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CATTLE SKETCHES

1914-15



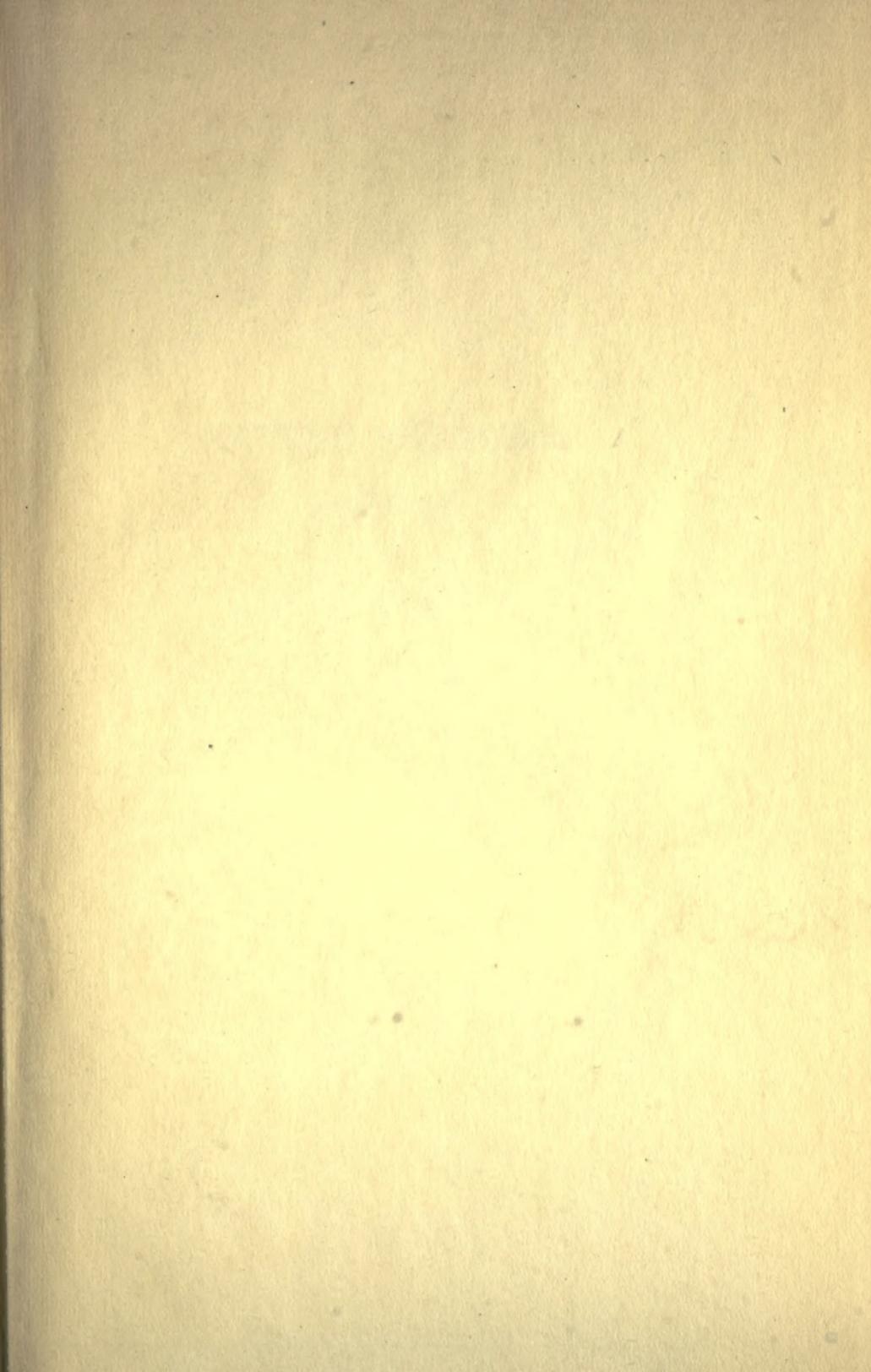
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OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK

TORONTO MELBOURNE BOMBAY

HUMPHREY MILFORD M.A.

PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY



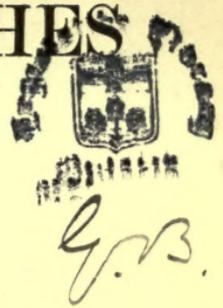
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BATTLE SKETCHES

1914-15

BY

A. NEVILLE HILDITCH



OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1915



*Three of these sketches have already appeared in the
series of Oxford Pamphlets*



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE CAMPAIGNS IN CAMEROON	7
THE STAND OF LIÈGE	43
THE SIEGE OF TSING-TAO	83
TROYON : AN ENGAGEMENT IN THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE	107
GHELUVELT : THE CRISIS OF THE FIRST BATTLE FOR YPRES	121
CORONEL AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS : THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PACIFIC TRADE ROUTES	143
THE BATTLE OF NEUVE CHAPELLE	179

MAPS

CAMEROON	6
LIÈGE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD	42
LIÈGE AND ITS FORTS	53
TSING-TAO	82
TROYON	106
YPRES AND GHELUVELT	120
SOUTHERN SOUTH AMERICA	142
NEUVE CHAPELLE	178

THE CAMPAIGNS IN CAMEROON

I

TOWARDS the end of July, 1914, H.M.S. *Cumberland* was lying at Cowes, in readiness for the Spithead review. She was a cruiser of 9,800 tons, with a primary armament of fourteen 6 in. guns and a speed of twenty-three knots, and was then engaged in the practical training of naval cadets. One evening, when all were settling down to repose, a slip of paper was taken from the wireless office to the captain. It was a coded telegram : Austria had declared war upon Serbia. Immediately everybody was astir. The cadets, who, after cricket at Osborne, had turned in, their hammocks slung on the upper deck, were unfortunate enough to be sent below to be out of the way. Steam was raised, and the *Cumberland* at once weighed, and left for Devonport. Guns were prepared, lyddite shells were fused, warheads were put on the torpedoes. At Devonport coaling was hastily completed, extra men were taken on, and all except twelve of the cadets, shortly to be gazetted as midshipmen, were sent away to their war stations. The cruiser proceeded to Gibraltar immediately. On the night of August 4, officers and men were drawn up before the captain on the quarterdeck : he read out, amid tense silence, Great Britain's declaration of war against Germany. That night the *Cumberland* left Gibraltar ; and after some days, spent in preparing the ship for battle, she arrived off the coast of Nigeria,

with its capital port, inaccessible for large vessels owing to a dangerous bar, of Lagos.

British Nigeria comprises the territories situated on the Bight of Benin between French Dahomey on the west and German Cameroon on the east. Its area totals some 338,000 square miles, its population nearly seventeen millions, statistics which, indeed, compare favourably with the 295,000 square miles and the three and a half million population of Cameroon. The dependency, both in natural features and in inhabitants, presents striking contrasts. A great swamp region, hardly equalled in the world for immensity and gloom, forms much of the coast, where the Atlantic adjoins the vast delta of the Oil Rivers, filtering their sluggish, muddy waters, in countless intercommunicating channels, through thousands of square miles of dank, malodorous slime, covered with mangrove-trees which, where drained waterless, stand rotting in putrefaction. The strange saurian monsters drowsing for ever in the stagnant pools are the only inhabitants impervious to the breath of the malarial mud. The Niger recalls to some travellers, indeed, classical memories of the Styx or the Cocytus. From these pestilential regions the surface of the country mounts through a belt of hills and dense forests, which gradually thin out towards the north, to a hot but healthier tableland, bordering, in sandy desert stretches, the wastes of the Sahara. Kano, the greatest commercial city of the central Sudan, lies upon these arid steppes ; and its ancient walls, opened by thirteen cowhide gates set in massive entrance towers, hold in their spacious confines, watered by a great pool and overlooked by the dome of the Emir's gorgeous palace, Africans of many a varied tongue, colour, or race. To its markets gather the Salaga from Guinca,

the trader from the shores of Chad, the Arab and the Tuareg, bringing tea, sugar, and other European commodities in caravans from Tripoli. From its industries emanate most of the Morocco leather goods on the European market, brought over the desert at great risk and expense, and the clothing of half the population of the Sudan. A railway line links the town with the navigable reaches of the Niger. These, innumerable other waterways, and a second line from Lagos into the interior, give the colony excellent communications, bearing to the coast ports the multifarious products, cocoa, rice and tobacco, rubber and mahogany, cotton and indigo, which a frequent steamship service transports to the docks of Liverpool. Northern Nigeria, indeed, is believed by experts to be the most suitable of all British dependencies for the production of cotton on such a scale as to render the looms of Lancashire independent of sources of supply outside the Empire. The climate of the plateau is favourable, and has the requisite humidity. Violent tornadoes and drenching rains frequently break over the country. The worst of the rainy season takes place in August and September, a fact which, indeed, when war broke out in August 1914, seriously complicated military problems. The commander to whom fell the task of their settlement was Brigadier-General C. M. Dobell.

