the neutrality of one of those countries is violated, if the troops of one of the combatants should violate its neutrality and no action should be taken to resent it, at the end of the war, whatever the integrity may be, the independence will be gone. I have one further quotation from Mr. Gladstone as to what he thought about the independence of Belgium. He said:—

“We have an interest in the independence of Belgium which is wider than that we have in the literal operation of the guarantee. It is found in the answer to the question whether under the circumstances of the case this country, endowed as it is with influence and power, would quietly stand by and witness the perpetration of the direst crime that ever stained the pages of history, and thus become participators in the sin.”

No, sir, if it be the case that there has been anything in the nature of an ultimatum to Belgium, asking her to compromise or violate her neutrality, whatever may have been offered to her in return, her independence is gone if that holds, and, if her independence goes, the independence of Holland will follow.

THE ISSUES AT STAKE.

I ask the House, from the point of view of British interests, to consider what may

be at stake. If France, beaten in a struggle of life and death, beaten to her knees, loses her position as a Great Power and becomes subordinate to the will and power of one greater than herself—consequences which I do not anticipate, because I am sure that France has the power to defend herself with all the energy and ability and patriotism which she has shown so often—still, if that were to happen, and if Belgium fell under the same dominating influence, and then Holland, and then Denmark, then would not Mr. Gladstone's words come true, that there would be a "common interest against the unmeasured aggrandizement of any Power"? And that Power would be opposite to us. It may be said, I suppose, that we might stand aside, husband our strength, and, whatever happened in the course of this war, at the end of it intervene with effect to put things right and to adjust them to our own point of view. If, in a crisis like this, we run away from those obligations of honour and interest as regards the Belgian Treaty, I doubt whether, whatever material force we might have at the end, it would be of very much value in face of the respect that we should have lost. And I do not believe, whether a Great Power stands outside this war or not, it is going to be in a position at the end of this war to exert its material strength. For us, with a powerful fleet, which we believe able to protect our commerce and to protect our shores, and to protect our interests if we are engaged in war, we shall suffer but little more than we shall suffer if we stand aside. We are going to suffer, I am afraid, terribly in this war, whether we are in it or whether we stand outside. Foreign trade is going to stop, not because the trade routes are closed, but because there is no other trade at the other end. Continental nations engaged in war, all their populations, all their energies, all their wealth, engaged in a desperate struggle, cannot carry on the trade with us that they are carrying on in times of peace, whether we are parties to the war or whether we are not. At the end of this war, whether we have stood aside or whether we have been engaged in it, I do not believe for a moment, even if we had stood aside and remained aside, that we should be in a position, a material position, to use our force decisively to undo what had happened in the course of the war, to prevent the whole of the west of Europe opposite to us, if that had been the result of the war, falling under the domination of a single Power.

OUR MORAL POSITION.

And I am quite sure that our moral position would be such——(Loud cheers, in which the end of the sentence was lost.) Now, I have put the question of Belgium somewhat hypothetically, because I am not yet sure of all the facts, but, if the facts

turn out to be as they have reached us at present, it is quite clear that there is an obligation on this country to do its utmost to prevent the consequences to which those facts will lead if they are undisputed. I have read to the House the only engagement that we have yet made definitely with regard to the use of force. I think it is due to the House to say that we have made no engagement yet with regard to sending an Expeditionary armed force out of the country. Mobilization of the fleet has taken place; mobilization of the army is taking place; but we have as yet made no engagement, because I do feel that in the case of an unprecedented European conflagration such as this, with our enormous responsibilities in India and other parts of the Empire, or in countries in British occupation, with all the unknown factors, we must take very carefully into consideration the policy of sending an Expeditionary Force out of the country until we know how we stand. One thing I would say: the one bright spot in the whole of this terrible situation is Ireland. The general feeling throughout Ireland—and I would like this to be clearly understood abroad—does not make that a consideration that we feel we have to take into account. I have told the House how far we have at present gone in commitments, the conditions which influence our policy, and I have dwelt at length to the House upon how vital the condition of the neutrality of Belgium is. What other policy is there before the House?

UNCONDITIONAL NEUTRALITY IMPOSSIBLE.

There is but one way in which the Government could make certain at the present moment of keeping outside this war, and that would be that it should immediately issue a proclamation of unconditional neutrality. We cannot do that; we have made a commitment to France which I have read to the House which prevents us from doing that. We have got the consideration of Belgium which prevents us also from any unconditional neutrality, and, without those conditions absolutely satisfied and satisfactory, we are bound not to shrink from proceeding to the use of all the forces in our power. If we did take that line, and said we will have nothing whatever to do with this matter under any conditions—the Belgian Treaty obligations, the possible position in the Mediterranean, the damage to British interests, and what may happen to France from our failure to support France—if we were to say that all those things mattered nothing, were as nothing, and to say we would stand aside, we should, I believe, sacrifice our respect and good name and reputation before the world. And we should not escape the most serious and grave economic consequences. My object has been to explain the view of the Government and to place before the

House the issue and the choice. I do not for a moment conceal, after what I have said and after the information, incomplete as it is, that I have given to the House with regard to Belgium, that we must be prepared, and we are prepared, for the consequence of having to use all the strength we have at any moment, we know not how soon, to defend ourselves and to take our part. We know, if the facts all be as I have stated them, though I have announced no impending aggressive action on our part, no final decision to resort to force at a moment's notice until we know the whole of the case, that the use of it may be forced upon us.

FORCES OF THE CROWN READY.

As far as the forces of the Crown are concerned, we are ready. I believe the Prime Minister and my right hon. friend the First Lord of the Admiralty have no doubt whatever that the readiness and the efficiency of those forces were never at a higher mark than they are to-day, and never was there a time when confidence was more justified in the power of the Navy to protect our commerce and to protect our shores. The thought is with us always of the suffering and misery entailed, which no country in Europe will escape, and from which no application of neutrality will save us. The amount of harm that can be done by an enemy's ships to our trade is infinitesimal compared with the amount of harm that must be done by the economic conditions forced upon the Continent. The most awful responsibility rests upon the Government in deciding what to advise the House of Commons to do. We have disclosed our mind to the House of Commons; we have disclosed the issue and the information which we have, and made clear to the House, I trust, that we are prepared to face that situation, and that should it develop, as it seems likely to develop, we will face it. We worked for peace up to the last moment and beyond the last moment. How hard, how persistently, and how earnestly we strove for peace last week the House will see from the papers that are before it. But that is over so far as the peace of Europe is concerned. We are now face to face with a situation and all the consequences which it may yet have to unfold. We believe we shall have the support of the House at large in proceeding to whatever consequences, to whatever measures may be forced upon us by the development of facts or action taken by others. I believe the country, so quickly has the situation been forced upon it, has not had time to realize the issue. It is, perhaps, still thinking of the quarrel between Austria and Servia. The absurd complications of this matter which have grown out of the quarrel between Austria and Servia! Russia and Germany, we know, are at war; we do not yet know officially that Austria, the ally whom Germany

is to support, is already at war with Russia. We know that a good deal has been happening on the French frontier. We do not know that the German Ambassador has left Paris. The situation has developed so rapidly that technically, as regards the conditions of war, it is most difficult to describe what has actually happened. I wanted to bring out the underlying things which would affect our own conduct and our own policy, and to put them clearly. I have put these vital facts before the House, and if, as seems only too probable, we are forced, and rapidly forced, to take our stand upon those issues, then I believe, when the country realizes what is at stake, what the real issues are, the magnitude of the impending dangers in the West of Europe which I have endeavoured to describe to the House, then I believe we shall be supported throughout, not only by the House of Commons, but by the determination and the resolution, the courage and the endurance of the whole country.

APPENDIX II.

GERMAN MILITARY POLICY.

(Reprinted, by permission of the "Times," from the authorized English translation of the French Yellow Book, December 1914.)

*M. Etienne, Minister of War, to M. Jonnart,
Minister of Foreign Affairs.*

PARIS, April 2, 1913.

I have just received from a trustworthy source an official and secret report dealing with the strengthening of the German army. It falls under two heads. The first section consists of general considerations, and the second relates in the greatest detail, arm by arm, the steps to be taken. The portions relating to the use of motor cars and of the air services are particularly striking. I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of this document, which appears to me to demand your attention.

ETIENNE.

ANNEXE.

Note regarding the strengthening of the German Army.

BERLIN, March 19, 1913.