His task may be stated simply. It was important that all available troops should be organized and prepared for offensive action against Cameroon without delay. The German coastline, 200 miles long, offered a ready shelter for German commerce-destroyers, and there was, moreover, a danger that, unless strong measures were taken by the British authorities against the foes of their nation, British influence amongst the

natives, always alert to note signs of weakness, might sensibly decline. These two considerations, indeed, not only determined the course of policy, they suggested also the course of strategy. Any fear of the coastline being used as an enemy cruiser base must obviously be averted by the occupation of that coastline, and the seizure of Duala, the principal port. A dark and sinister fact supported schemes of such invasion from the sea. German treatment of natives had a reputation for harshness not only throughout West Africa, but throughout the world. If, by the entry of British troops at two or three points on the Nigerian-Cameroon frontier, considerable German forces, led to believe that this was the main line of advance, could be enticed into the interior; if, with coast defences accordingly weakened, Duala and the neighbourhood of the Cameroon estuary could be assaulted suddenly from the sea, and occupied; and if, constantly driven further inland, the Germans were at last forced to depend for their supplies upon native aid, might not native hostility, smouldering during peace, and at this opportunity probably breaking into open flame, be expected ultimately to bring about their capitulation? The French in Dahomey could co-operate both by sea and land to the same purpose. The great point that had brought the Germans into disrepute with the natives was their military spirit, since this was seen in a desire to regulate everything by rule and method, and in a habit of nagging and fault-finding peculiarly abhorrent to the temperamentally easy-going African. The authorities, moreover, habitually solved the labour problem, ever the most insistent of West African problems, by resort to a system of forced labour. When a German planter wanted native workers he notified his government, and

they were brought to him. Conditions such as these, not far short of mere military despotism, had, indeed, more than once given rise to serious trouble, and a revolt of labourers imported from Togoland in 1894 had cost several white lives. None of the natives, it is noteworthy, spoke German, even in Cameroon, but pidgin-English instead. Hausas and Krubois were chiefly utilized for labour purposes, and Hausas almost wholly for the native troops and police, both in Nigeria and in Cameroon. The German native levies numbered several thousand, and the British consisted of three regiments of infantry and two artillery batteries. But on the outbreak of war fresh recruits were speedily raised; and General Dobell's command was later swelled by reinforcements from other British West African dependencies, which had first been employed in the Togoland operations. Meanwhile, he made his preliminary dispositions.

Three British columns were first told off to operate on the Cameroon frontier, in order to create the desired diversions, from Yola, from Ikom, and from Calabar. The incursion from Yola, which it was planned that the 2nd and 5th Nigerias should make, was to be, indeed, a more serious enterprise than a mere raid, its purpose being to overpower the extreme north of Cameroon, and to prevent any retirement thither of the main forces of the enemy. Meanwhile, at all the coast ports of Nigeria preparations for the invasion were hastily pushed forward. Transports were equipped, supplies were collected, troops were organized. In view of a possible shortage of food the Administration took control of the supplies, and no provisions were allowed to be bought without a permit. Considerable difficulty was experienced in preparing maps for the adventure. Maps of Cameroon had to be enlarged, and kilometres turned into miles. To extract

information as to rivers or distances, canoes or bridges, from woolly and perplexed heads proved a tedious and painful task. The cruiser *Cumberland* and the *Dwarf*, a gunboat of 710 tons, carrying two 4 in. guns, were, in the meantime, engaged in reconnoitring the Cameroon coast. It was a shore fringed by countless tiny islands and narrow creeks, where crocodiles, wallowing on the muddy banks, dense with mangroves and prolific vegetation, rendered incursion adventurous. In the midst of these multifarious preparations, at the beginning of September, an ominous report gained currency in the coast settlements. Colonel Maclear's northern column, in the course of its operations from Yola, had been disastrously cut up.

Four days after the declaration of war the 5th (Mounted Infantry) Battalion of the Nigeria Regiment had set out from their barracks at Kano. For seventeen days they journeyed through the bush, and at length reached Yola, where the 2nd Battalion had already concentrated, after a march of 400 miles, no light performance during the rainy season, with rivers and streams in flood. Yola, capital of Adamawa, was situated on the southern side of the Benue, a tributary of the Niger, near the point where the former entered Cameroon, some 400 miles from either Calabar or Duala, and from the sea by river some 850 miles, which, however, small steamers could navigate. In this part of Nigeria, Mohammedanism, a faith embraced by about a tenth of the population, was widely prevalent. It is these particular religionists that Germans single out as especially qualified to be gulled by the most absurd fables, and to be inflamed by the most fanatic passions. A letter is said to have been found, some time later, in the mosque at Yola, purporting to give news, good and

true, from Germany, to the effect that Germans and English had met in battle for one day at an English town; that ten thousand English had been killed, those who fled being thirty thousand; and that these, soon captured, had been sent to Germany with chains around their necks. The letter was written, it was added, in order that all Mussulmans might know that English and French were liars and thieves. Similar intrigue was not, indeed, wholly absent even from the southern parts of Nigeria, where one message was intercepted predicting the invasion of England by a German air fleet, and the slaughter of her inhabitants by the raining down of tigers from the sky. These tidings had in one part been directly productive of slight disaffection. At Yola, therefore, Colonel Maclear was operating in a district which, bordering German territory and susceptible to German influences, rendered circumspection and prudence particularly necessary. How far these circumstances increased his difficulties and contributed to his disaster can only be surmised. He was unquestionably dependent for information respecting the enemy and much of the district upon the natives, though the Benue itself in this neighbourhood had been mapped out eleven years before by an Anglo-German boundary commission. There seems ground for the suspicion that, when entering hostile territory, Maclear's knowledge and preparations were inadequate, and that his advance was precipitate and ill-advised. On August 25, immediately upon the arrival of the Mounted Infantry, the colonel directed them to push forward to Tepe, a small German frontier station 30 miles up-river from Yola, in order to feel the enemy's strength and to reconnoitre the country. The infantry, the 2nd Nigerias, followed in their wake. At Tepe the advance column

first came into contact with the Germans. There was a sharp skirmish, lasting some twenty-five minutes, as a result of which the enemy were forced to retire. The British lost three of their six officers and one white non-commissioned officer, but a distressing incident, which caused a further casualty, occurred after the fighting. A certain Captain Wickham had taken prisoner a German officer, who begged for mercy and told his orderly to respect the Englishman; Wickham turned away to ask his commanding officer for instructions; immediately the orderly brought up his rifle and blew his captor's head off. The German and his orderly were at once shot, and Tepe was burned to the ground. Next morning the column again moved forward up-river, followed by the main body, the infantry, to Saratse. During the ensuing three days the advance was continued towards the important and well-fortified river station of Garua, which formed the most considerable native town of Northern Cameroon. The British fixed their camp four miles away, and made preparations to attack the station. At night on August 29 the 2nd Nigerias moved out of camp, and shortly before midnight reached the enemy's position. There was a surprise in the darkness, and one of the German entrenched works was rushed. Promiscuous firing began, which the colonel ordered to cease on the British side until dawn. The enemy were now alert and watchful. About 4.30, as soon as dawn flushed the horizon, they counter-attacked heavily with the aid of several maxims. These weapons proved deciding factors, and the British, unable to resist or counter their deadly fire, were thrown into confusion. Panic took the native troops at the sight of their comrades falling in large numbers, and they turned and fled, leaving only officers

and non-commissioned officers in the entrenchments. It was a mortifying position for brave and spirited men, but flight was inevitable. The remnants of the battalion at length straggled into their camp, and it was seen in what appalling loss the venture had resulted. Ten out of 21 officers, and 250 out of 600 native rank and file, had fallen. Maclear himself had met his death, so Captain Adams now assumed command. It was probable that the enemy would take the offensive, and withdrawal into British territory forthwith was decided upon. The camp was not, however, evacuated for some hours, in case more stragglers might turn up, and it was feared, when the column set out, that the delay would have given the Germans an opportunity to follow up their success. The enemy, however, were apparently engaged otherwise. Two British surgeons who had remained behind to tend the wounded were apprehended, but no efforts, fortunately for the retreating column, were made to molest it. Captain Adams made a cautious and clever retreat to the frontier, and reached it safely. It is said that, some days after, the Germans sent into Yola to ask for letters for the prisoners they had taken : and later they returned the rings found on the hands of the dead.