I.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE NEW ARMY LAWS.

The increase has taken place in three stages:—

1. The Algeiras Conference removed the last doubts as to the existence of an *Entente* between France, England, and Russia. We have seen, on the other hand, that Austria-Hungary was obliged to detach forces for use against Serbia and Italy. Finally, our (*i.e.*, the German) fleet at that moment was not sufficiently strong. At the end of the dispute the first things to be done, therefore, were to strengthen our coastal defence and to increase our naval force. To the English intention of sending an expeditionary force of 100,000 men to the Continent, we had to reply by better formation of reserves, who would have to be employed according to circumstances on the coast, in our fortresses, and in siege operations. It was already clear at that time that a great effort was indispensable.

2. The French, having violated the Moroccan Conventions, brought about the Agadir incident. At that moment the progress of the French army, the moral recovery of the nation, the technical advantage gained in the field of aviation and in that of *mitrailleuses*, made an attack against the French less easy than in the previous period. Moreover, an attack by the British fleet had to be expected. This difficult situation showed the necessity of an increase in the army. This increase was from this moment on regarded as a minimum.

3. The Balkan War might have dragged us into war in support of our Ally. The new situation to the south of Austria-Hungary diminished the value of the help which this Ally might be able to give us. On the other hand, France had strengthened herself by a new *loi des cadres* (a law strengthening the officering of the French army). It was therefore necessary to advance the date upon which the new military law should come into force. Opinion is being prepared for a further strengthening of the active army, which will ensure an honourable peace to Germany, and the possibility of suitably guaranteeing her influence in the affairs of the world. The new army law and the complementary measures which must follow, will nearly allow the complete attainment of this aim. Neither the ridiculous clamours for revenge of the French jingoes, nor the English gnashing of teeth, nor the wild gestures of the Slavs, will turn us from our end, which is to strengthen and to extend *Deutschtum* (Germanism) throughout the entire world. The French may arm as much as they like. They cannot from one day to another increase their population. The use of a black army in the European theatre of operations will for long remain a dream—a dream, moreover, lacking in beauty.

II.

AIM AND DUTIES OF OUR NATIONAL POLICY, OF OUR ARMY, AND OF ITS SPECIAL BRANCHES.

Our new army law is but an extension of the military education of the German people. Our ancestors of 1813 made greater sacrifices. It is our sacred duty to sharpen the sword which has been placed in our hand, and to hold it ready for our defence as well as to strike our enemy. *The idea that our armaments are a reply to the armaments and policy of the French must be instilled into the people.* The people must be accustomed to think that an offensive war on our part is a necessity if we are to combat the adversary's provocations. We must act with prudence in order to arouse no suspicion, and so as to avoid the crises which might damage our economic life. Things must be so managed that under the weighty impression of powerful armaments, of considerable sacrifices, and of political tension, an outbreak (*Losschlagen*) shall be considered as a deliverance, because

after it would come decades of peace and of prosperity, such as those which followed 1870. The war must be prepared for from a financial point of view. There is much to be done in this direction. The distrust of our financiers must not be aroused, but nevertheless there are many things which it will be impossible to hide.

There need be no worry about the fate of our colonies. The final result in Europe will settle that for them. On the other hand disturbances must be stirred up in Northern Africa and in Russia. This is a means of absorbing forces of the adversary. It is, therefore, vitally necessary that through well-chosen agents we should get into contact with influential people in Egypt, Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco, in order to prepare the necessary measures in case of European war. These secret allies would, of course, be recognized openly in time of war, and on the conclusion of peace they would be guaranteed the preservation of the advantages they had won. These desiderata can be realized. A first attempt made a few years ago gave us the necessary contact. Unfortunately, the relations established then have not been sufficiently consolidated. Whether we like it or not, we shall have to resort to preparations of this sort in order rapidly to bring the campaign to an end. Risings in time of war created by political agents require careful preparation by material means. They must break out simultaneously with the destruction of the means of communication. They should have a guiding head who might be found among influential religious or political chiefs. The Egyptian school is specially suited for this. More and more it gathers together the intellectuals of the Mussulman world. By whatever means we must be strong, so that by a powerful effort we may destroy our enemies in the east and in the west. But in the next European war the small States must be forced to follow us or must be cowed. In certain conditions their armies and their fortresses could rapidly be conquered or neutralized (this might probably be the case with Belgium and Holland), so as to prevent our western enemy from obtaining a base of operations against our flank. To the north we have nothing to fear from Denmark or from the Scandinavian States. We have the less to fear, as in any case we should arrange for the concentration of a strong army in the north, capable of replying to any evil intentions on this side.

At the worst Denmark might be forced by England to abandon her neutrality, but by then the decision would already have been reached by land and sea. Our northern army, the strength of which might be greatly increased by Dutch troops, would oppose an extremely active defence to any attack from this direction. In the south Switzerland forms an extremely solid bulwark, and we can count upon her defending her neutrality against France with energy, and thus protecting this flank. As has been said above, the situation with regard to the small States on our north-

western frontier cannot be viewed in the same light. There the matter is vital for us, and the end towards which we should strive should be to take the offensive in great superiority from the outset. For this it will be necessary to concentrate a great army followed by strong forces of the Landwehr, which will lead the small States to follow us, or, at least, to remain inactive in the theatre of war, and which will crush them in case of armed resistance. If these States could be persuaded to organize their fortification system in such a manner that they could make an effective protection for our flank, the invasion plan might be given up. But for this it would also be necessary, particularly in Belgium, that the army should be reformed so that it might offer serious guarantees of effective resistance. If, on the other hand, that country's defensive organization were turned against us, which would give obvious advantages to our western adversary, we could not in any way offer Belgium any guarantee of the security of her neutrality. A vast field is therefore open for our diplomacy to work in our interests in that country. The plans made in this direction allow of the hope that the offensive might be taken immediately the concentration of the army of the lower Rhine is completed. An ultimatum with brief delay, followed immediately by invasion, would enable us to justify our action sufficiently from the point of view of International Law.

Such are the duties of our army. They demand large effectives. If the enemy attack us, or if we wish to tame him we shall do as did our brothers a hundred years ago. The aroused eagle will take its flight and, seizing the enemy in its sharpened claws, render him harmless. We shall then remember that the provinces of the old German empire, the country of Burgundy and a large portion of Lorraine, are still in the hands of the Franks, that thousands of our German brothers of the Baltic Provinces groan under the yoke of the Slav. It is a national matter to give back to Germany what she formerly possessed.

APPENDIX III.

A SHORT MILITARY GLOSSARY.

APPENDIX III.

A SHORT MILITARY GLOSSARY.

A

Abattis, Entanglements, and Redoubts. See ENTRENCHMENTS.

Advanced Guard, a smaller body of troops moving in front of the marching column to explore the ground and prevent surprise. Every body of troops, small or large, in war time has an advanced guard. In the case of armies or army corps, the advanced guard will be a force of all arms, strong enough to hold its own against an attack until the army behind it can deploy from its marching columns into battle array. The term "strategic advance guard" is used by modern French writers on war in a special sense. It means a large force, perhaps amounting to several army corps, whose mission is to gain touch with the enemy and hold him in position, while the main body, known as the "masse de manœuvre," pivots upon it, and strikes at one or the other of the enemy's flanks.

Armistice, a suspension of hostilities, either locally or generally, by mutual agreement.

Army. This word is used in three different senses—(1) the whole organized land force of a nation; (2) the whole force engaged in a theatre of war:

French army there are a number of regiments of *Chasseurs à cheval*, or mounted rifles—originally raised, like our mounted infantry, for action on foot, the horse being intended only to bring them rapidly to the scene of the fighting. They are now practically like cavalry. Mounted infantry has lately been abolished in our army. But one may say that we still have mounted infantry in the Territorial cyclist battalions, which use the cycle as the horse was formerly used.

Commissariat, the army department that looks after supplies of food and forage. The name comes from the former title of its officers, who used to be called commissaries for supply.

Company. See BATTALION.

Cuirassiers. See CAVALRY.

D

Defile, in ordinary colloquial language means a narrow pass in hills or broken ground. In military language, it is applied to any ground where it is impossible to march on a broad front and troops are forced to move in a narrow column. Thus, a road running between two marshes, where the troops upon it cannot leave the road and form line. would be described as a defile.