II

Midway down the coast of Cameroon a lofty, volcanic mountain, called, from the frequent storms that flash and growl round its crest, the Throne of Thunder, abuts into the ocean. The traveller who, traversing its forested slopes, scales the sterile crater, 13,760 feet above the sea, can survey in clear weather a panorama of wonderful colour and beauty, containing the main centres and channels of the colony's life and activity,

as from a bird's-eye view. Inland extends, sending in rainy weather countless small torrents cascading to the sea, the picturesque mountain-range of Rumbi and Omon, running north-east, with numerous spurs branching off, for some hundreds of miles, and merging, in a final sweep to south-east, with the stretches of high and broken plateau which form, save for a strip of lowland coast, the principal part of Cameroon. In the opposite direction, some twenty miles away seaward, Fernando Po rises out of the Atlantic with the majestic grace peculiar to a volcanic island, its peak reaching 10,190 feet : while immediately below, where the foothills of the Throne encircle the lovely Bay of Amba, studded with innumerable rocky islets, lies Victoria, the seaport of the administrative capital, Buea, which is situated on the southern mountain-side, at a 3,000 feet altitude. The magnificent road, as wide as Oxford Street, which connects Buea and Victoria, passes through the grand, primeval forest whose trees, their immense trunks festooned with mauve convolvuli and varied twining lianas, alive with gorgeous butterflies and birds whose plumage shimmers with every brilliant hue, lose their feet in billows of exuberant shrub and fern. The great stretch of the estuary of Cameroon, spreading beneath Buea southwards, has for its shores, where the small rivers Wuri, Bimbia, and Mungo empty into it, many miles of black mangrove-swamp, threaded with gleaming waterways, and bordering inland a belt of high forest. Some miles from the mouth of the Wuri, Duala and Bonaberi appear upon opposite banks, whence railway-lines run north and east, receiving the produce, ivory, rubber, vanilla, tobacco, coffee, of field and factory, and pouring them upon the wharves of Duala.

This port was, until recently, in many ways very typical of German colonial life and methods. It was the head-quarters of the merchants and missionaries, and contained, with its 22,000 natives, some 200 Europeans. It was beautifully situated, if somewhat straggling, well laid out in wide and tree-lined streets, had a fine park containing the government offices, and was furnished with excellent sanitation. The numerous notices which everywhere met the eye, 'Bakerei', 'Condetorei', &c., reminded the traveller strangely of some haunt of the Black Forest. Germans sought, indeed, to reproduce in the colony as far as possible the life of their Fatherland. They set aside a colonial 'Widows and Orphans' fund, upon which men drew subsidies enabling them to take out their wives to the colony, and no more pleasing sight could be seen in the whole of West Africa than man and matron arm-in-arm beside their charming, red-roofed bungalow, gay with fern and flower, whose open door disclosed, perhaps, glimpses of a snowy tablecloth bright with polished silver and glass. Nor were aspects of the Fatherland alone represented in social and domestic circles. In administrative and commercial spheres the unmistakable stamp of German method and organization was everywhere impressed. It combined, indeed, with greater absolutism and greater efficiency a more enlightened attitude between commerce and the government, assisted as the latter was by an advisory council of the principal merchants, than was to be found in any other West African dependency. That caste aloofness between trader and official from which unhappily British West African colonies were not free, had no counterpart in Cameroon. Even the British merchant was warmly welcomed, not for himself, but for his trade. The ship

that steamed into a German port met with no delay owing to the medical officer being at dinner or tennis, but with a promptness and thoroughness strongly in contrast with its usual reception at a French or Portuguese port. British and German steamship lines, indeed, were keenly devoted to cargo, but of the Woermann vessels particularly a report was current in the Bights that they would lie off and wait for the stuff to grow. The influences and energies that had impelled the vast German trade expansion which Europe had recently seen were all at work in Cameroon, and though the volume of the latter's trade just before the outbreak of war was only a sixth of that of Nigeria, keen rivalry promised between the two colonies. Trade, however, came almost completely to a standstill after August 1914. The energies of the numerous German settlers, who, having all had military training, were now armed for military service, became immediately absorbed with usual German intensity in local war. Troops were distributed at points along the near frontiers, and British movements were watched, as far as possible, with close attention. The circumstances and the resources of the colony dictated a defensive, not an offensive rôle. Events were not long in developing. About the time that news was beginning to filter through regarding the British defeat at Garua, urgent messages reached Duala for reinforcements to stem a second British invasion, so far victorious, near Nsanakang.

Nsanakang was a compact little village, with a comfortable 'rest house' and a large iron-built factory, situated upon the Cross river, five miles inside the Cameroon frontier. The Cross at this point was some eighty yards wide, and the bush around was so prolific that it grew densely to within a hundred yards of the

buildings, which could thus readily be made untenable by no great number of snipers. British reconnaissances from Ikom, in one of which there was a slight skirmish with the enemy, were not slow to recognize the weaknesses of the place. At dawn on August 25 an alarm was given throughout the village: the English were outside and preparing to attack. Presently to watchers within the defences a canoe appeared round a bend of the river containing a British officer and a canoe-boy. The Germans met it with a hail of bullets, and the canoe-boy jumped overboard. The unfortunate officer spun round and round in the middle of the river, but at length, miraculously preserved, escaped round the bend, where a steam-launch, constituting one of three columns engaged in the attack, was waiting. The launch, which carried guns, now moved up-stream stern first, to avoid exposing itself by turning should retirement become necessary. Three times, indeed, this proved to be the case, and finally, still no Union Jack appearing, it was concluded that the land columns had met with a check. But soon a canoe came paddling swiftly down. The village had been taken. The flag was not flying because it had, unfortunately, been handed to a canoe-boy, who, when a German outpost was encountered in the darkness, had bolted. Nsanakang was now taken possession of by the British, and a garrison of 200 men was stationed there. Meanwhile, another expedition was engaged in a similar raid into German territory nearer the sea-coast. A small force, starting from Calabar, crossed the Akpa Jafe river, which here formed the boundary-line, and on August 29 seized Archibong, on the road to Rio del Rey, after slight resistance. A week later German reinforcements, brought up from Duala, fell upon Nsanakang.



At two o'clock in the morning of Sunday, September 6, sudden tumult broke the stillness of the forest enclosing the village. Rifle-shots cracked sharply in the darkness. The British, on the alert, immediately replied. This, however, was as the enemy had hoped, for it enabled them to locate the British entrenchments. The Germans, some 800 strong, now so placed their machine-guns, with which they were amply provided, as to enfilade the position. At length twilight filtering through the branches indicated the approach of dawn. About five o'clock the Germans opened fire from their prepared positions, situated on high ground on the left, and the rattling of their maxims could be heard for fifteen miles in the clear morning air. A British motor-launch, summoned by the sound, attempted to reach the village, but was driven back by fusillades from the river banks. The defenders in Nsanakang, heavily outnumbered, and outclassed in weapons, stood their ground with stubborn courage. To move about in their entrenchments, with hostile machine-guns at so short a range, was practically impossible. Ammunition could not be distributed, and after some time the supplies available began to give out. The trenches became filled with dead and dying: the enemy, however, also suffered severely, losing their commandant, assistant-commandant, and many officers. A retirement was being contemplated, indeed, by the Germans, when the British shortage of ammunition in the firing line became apparent. Captain Milne-Howe, commanding the defenders, realized that his men, fired at from all sides, their numbers dwindling through casualties, could hold their own no longer. Withdrawal was impossible, surrender was inconceivable. He ordered a charge: a number of his men, after a sharp

struggle, managed to break through the enemy and escape into the bush. British officers at Ikom, the advanced base a few miles inside the Nigerian frontier, were horrified during the next few days by the arrival of survivors, Englishmen and natives, bedraggled, starved, and torn, who had suffered terrible privations in the pathless bush, some having been for days without food. Not a fifth of the original garrison at length straggled in. Of the natives, the losses numbered 95 killed, 16 wounded, and 49 captured, the proportion of killed being due, it is said, to the slaughter of wounded men. The German casualties, however, were scarcely less. The enemy sent to Ikom under a flag of truce to propose an armistice, and by agreement Nsanakang was declared a neutral zone in order that the wounded of both sides might be cared for. Meanwhile, a large part of the forces which had been operating from Ikom had already hastened back to Calabar, where preparations for the invasion of Cameroon by sea were nearing completion.