(3) a number of army corps grouped under one commander as a subordinate unit in this army of operations. Thus in the Franco-German War there were, on the German side, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Armies, and later the 4th Army, or Army of the Meuse. On the French side, the Army of the Rhine, the Army of Châlons, or reserve army, and later the Army of the North, Army of the Loire, etc.

Army Corps, the largest organized unit in an army. It is made up of from two to three infantry divisions, with a certain proportion of artillery, cavalry, engineers, and various auxiliary services (transport, ammunition columns, ambulances, etc.). It is a little army complete in itself, and its strength is determined by taking the average number of men that can move on a single road, and cover only such a length that in a single day it can close up and form for battle to the front. The strength and organization varies in different armies. In the British army it is made up of two infantry divisions, each of three brigades of four battalions, seventy guns, a small cavalry detachment, and Royal Engineer field and telegraph companies, ammunition and supply columns and ambulances. Besides these divisional troops, the corps commander generally has at his disposal some additional batteries of heavy artillery, telegraph and bridging detachments of engineers, a detachment of the Flying Corps, an

Deploy, to form from a narrow on to a broader front—e.g., to form from marching column into line.

Dragoons. See **CAVALRY**.

E

Enfilade, fire of musketry or artillery not coming from the front, but from a flank, so as to rake the line from end to end. Thus the same projectile may bring down more than one man, or, missing one, is likely to strike others. It is the most deadly kind of fire. As a protection against it, trenches are given a zigzag or broken outline, and at various points obstacles are placed to break the line. These protections against enfilade fire are known as traverses.

Entrenchments, temporary fortifications, formed chiefly by digging in the ground. They are made up chiefly of (1) trenches for infantry, formed either by digging a deep trench and making the unbroken ground in front a protection against hostile fire, or throwing up the earth in the front to make a low mound with a hollow behind it for the men, the fresh earth being concealed with sods, branches, etc. (2) Gun-pits constructed in the same way, but large enough to give shelter to field artillery and howitzers. (3) Redoubts—that is, small completely or partly closed forts formed by digging a ditch and throwing the earth outwards to make a low rampart. Various methods can be used for

infantry battalion to serve as an escort to headquarters, and a mounted detachment for messenger duties. A German army corps has two divisions, each of two brigades of six battalions, an artillery force made up of as many batteries as there are battalions in each division, two cavalry regiments, and attached to the corps heavy batteries, engineer troops, and supply columns.

Army Service Corps, the name in our army for the troops organized to conduct the supply and transport work of the army.

Artillery, a word used for (1) the cannon of an army, with their draught horses and the officers and men who handle them; (2) the guns themselves. The artillery with the British army is made up of two kinds of field guns—the 18-pounder quick-firer gun that works with the infantry, and has its detachment of gunners conveyed on the seats of the limber and on seats on the axle of the gun, and the lighter 13-pounder quick-firer of the horse artillery batteries. The gunners for the 13-pounder are mounted on horses. All field and horse artillery guns are drawn by teams of six horses in three couples, each couple having a driver mounted on the near horse. This team is harnessed to a limber, a heavy two-wheeled carriage with two ammunition boxes on top of it. A ring or eye on the end of the trail of the gun—that is, the iron tube at the back which, with the wheels, supports it when it is in

strengthening such a line of entrenchments; the most important is to clear the front of all cover an enemy could use in the attack, and to put obstacles in his way. The most effective of these is the wire entanglement formed by driving rows of posts into a belt of ground within easy rifle range of the front, and fixing plain or barbed wire in a network from post to post. An older form of obstacle is the abattis, formed by felling trees and bushes, and fastening them together with their branches towards the enemy.

H

Howitzer. See ARTILLERY.

Hussars. See CAVALRY.

L

Lancers. See CAVALRY.

Limber. See ARTILLERY.

Line of Communications, the series of railway lines and roads by which an army in the field receives its supplies of food, ammunition, etc., and its reinforcements, and sends away its sick and wounded. The large armies of to-day cannot live on local supplies, and the line of communications is important to their very existence. Hence the effect of a stroke against this line of supply. The line of communications may include waterways, such as rivers and canals. In the case of an oversea expedition, the sea itself may be part of it, and in that

position—is hitched on to a hook on the limber when the gun is on the move. The gun is not directly attached to its carriage, but is mounted so as to slide freely backwards and forwards in a frame or cradle pivoted on the axle-tree and trail. Above the gun is fixed a device which controls the recoil, and as the gun slides back after being fired, compresses powerful springs which bring it back immediately to the original position. This enables the gun to be fired rapidly again and again without taking aim, as once properly laid on the mark the recoil springs bring it back to its original position after firing. The gunners are protected by a steel shield, and the gun has telescopic sights. Other guns are the 4.5 quick-firing field howitzer, throwing a 38-pound shell. The howitzer is a shorter gun with a larger bore, fired at a high angle of elevation, so as to drop the shell in a curved flight over entrenchments and other obstacles. Field artillery ranges up to from 6,000 to 8,000 yards. Each British division has a battery of heavy guns of still longer range, long 60-pounders drawn by teams of eight heavy draught horses, and throwing their big shells to a distance of 10,000 yards.

Artillery Brigade, in our army a group of three batteries commanded by a colonel.

B

Base, or Base of Supply, or Base

case naval protection of the line of supply is all important.

M

Machine Gun, a gun barrel usually of the same type as the ordinary infantry weapon, mounted so that it can be automatically reloaded and fired in quick succession, and fed with a constant stream of cartridges. Most machine guns are variations of the Maxim type, in which the recoil of the barrel works the reloading machinery. The cartridges are fed to the gun from a moving belt, and the barrel is cooled by a water-jacket. Six hundred shots a minute can be fired, but no machine gun can be kept continuously in action, on account of the rapid overheating of the barrel, which the water-jacket arrangement only delays for a while. In battle the position of machine guns is sometimes revealed to an enemy by the white cloud of steam rushing from the safety valve of the water-jacket.

Masse de Manœuvre. See **ADVANCED GUARD.**

Mixed Brigade, a small mixed force of infantry, cavalry, and guns assembled for a special purpose.

O

Outposts, a line of detachments placed in front of and on the flanks of a halted force, in order (1) to prevent it being attacked before it has time to form

Base, or Base of Supply, or Base of Operations, the district from which an army draws its supplies, etc., and the lines of communication originate. *Advanced base*, usually the place where supply by rail comes to an end, and the work is taken up by road transport. Here large dépôts are formed as a reserve.

Battalion, the unit of infantry. Originally it was the number of men that a mounted officer could command in close order, and in nearly all armies the number is about a thousand. Until recently in our army a battalion was made up of eight companies; following the continental model, it is now organized in four double companies. The company is divided into four platoons (corresponding to the old half companies), and in each platoon there are four sections. The company has six officers and 232 men at full war strength. The battalion, with its four companies, machine gun section, and headquarters, numbers thirty officers and 992 men—1,022 in all.

Battery. Used in two senses. (1) A group of guns protected by earthworks, masonry, or armour in a fortress, in coast defences, or in siege works or field fortifications; (2) a field battery—that is, an organized group of guns with horses, drivers, gunners, and ammunition and other wagons. In a British field battery there are six guns. In most of the continental armies there are four guns in a field battery, the number being

for action; (2) to keep a constant watch upon the ground to the front. An outpost line is generally formed of pickets, which are small bodies of troops that keep sentries posted and patrols in movement to observe the ground in front, and have other detachments, known as supports and reserves, in their immediate rear. (In American military writings and reports pickets are sentries, and the picket line is the sentry line.)

P

Picket. See **OUTPOSTS**.

Platoon. See **BATTALION**.

Pontoon, a kind of large punt or flat-bottomed boat conveyed on a carriage, and used to make floating bridges.

Q

Quick-firing Guns, breech-loading artillery so mounted that, when the gun is fired, the recoil, instead of driving the carriage backwards, sends the gun itself sliding back between the guides of a cradle or trough fixed on the carriage, this recoil movement being controlled by hydraulic brakes and coiling powerful springs, which bring the gun back automatically to the firing position. Thus the gun has not to be relaid after each shot, but can be kept on its target, and fired again and again as quickly as it is reloaded. See **ARTILLERY**.

a field battery, the number being reduced on the theory that four quick-firers can deliver a heavier fire than six of the older guns, and the horses required for the two additional guns are more useful for extra ammunition wagons.

Bivouac. Troops spending the night or a longer period in the open without tents are said to be in bivouac.