The task of the *Cumberland* and the *Dwarf*, in reconnoitring the approaches to Duala, was both difficult and adventurous. The position of the town upon the Wuri was not far from where the Cameroon estuary, a wide and navigable bay, broken by innumerable creeks, received the river's waters. Many of these creeks it was necessary to sound, and often thrilling exploits, welcomed with zest by youthful midshipmen, took place. Picket-boat or pinnace, exploring unknown channels, would encounter some hostile motor-launch, or run into ambush from the banks. One such picket-boat gained notoriety even amongst the Germans, who named it the 'Red Devil', for its hairbreadth escapes and exciting adventures. On September 13 it was

sent up one of the creeks to look for a vessel that had fired at one of the British small craft during the night. While examining some native huts on the bank the crew of the 'Red Devil' sighted an enemy steam-launch, and gave chase, firing with a three-pounder gun. The launch disappeared round a bend, and the picket-boat followed at full speed. The British beheld, to their horror, a large armed merchantman only 400 yards away. They sent shots into her bows, turned, and fled. The German vessel gave chase. For fifteen minutes shot and shrapnel splashed into the water close around, but fortunately missed, until at length the picket-boat sped round a bend, out of sight and out of danger. Next day the enemy attempted a daring enterprise. Under cover of darkness a man in a small steamboat, its bows laden with high explosive set for discharge, came steaming down towards the *Dwarf*. He was, indeed, by profession a man of peace, being a German missionary, who undertook the task because he was, he said, a warrior first, an evangelist afterwards. As he neared the gunboat he dived, at the critical moment, into the waves. By good fortune, in doing so he put the helm hard by, and the infernal engine, veering, missed the *Dwarf* by inches. Both steamboat and missionary were secured. The gunboat, able from her size to navigate shallow waters, came in for more than one such effort at destruction. Two days after the first attempt, an old guard-ship, the *Nachtigal*, essayed to ram the British vessel, but the effort completely miscarried, the German being wrecked with a loss of 36 men, and the *Dwarf* being only slightly damaged and without casualties. Yet again, some days later, a further attack by two hostile launches, armed with spar torpedoes, was similarly frustrated. Another

danger to the British vessels was constituted by the numerous floating mines scattered in the channel leading to Duala, which was also obstructed nine miles from the river-mouth by at least ten sunken ships. Some of the latter were, however, blown up by gun-cotton and dynamite, the channel being cleared sufficiently for navigation and swept for mines to within three miles of Duala. Twelve were found and exploded by rifle-fire. Meanwhile, the British troopships conveying the invading force were drawing rapidly nigh.

The flotilla consisted of five transports, escorted by the cruiser *Challenger*, and two or three colliers. Life aboard presented a curious study in contrasts and varieties. Staff officers who might have been straight from Piccadilly, native carriers clothed in what might have been a soiled duster, Nigerian railway, transport, and survey men, some thousand native troops, a few Hausa Waffs, their fingers and toes stained scarlet with henna, two native deserters from Cameroon, surgeons, nurses, a political officer, a guide, a financial agent, an Anglican 'sky-pilot', and a Roman priest, formed surely the strangest invading party to which military history or the records of colonial conquest can point. The difficulty of the venture was not under-estimated: it was believed aboard that, in addition to native troops, the German defenders included 3,000 whites, and General Dobell himself drew attention to the fact that the Germans considered Duala impregnable; sunken wrecks blocked the river-mouth, and mines had been sown broadcast. The voyage was lengthy and monotonous. The coastline, 'flat, stale, and unprofitable' it was named on board, was unvarying with its fringe, broken by numerous inlets, of low-lying bush, fronted by white surf, and backed by cloud-studded blue sky.

Away to the south, however, forming, as they were approached, a magnificent spectacle, the Throne of Thunder and Fernando Po rose grandly from the waters. When the flotilla entered the Cameroon estuary, where lay the *Cumberland* and the *Dwarf*, the aspect at sunset, heightened by the gorgeous phenomena of a West African sunset, became indescribably sublime. To north-west the Peak of Cameroon, partly hidden in the clouds, Buea and Victoria invisible, and to westward the purple mountain of Fernando Po, rearing its summit from the sea, appeared, standing stark against skies upon which were reflected all the hues of orange and of emerald; while in the background, morse messages flashing from one to another through the twilight, the forms of the ships showed sombre and still. They made already quite a formidable fleet: but the French expedition, now nearing the rendezvous, was soon to swell its number.

III

The commander of the forces in French Dahomey was General Aymerich, who had to deal with an extraordinary military position. The French-German frontier, an irregular line touching in its course both Lake Chad and the Congo, was three times the length of the British-German frontier, and the troops available were few and scattered. But two circumstances influenced Aymerich's dispositions. It was desirable to conform to the British plan of holding as many of the enemy as possible in the interior, while the main attack from the sea was being delivered. That French troops should engage the enemy inland was, therefore, as important as that they should take part in the coastal operations. During the

Agadir crisis of 1911, moreover, to ensure an amicable settlement, France had ceded to Germany an extensive and valuable strip of her African territory adjoining Cameroon. It was fitting that this area should be reoccupied without delay. Upon these lines, therefore, General Aymerich had, since the outbreak of war, proceeded. Two columns were organized, operating in the north and in the south-east, and overran much of the ceded area with little difficulty. Meanwhile, an expeditionary force was prepared at Libreville to act under General Dobell with the British troops attacking Duala. French war vessels also were not inactive. Cocobaach, to the north of Gaboon, was captured by a gunboat. The Republican cruiser *Surprise* on September 24 appeared off Ukoki, in Corisco Bay, an estuary full of reefs and sandbanks, escorting a military force, and two small German armed liners, the *Rhios* and the *Itolo*, were, as it was officially announced, actually surprised, and sunk. The Germans were driven back, and Ukoki was occupied. On the following day, the French expedition having now joined the British flotilla, the bombardment of Duala began.

It was the *Challenger* which was directed to force the entrance of the river and to open bombardment. Her displacement was greatly less than that of the *Cumberland*, and greatly more than that of the *Dwarf*. She carried 6-inch guns, moreover, which could be made effective siege pieces. On September 25 the cruiser, from a three-mile range, comfortably out of reach of the German forts, opened the attack. The shelling was continued at intervals for two days, and on the second day, the 26th, a landing was attempted. A flotilla of tugs, motor-launches, and picket-boats, among them the 'Red Devil', carrying Nigerian troops, moved off

at about four o'clock in the morning up one of the creeks. The boats were nearly all armoured, and provided with maxims or three-pounders. The enemy were, however, upon the alert, and the stretches of black, slimy ooze which fringed the banks proved fatal to the enterprise. As soon as the expedition stopped at a spot less unfavourable than elsewhere, three signal shots from watchers on the shores brought up the defenders in force. The banks were overgrown with a dense jungle of mangroves, which afforded ideal cover for the enemy. A tremendous fusillade was soon opened upon the boats, which, while they swept the banks vigorously with their maxims, had to fire at an invisible foe. So stubborn was the resistance, and so impassable the mud-banks, that the landing had to be given up. Some of the troops were, indeed, put ashore, but proved unable to relieve the situation, or to make headway in the swamp. Meanwhile, the Germans in the Duala forts were suffering severely from the bombardment. An effort to destroy the *Challenger* by ramming her was made by a ship prepared with dynamite, but miscarried. The German fort guns were outranged, and the fates themselves appeared to be on the side of the British, whose ships seemed charmed against mine or sunken hulk, fire-ship or dynamite. It was evident that prolonged resistance would be futile, and preparations for evacuation were made. The wireless station was dismantled, and all the instruments were destroyed. Nine merchant steamers and a river-gunboat, the *Soden*, lying in harbour, were sent up-stream for a few miles. The floating dock, however, and the *Herzogin Elizabeth*, a small government vessel, which had been set afire by shells, were sunk. On Sunday, September 27, look-out men upon the *Challenger* espied a white flag fluttering

from the town. Messages were at once exchanged between the opposing forces: the surrender was, however, unconditional. Troops were soon landed; and on the 28th General Dobell went ashore and formally took possession of the town and port. The occupation resulted in the release of Dagadu, the old Chief of Kpandu, in Togoland, whom the Germans had exiled to Duala eighteen months before on account of his British sympathies. He had, in 1886, applied to be taken under British protection, and had been given a British flag, but his territory had come within the German sphere when the Togoland boundary was delimited. He retained his flag, however, until his exile early in 1913, when it was discovered. Dagadu showed his gratitude for his release upon his return to Kpandu shortly afterwards, hailed by his people with great enthusiasm. 'It was my willing to give more', was the old chief's cry when, out of his depleted fortunes and the scanty resources of his 'village youngmen', he sent £100 as a contribution to the War Fund.