Brigade, a small organized group of regiments, commanded by a brigadier-general. In our army an infantry brigade is made up of three or, more usually, four battalions. In the German army, an infantry brigade is made up of two regiments, each of three battalions. A British artillery brigade is made up of three batteries, and is a colonel's command. In the German army it is made up of two regiments, each with six batteries of guns, and is commanded by a brigadier-general.

Brigadier-General, the commander of an infantry or cavalry brigade. In our army this is a temporary rank, held by a colonel or lieutenant-colonel while commanding a brigade. (It may be worth noting that in the French army a "brigadier" is a non-commissioned officer below the rank of sergeant. The French for brigadier-general is "Général de Brigade.")

C

Camp, an assemblage of tents or huts for troops halted. Not used in

R

Regiment. In foreign armies an infantry regiment is generally made up of three battalions acting together under a colonel's command. A cavalry regiment has four squadrons, with usually a fifth squadron left at home to forward reinforcements and train recruits. A regiment of artillery is a permanently organized group of several batteries. In the British army the battalions of the same regiment are seldom seen side by side. In peace time the normal usage is that one of them should be on service at some oversea station, and the other at home training recruits and supplying drafts for the service battalion. Even in war time it is seldom that two battalions of the same regiment are brigaded together. British cavalry regiments have three squadrons, each squadron being organized in four troops. There are six officers and 154 men in a squadron, twenty-five officers and 526 men in a cavalry regiment at war strength.

S

Shell. Field artillery projectile used to be solid shot; it is now always a shell—that is, a hollow projectile containing a bursting charge. The usual form of shell is the shrapnel, so named from its inventor, General Shrapnel, an artillery officer in the days of the Peninsular War. The shrapnel shell is a light steel case packed with bullets, and fitted with a

modern war in Europe unless the halt is a prolonged one, as the conveyance of tents adds greatly to the transport train.

Cantonments. Troops which, when halted, are lodged in the houses of towns and villages, are said to be in cantonments.

Cavalry, the mounted troops of an army employed for (1) scouting and reconnoitring on its front and flanks; (2) action in battle, either mounted in the charge, or dismounted with carbines or rifles. Formerly only dragoons were used for dismounted action, and such were mounted on horses not trained for the charge. Now cavalry of all kinds are trained both for mounted and dismounted action. The various kinds of cavalry are (1) heavy cavalry—cuirassiers and dragoons, originally big men on heavy horses employed only for charging. In our army the cuirass is worn by the Household cavalry only in peace for parade and ceremonial purposes. At manœuvres or in war, they wear neither cuirass nor helmet; but in many foreign armies armour still survives in the cuirassier regiments on active service. (2) Lancers were only introduced into our army after the Waterloo campaign, and into the French army by Napoleon, when he added a number of Polish regiments to the Grand Army. There are now Lancer regiments in all European armies. In the German army they are known as Uhlans, the Polish word for a lancer. In most armies the front rank of

fuse and a bursting charge, intended not, as many suppose, to scatter the balls, but simply to break the case open and allow them to spread. The fuse is arranged so as to burst the shell in the air in front of the troops attacked. The balls then come down in a shower. Against well-aimed shrapnel entrenchments are only a very limited protection. The high-angle fire of howitzers is still more telling against entrenched troops, as the shell can be burst close over their heads, giving the shower of bullets a sharp angle of descent. Another kind of shell arranged to burst on striking contains no bullets, but is loaded with some kind of high explosive. This shell is used to destroy buildings, obstacles, and entrenchments, and against troops to injure and demoralize them by producing heavy explosions in their midst. A star shell, used during night operations, is arranged to burst high in the air, and set free a parachute that, as it descends, supports a small mass of composition that burns with a bright light; or the star shell throws out a shower of magnesium stars like those often seen in firework displays. In either case the object is temporarily to light up the ground below.

Shrapnel. See **SHELL**.

Star Shell. See **SHELL**.