The footing now gained was consolidated and extended without delay. Bonaberi, a neighbouring town on the other side of the river, was occupied. It was feared that the Germans would counter-attack, and careful watch had to be maintained. An alarm was sounded, indeed, just at dusk, some of the enemy having apparently been seen, but no attack followed. At seven o'clock next morning about a hundred men were sent with a naval party in tugs and launches to seize the merchant steamers that had withdrawn up-river. The men loaded their rifles and prepared for action, since it was doubtful with what reception they would meet. At length the *Hans Woermann*, the largest of the steamers, was approached. The British proceeded

cautiously along. They were greeted, however, not by bullets, but by British cheers. Some thirty English, including two women and a baby, had been kept prisoner on board, and were overcome with delight at their release. The German crew, when the British flag had gone up over Duala, had thrown overboard all their rifles and ammunition, and now received the expedition quietly, though sullenly. The ships were immediately searched, the white crews being removed as prisoners, the native engine-room ratings being retained. The merchantmen, which numbered nine vessels, with a total tonnage of nearly 31,000 tons, were in good order, most of them still containing their cargoes and considerable quantities of coal. The gunboat *Soden* was also among the captures, being eventually recommissioned for British use. It was expected at Duala, moreover, that the sunken floating dock could be raised and utilized. All through the operations which had preceded and followed the capture of the town the sole casualties had been one naval signalman and four natives wounded; while 400 German prisoners had been taken. But such success as the British had met with did not deceive them as to the difficulties in front. Two defeats had yet to be retrieved. During the following week preparations were energetically made for immediate advance, which was planned to take three directions.

The railway line upon which Duala lay ran to south-east for about a hundred miles towards Edea and Sende, and was continued from Bonaberi in a northerly direction towards Susa for some sixty miles. The river Wuri provided a means of easy transit to the north-east, the chief township on its banks being Jabassi, some forty miles up-stream. Advance in these three direc-

tions formed obviously the soundest ways of forcing the enemy back into the inhospitable interior, though each was certain to be strongly guarded. Columns were organized for each, and in a week all was in readiness. An Anglo-French force which set out along the southern railway towards Edea was the first to come in contact with the Germans, who, at Japoma bridge, contested the crossing of the French. The French Senegalese Laptot, very fine, fierce fellows, carried 'coupe-coupes', to which bayonets were fixed, forming a sort of kukri, and a dangerous weapon at close quarters. They acquitted themselves with brilliant success, and forced the river passage with little loss. Meanwhile, an attack upon Jabassi was impending.

The approaches to the town had already been reconnoitred. The 'Red Devil' had set out some days earlier, and during a three-day trip, not without incident, had carefully scanned the banks for possible landing-places. The enemy were reported in force, and fairly strongly entrenched. By October 7 all was ready for the main expedition. On that day a flotilla of 27 small boats, including a lighter towed by a tug, and a steamer, in each of which naval 6-inch guns had been mounted, and which respectively were nicknamed the 'Dreadnought' and the 'Super-Dreadnought', left Duala for Jabassi. They carried a military force consisting of two battalions of infantry, with four small field-guns, commanded by Colonel Gorges. A five-knot current was racing down-stream, and the voyage up was arduous and long. The 'Red Devil' led the way, and in about twelve hours a German outpost was encountered, which, after a few shots had passed, was dispersed by shells from one of the big guns. It was decided to remain at this spot for the night, and one company was at once



landed and placed on picket duty. The night passed off uneventfully. Early next morning the boats began to move off, and the troops were all landed at a point three or four miles from Jabassi. Both naval and military forces now advanced up the river. When about a thousand yards from the town the first signs of resistance were met with. The 'Red Devil', venturing forward to reconnoitre, had a narrow escape under hot maxim and rifle fire from the banks. On land machine-guns, the predominant German weapons, proved terribly effective, and the British, unable to leave cover under the incessant hail of bullets, were brought to a standstill. A flank attack was attempted, but was foiled by the watchful enemy. For some time the attacking force, under the heat and glare of an exceptionally brilliant sun, was held up completely before the hostile lines. The flotilla in the river, notably the two 'Dreadnoughts', played terrible havoc among the enemy on the banks, but was unable, owing to the uncertain ranges and the dense jungle, to co-operate usefully with the land forces. Nor could the field-guns, for similar reasons, render effective aid. There was no alternative but retirement and re-embarkation. This was done in good order, and during the rest of the day and the 9th October the troops were rested. On the 10th General Dobell came up by launch, and after surveying the position ordered the whole force back to Duala. A week later the expedition set out again. The strict precautions taken and the alternative plans prepared this time proved, however, needless. The enemy had for some reason evacuated the town, and it was occupied without resistance.

A few days after the seizure of Jabassi the column advancing up the northern railway, under Lieut.-

Colonel Haywood, came into action with the Germans at Susa, 34 miles from Bonaberi, and forced them to retire. Equally successful was a further attack along the southern railway, upon Edea, an important station about 25 miles beyond Japoma. It was determined to attack the town, which lay upon the river Sanaga 56 miles from the coast, by a river expedition. On October 20 a strong force, mainly French, set out from Duala along the sea-coast in small boats, escorted by two ships. The voyage proved notable for discomfort and mishap. So crowded were the boats that sleep was impossible, and commissariat arrangements, labouring under difficulties, partly broke down. In crossing the bar at the mouth of the Sanaga an accident resulted in three officers being drowned, while one of the boats ran aground in the river, the men having to be taken off in smaller craft. At length, on the 23rd, the troops were landed, and a base camp was established, one and a half companies of the West African Regiment, composing the British force, being left as garrison, while the remainder, the French, under Colonel Mayer, set off towards Edea. During two days the column, following a road which wound through the dense, tropical forest, was constantly beset by hostile snipers, who made use of elephant-guns and maxims, cunningly concealed in trees. Advance under such conditions was sorely trying, but the French, undismayed, pushed on tenaciously until, on the third day, resistance practically ceased. The casualties had been fewer than might have been expected. A big final action was, nevertheless, anticipated before the objective could be gained. When the French arrived on October 26, however, they found Edea evacuated, the Germans having entrained and made off, with goods and valuables, down the

railway line towards Yaunde, which they shortly after made their temporary capital; for Buea, the administrative capital, was soon in British hands.

Dobell, meanwhile, had been planning and organizing operations on an extensive scale for the capture of both Buea and Victoria. The latter lay at the head of Ambas Bay, and Buea some miles up the slope of the great mountain. The operations, skilfully prepared, carried all before them. Large naval and military forces advanced from different points upon Buea, while the *Bruix*, a French cruiser, and the *Ivy*, a Nigerian government yacht, bombarded Victoria. The latter was seized upon November 13 by a force of British marines, and two days later Buea was taken. The Germans were scattered in all directions. Some idea of the complete success of these undertakings may be gained from the fact that not a single white casualty was suffered.

IV

General Dobell could now congratulate himself upon being within sight of his objective. By the end of the year the position was still more satisfactory, so much so, indeed, that on December 21 the port of Duala was reopened to trade, though the sale of foodstuffs, without special permit, was forbidden. Permission to trade was also extended to much of the area then occupied by the Allied forces. Every month had seen, and continued to see, this area steadily increase. On November 13 a column advancing along the northern railway from Susa had driven the enemy before them and occupied Mujuka, some 50 miles up the line from Bonaberi. The retreating Germans blew up the permanent way at frequent intervals. At the beginning

of December Lum, 20 miles farther on, was the scene of a sharp engagement, in which the British, ambushed in a deep cutting by Germans with concealed maxims, sustained a dozen casualties. Ambush, indeed, constituted one of the principal dangers of the whole campaign, as well as a supreme trial to the nerves. Eternal twilight reigned in the thick forests, the trees interlacing their boughs, festooned with creepers, far overhead. Columns picking their way in single file through the dense bush would suddenly be checked by shots ringing out in the wonderful stillness, very often taken by the native carriers as a signal to stampede with their loads. Continuing to advance, however, the British had by December 10 reached the railhead, and the following day they pushed on to Bare, an important native town eight miles beyond, which surrendered after slight resistance. Five railway-engines, much other rolling-stock, and two aeroplanes were taken: sixty whites, many of whom were women and children, half the former wearing riding-breeches and leggings, fell also into British hands. And not least among the captures were two or three hundred large bottles of soda-water, which British officers, after long abstention, found very palatable. After adequate rest, Colonel Haywood's force divided into two columns, and pressed on inland, through hilly country, towards the stronghold of Tschanj, 60 miles away, whither the enemy had retired. German sniping patrols hindered rapid advance, but attempts at resistance in force were repulsed with ease by field-gun fire. Tschanj was occupied in about a fortnight with little opposition, more prisoners being taken. Meanwhile, many miles north of this column, near where the Cross River traversed the Nigerian-Cameroon borders, the Germans had, following their

early success at Nsanakang, been making small frontier incursions, retiring, in every case but one, without encountering the British, whose detachment at Ikom was on December 1 reinforced from Lagos. An attack by 300 of the enemy to the east of Ikom in the middle of November constituted the exception, but was, after a preliminary success at Danare, 25 miles east of the town, repulsed with loss at Abonorok. The fresh British troops at Ikom, after a rest of ten days, advanced slowly up the Cross towards German territory. The surface of the country was here broken greatly by mountain and river, and marching proved terribly trying, particularly where the road lay for distances in the beds of streams a foot deep. Blockhouses were constructed along the frontier, and an advanced base fixed at Nsarum. Outposts placed on the boundary came occasionally into contact with the enemy, and sometimes met with exciting adventures, varied by frequent false alarms prompted by native farmers who, for security, were anxious to retain the British troops in their villages. Early on Christmas morning, however, a column crossed into German territory, their objective being Ossidinge, 25 miles on. Five miles outside this stronghold the enemy had left a white flag, and the British were met by a messenger bearing the keys and announcing the surrender of the place. But on arrival, off their guard, they were fusilladed by maxims. The Germans were, however, easily dispersed by artillery, and the attackers took possession of the town, which, after fortifying it, they utilized as a base for raids into the interior during January. Small engagements between patrols continued to take place frequently, as was the case, indeed, at many points throughout the Nigerian-Cameroon boundary, some

650 miles long. Among other areas, the district around Garua, in the extreme north of the colony, also the scene of an initial German success, showed renewed activity.

In this part, the extreme north, a detachment of the Nigerian Regiment had, as early as October, partly retrieved the disaster by occupying Marua, an important town 600 miles inland, the German forces all having concentrated at Garua. The British obtained possession on October 8, a month before war broke out with Turkey, of a German proclamation addressed in Arabic to the Chief of Marua, indicating the cause of the war as the desire of the English to take Constantinople and to give it to the pagans. Misrepresentations such as these, however, by no means limited, as has been seen to German Mohammedan subjects, had little influence upon British subjects. During the first few months of war many gifts and messages of loyalty, indeed, poured in to the Governor of Nigeria. The Emir of Bornu sent to the troops at Marua horses, corn, and cattle, and contributed to the war chest £3,500 from the native treasury. 'I am the servant of our lord the King,' he said. 'Why should I not help him to eat up his enemies?' The same potentate, many months later, when Garua fell to the British, ordered three days of public rejoicing in his capital, and tendered in thanksgiving a further contribution of £1,000, with many prayers for the victory of British arms and for the lengthening of Governor Lugard's days. But Garua was yet to fall: reinforcements, and certain big guns from Morocco and elsewhere, had yet to be brought up, and meanwhile in the south, as the new year advanced, the Germans were slowly driven into the interior and surrounded.

The fighting in Cameroon now developed into guerrilla warfare such as almost every war of conquest produces. The South African War was won within a year, but two years of blockhouse fighting were necessary before the enemy could be brought to terms. The campaigns in Cameroon constituted just such another war on a smaller scale, won, after preliminary reverses, within a few months, but not brought to a close until after many months of bush fighting. Such fighting was highly dangerous, and saw many thrilling adventures, in one of which, notably, Captain Butler, of the Gold Coast Regiment, attacked and defeated with 13 men 100 of the enemy, capturing a machine-gun and many loads of ammunition. For this and for another exploit he was awarded the Victoria Cross. Hemmed in by bush, on a path wide enough only for single file, a column, sometimes two or three miles long, would find itself suddenly fusilladed by a foe invisible in the undergrowth. The darkness and stillness of the everlasting forest, for native minds the home of countless legions of spirits, lent strangeness and terror to the campaigning. The brushwood was so dense as to envelop the tree-trunks, forming sometimes the low, thick bush of the Sierra Leone Protectorate, more often of the wild West African forest, varied by luxuriant palm-groves and acres of flourishing bananas. It was not uncommon for white men to get lost in the bush, only returning to their columns alive after terrible hardships. To cover more than about 20 miles a day, marching from dawn to dusk, was impossible. The heat was intense, tropical downpours were frequent, and at certain seasons violent tornadoes swept down in thunder-clouds livid with lightning. In the interior of the colony, upon the high plateaux, the country was more open, with

rolling hills covered by long grass, where, however, countless swarms of ants proved distressing companions. The fauna of the colony, indeed, showed little appreciation of the fact that war was being waged, and a herd of elephants, animals which abounded, disturbed one column by overrunning its camping-ground. The frequent indications of liveliness evinced by the Germans, who showed no signs of desire to finish the 'palaver', was, however, the chief excitement. It is probable that dreams of sweeping victories in Europe inspired them to endurance, for they fought with spirit and determination. They broke into small parties, raiding across the country for food, which they lacked. German officers could not at times prevent their native troops from perpetrating atrocities such as the slaughter of wounded men and of non-combatant natives. Early in the new year, however, they made a violent attack upon Edea, where Colonel Mayer repulsed them, inflicting a loss of 20 Europeans and 54 native soldiers, a machine-gun and 50 rifles. Only after many stubborn fights were the Germans forced back, during the following months, to the high plateaux of the interior. They made Yaunde their base, and the advance of the Allies was pressed slowly in this direction, British and French columns pushing forward from Edea, and troops from French Equatorial Africa, directed by General Aymerich, entering Cameroon from the east. Aymerich had, indeed, aided by a small contribution of men and material from the Belgian Congo, been conspicuously successful in his operations in the south, almost all the region forming the basin of the Sangha River being now in his hands. By the end of May Colonel Mayer, with his French column from Edea, had captured two fortified posts in the Yaunde district, and the French column

from the Sangha had gained a notable success at Monso, where a number of prisoners and a very large quantity of weapons and ammunition were taken. The spoils also included an interesting collection of archives and correspondence. The French during the early days of June continued to press on, and at this time the stronghold of Garua fell to an Allied force without the loss of a single life.

Since their success in August 1914, the Germans at Garua, under von Cranzelheim, had been energetically strengthening their fortifications. Two thousand native labourers were employed to turn the place, with its four forts, into a formidable stronghold, upon which were lavished all the care, skill, and ingenuity with which for warlike purposes Germans have shown themselves to be so plenteously endowed. Three modern works, set upon eminences each distant some four or five hundred yards from the next, and situated upon a high ridge dominating the adjacent town, together with an old fort on the plain below, comprised the defences: but other invaluable assets included workshops equipped with excellent armourer's, carpenter's, and blacksmith's tools, and a hospital replete with valuable medical instruments, microscopes, medicines, bandages, and even an up-to-date dentist's chair. The old fort, whose mud and brick walls, some 15 feet high and 4 feet thick, extending in a rectangle about 100 yards by 150 yards, were embrasured for guns and furnished with sandbag loopholes, displayed in its construction exceptional artifice and savage cunning. It contained bungalows, offices, stores, and underground bomb-proof shelters; a deep ditch filled with upright spears, and a barbed wire entanglement twenty feet broad, surrounded it; and outside these an abattis