Strategic Advance Guard. See **ADVANCED GUARD**.

all heavy cavalry regiments is armed with a lance on service. The other cavalry weapons are the sword for mounted and the rifle or carbine for dismounted action. (3) Light cavalry are generally known as Hussars, and wear a uniform which is derived from the dress of the Hungarian mounted levies, just as the dress of our Lancers is a modification of the old Polish costume. (4) In the

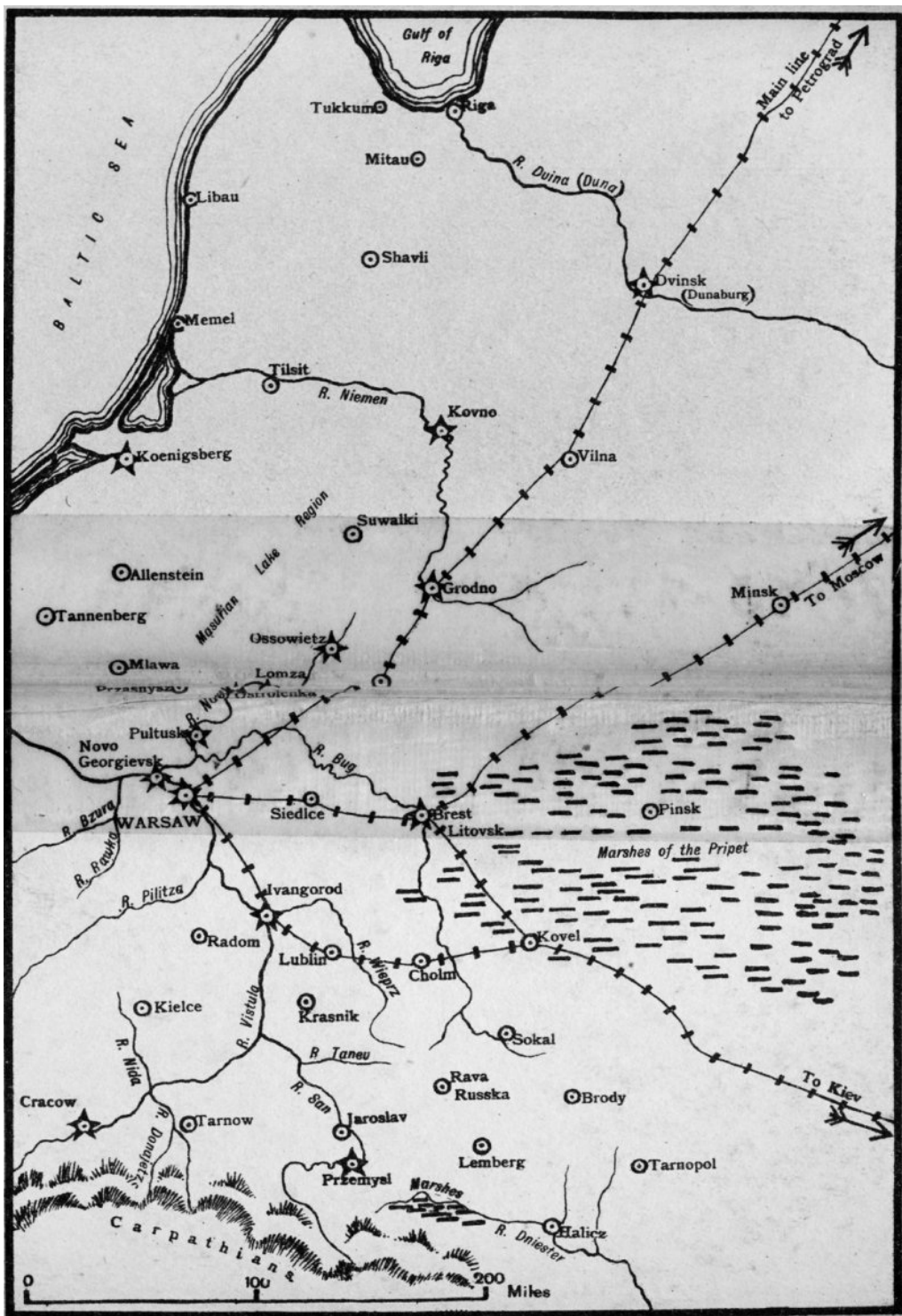
Traverses. See ENFILADE.

Trestle Bridge, an improvised military bridge, made by lashing or bolting together wooden beams into trestles which serve as piers, and carrying the roadway across on these.

U

Uhlands. See CAVALRY.

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TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

Inconsistency in accents has been fixed.

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

Some photographs have been enhanced to be more legible.

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