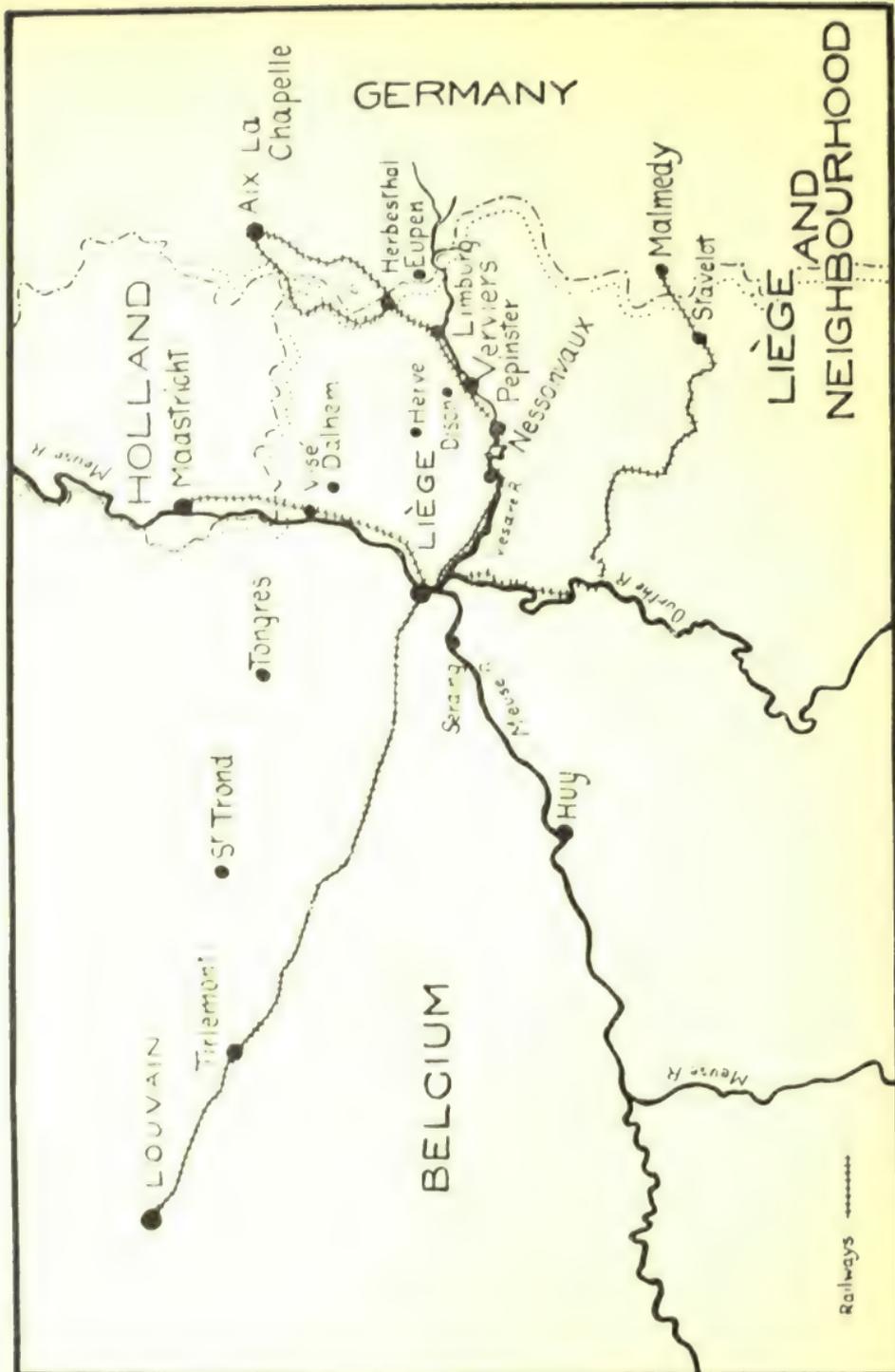
of felled prickly acacia trees and a maze of deep pits, cunningly concealed and bristling with upright poisoned spears, lay circumposed. The town near by, situated upon the Benue, was large, containing some 10,000 inhabitants. Von Cranzelheim's total garrison numbered probably some 500 men, of whom between 40 and 50 were Europeans: while he was provided with four field-guns and ten maxims, and his supplies of food and ammunition ensured his capacity for withstanding siege.

On May 31 a considerable Allied force, composed of French and British infantry, cavalry, and artillery, under Colonel F. G. N. Cunliffe, commandant of the Nigerian Regiment, appeared outside the town. He was well aware of the strength of the fortifications, and had come prepared accordingly. Notwithstanding the difficulties of transport, a large calibre French gun had been brought upon boats from Morocco along about a thousand miles of waterway, while a British naval gun had similarly been transported by river for several hundred miles, under the charge of Lieutenant L. H. K. Hamilton, who had commanded a river flotilla which had, at the end of the previous December, driven the Germans from the township of Dehane. The Colonel first very carefully reconnoitred the whole position, and picked out what he thought its weakest spot. The heavy guns, from a distance of 4,000 yards, opened a bombardment upon all four forts, and sapping operations, by night, were commenced with a series of parallel trenches dug gradually nearer and nearer to the work immediately in front. The enemy replied with a lively fire, the effect of which was negligible. Meanwhile, in order to prevent the garrison breaking out, a company stationed upon a hill on the other side of the Benue

watched the fords below, while patrolling cavalry guarded the fords barring the way to the south. The precaution was necessary. The bombardment, which lasted some ten days, was so accurate and severe, especially towards the end, that the German native troops became completely demoralized. They could not counter or reply effectually to the melinite and lyddite shells which descended incessantly upon them. The British lost not a single life during the whole operations : one projectile alone exploding inside a bomb-proof shelter killed twenty of the enemy. At length, on June 9, the men began to mutiny, and refused to man the fortifications. Next day a large number of the enemy's cavalry, maddened by the shell-fire under which they were impotent, broke loose, seized horses and rifles, and galloped off towards the Bénue. The river had, however, during the last few days risen considerably. Many of the luckless enemy were drowned in attempting to cross ; one party which got over was fallen upon by a British force, and the remainder were vigorously pursued by French cavalry. That afternoon, about half-past four, white flags were hoisted from the forts. Colonel Cunliffe ordered the ' Cease-fire ', and with the French commander and two staff officers galloped to the British forward trenches, about 1,000 yards from No. 1 fort. A white flag was hastily improvised by means of a white shirt tied to a stick, no more finished article being available. The officers, walking forward, were soon met by a party of the garrison, whose leader voiced their conditions of surrender : that the garrison be allowed to march out with the honours of war, and to rejoin the German troops in the south of the colony. The indignant Colonel declared that he would listen to no terms, but only to unconditional surrender. The

German saluted and asked for two days' grace in which to bring back the commandant's reply. Two hours, the Colonel answered, was all he would give. Von Cranzelheim, after a short delay, surrendered unconditionally. Next morning at daybreak the Allies marched into Garua, hauled down the German flag, and hoisted, amid a flourish of bugles, the Union Jack and the Tricolour. Thirty-seven Europeans and 270 native rank and file, a number of field-guns, maxims, and rifles, large quantities of equipment and ammunition, were captured. Many bales of cloth and beads, which were also taken and divided with the spoils, were given to the men as rewards for discipline and self-restraint. And on Sunday, June 13, a funeral parade service was held over the graves of Colonel Maclear and the other officers who had fallen in the early defeat, and a large wooden cross was erected.

Here the story of the campaigns in Cameroon must at present end. Ngaundere, a large commercial town on the route from Duala to Lake Chad, was occupied on June 29, probably by Colonel Cunliffe's column, and Lomie on June 25 by the French. The latter place had been evacuated by the Germans in consequence of the mutiny and desertion of their troops. In their retreat the enemy are said to have burnt villages and laid waste the country. And reports of a native rising against the Germans in one district, accompanied by demonstrations of goodwill towards the Allies, have come to hand.



HOLLAND

Maastricht

GERMANY

LIÈGE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

BELGIUM

LOUVAIN

Tirlemont

St Trond

Tongres

LIÈGE

Herve

Dison

Herbsthof

Eupen

Limburg

Verviers

Pepinster

Nessonvaux

Malmédy

Stavelot

Aix La
Chapelle

Meuse R.

Vise

Dalhem

Semois R.

Vesdre R.

Ourthe R.

Meuse R.

Railways

THE STAND OF LIÈGE

The Brabant armies on the fret
For battle in the cause of liberty.

WORDSWORTH.

ON the morning of August 4, 1914, the sentinels pacing the ancient citadel of Liège, where the infantry barracks were situated, cast, no doubt, many anxious glances eastwards, where the Vesdre wound, through Verviers and Limbourg, to the German frontier. They could see in that direction, and to the south, in the direction of Luxembourg, now, they knew, in German hands, long rolling stretches of wooded upland, rising gradually to where the heights of the Ardennes bounded the prospect. The journey between London and Cologne had no stretch more charming than the twenty-five miles, dotted with pretty country-houses, picturesque villages, and busy manufactories, traversed by a stream winding along a deep and beautiful valley, between Liège and Herbesthal. In the opposite direction, to west and to north, spread the broad and fertile plains of Hesbaye and Dutch Limbourg, broken by hilly stretches. The morning was sultry and cloudy. The panorama that lay below, magnificent as it was, could not be seen to best advantage. The broad Meuse, joined to the south of the city by the Vesdre and the Ourthe, lost itself in haze. Visé, ten miles to the north, could be discerned dimly upon the east bank. The soldier's eye could pick out the forts which girdled the city: Fléron and Evegnée, dominating their villages, lay

nearest the German frontier. Below, descending by steep curving streets and stairways, and intersected by numerous canals and streams, was Liège itself.

Liège, lying in a richly cultivated valley, is strikingly picturesque. The towers of numerous old churches, some dating back to the tenth century, grace the left bank of the river, where the principal part of the city is placed. The chimneys of many factories and foundries rise upon the right bank, the Outremeuse, the quarters of the artisan inhabitants. Innumerable barges line the Meuse near the iron-works and coal-pits of Seraing. The river is spanned by several remarkably fine bridges. The Liégeois who, on August 3, discussed in their tree-lined boulevards and their cafés the national crisis that had arisen with the delivery of Germany's ultimatum, could regard with complacency many historic buildings and invariably well laid-out streets. That ultimatum had, indeed, placed their country and themselves in a terrible position. Events had been moving rapidly for some days. A fever of anticipation and of preparation had settled upon the city.¹ The Belgian army had begun to mobilize. The Garde Civique had been called up. Then reservists were summoned in the middle of the night by knocks at their doors and by the ringing of church bells. Horses and vehicles of all sorts were commandeered. Even the dogs harnessed to the milkmen's and bakers' carts were taken off, wagging their tails in the prevailing excitement, to draw the machine-guns of the infantry. Carrier-pigeons also were requisitioned. A food panic commenced.

¹ The writer is indebted, for many succeeding facts concerning the internal condition of the city during the defence, to the account of an eye-witness, Dr. Hamelius, of Liège University, in his book, *The Siege of Liège*.

Provision dealers, overwhelmed by the rush of buyers, at first refused to accept banknotes, though payable on sight. There was a run upon the banks, amid noisy scenes. In some cases the city firemen had to be employed to disperse the crowds by playing the hose upon the more turbulent creditors. Cattle from the surrounding district were driven in, and stood, lowing plaintively, in suburban fields. The animals, it was remarked, seemed struck by uncanny fear. Many sickened and died. Refugees of all nationalities poured through the city towards their respective countries. Harrowing tales and sensational rumours were exchanged. It was reported that the 25th Prussian Regiment was deployed along the frontier near Moresnet. German airships were said to have passed over Brussels by night. A local paper published on August 2 an account, copied by the press of foreign capitals, but later proved unfounded, of a considerable French victory near Nancy. There were not wanting signs which, if contributing to the alarm of the citizens, stimulated their faith in Leman, their military governor. Thirty thousand navvies had been at work on Sunday, August 2, digging trenches and erecting earthworks between the forts. Thousands of troops had been brought up from Diest by forced marches to augment the garrison. Wanderers by night might have observed mysterious preparations, and the secret transport of bulky objects in connexion with the forts. The precautions had proved to be justified. On August 3 newspaper placards, 'Belgium Refuses,' spread sudden news among the disturbed populace of the rejection of Germany's proposals. The next day dawned upon an anxious but determined city. Yesterday had sent defiance to Germany. What was to-day to bring? Did their neighbours indeed

intend to make war upon them? Within a few hours, before night fell, an overwhelming enemy might be in their midst. The horrors of war might have overtaken their homes. The citizens could not but despair of the ultimate result of the onslaught of a foe so mighty. But they waited, during hours of acute suspense, with fortitude. Events soon revealed themselves. During the morning the distant rattle of rifle-fire broke out suddenly in the wooded country beyond Herve. A sharper and more continuous fusillade opened in the direction of Visé. Some time later a nearer and more sinister sound, the deep thunder of guns, was heard. The Germans were bombarding the forts.

Reports poured in at General Leman's head-quarters. The Germans had entered Limbourg: they had pushed on to Verviers: they had advanced to Herve: a large force had reached Dalhem, and was approaching Visé. The climax came. The enemy had arrived outside Fléron, and were preparing to attack. Leman's eyes might well be troubled; but his jaw was set hard.

It may be well now to recount the first stages of the German advance. Troops had crossed the frontier, early that morning, in three columns. It is recorded that, on their journey by open goods-train to Herbesthal, old men ran out to bless them, women and girls to encourage them, and to press upon them food and drink. Passing trainloads cheered each other, and promised to meet again in Paris. They were in high spirits. The task immediately before them appeared easy. It seemed incredible that Belgium would, or could, resist their progress. The main column, detrain- ing at Herbesthal, took to the road and advanced into Belgian territory. Cavalry patrols were sent on ahead. A few stray shots fired upon them showed that Belgian

scouts were on the alert. No resistance was offered. The cavalry, passing through Limbourg, met with some of the retreating Belgians at Verviers. There was a slight skirmish. The Belgians retired in safety, and made good use of their retreat in blowing up bridges and tearing up the railway. The line was, indeed, remarkable for the engineering skill of its construction. German infantry, meanwhile, had commandeered locomotives and rolling-stock found at Limbourg, and had, partly by rail and partly by road, reached Verviers. The terror-stricken inhabitants withdrew into their houses, and watched the arrival of the Germans from behind closed shutters. The invaders proceeded to the town hall. The Belgian flag was torn down and replaced by the German amid the cheers of the troops. Martial law was proclaimed in French. A German officer, placed in charge of the administration of the town, began to billet troops and requisition supplies. Large forces had, meanwhile, been pushing forward by various routes towards Liège. One column made rapid progress for some distance by means of the railway, until the torn-up portion of the line compelled recourse to the road. Other columns converged upon Herve, about ten miles due east of Liège. Continuous firing broke out in a northerly direction as the advance was proceeding. Belgian troops, after a skirmish at Warsage, had retreated, destroying bridges in their wake, to Visé. Here they were making their first stand.

Visé occupied a position of considerable strategic importance. It commanded the passage of the Meuse north of the city, which was at present exposed to attack from the east alone. Unless Visé were in German hands, it would be impossible completely to invest Liège,

or to throw forward cavalry into the country beyond. The capture of Visé was, indeed, an essential preliminary to the capture of Liège. Von Emmich, the veteran German commander, fully aware of this, had meditated a surprise. While his main body was advancing by Limbourg and Verviers, a number of motor-cars, carrying German troops, followed by large bodies of cavalry, crossed the frontier and proceeded rapidly to Dalhem. Two miles away, on the near bank of the river, lay Visé. So far no opposition, other than a few stray shots, had met them. They could not expect as propitious an entry into Visé, and they prepared for action. It was soon seen that Belgian troops were in occupation. Light German artillery was brought up, and fire was opened. It was the first engagement of the war. One can well imagine that the nerves of the combatants, as yet unhardened to the sight and sound of battle, were strung to the highest pitch. It is, indeed, in his first engagement that the soldier usually shows whether his natural disposition is for advance or for retreat. The defence of Visé foreshadowed the defence of Liège. The Belgians showed spirit. The Germans could make no progress for a considerable while. Time was precious. The attack on Liège itself, which the seizure of Visé should precede, would soon open. They commenced a series of fierce assaults upon the town. Many houses were set ablaze by bursting shells. The inhabitants, furious at the wanton attack upon their peaceful dwelling-place, began to take a share in the fighting. Many were, indeed, provided with weapons. The manufacture of fire-arms, for which Liège was famed, was largely carried on in the workers' homes. The people were familiar with their mechanism and use. Shots were fired from the houses. Boys and women flung stones upon

the attackers. Finally, after a desperate struggle, entry into the town was effected by the Germans. They were too late to save the bridge. The Belgians, retreating, destroyed it, and took up a position on the opposite bank of the river. A body of Uhlans, making for the bridge, was almost annihilated by a hot fire opened upon them by infantry hidden among the broken piers. At the same time shots were fired from houses near the bank. It is possible that these came from Belgian soldiers. The German infantry, pouring through the streets, proceeded to indiscriminate reprisals. A large number of the inhabitants were shot down. All resistance having ceased, the remaining population were herded together into the centre of the town, and surrounded by German troops. The commanding officer addressed the sullen Belgians in French. Urgent necessity, he said, not deliberate enmity, had forced the Germans to invade Belgian territory. But the inhabitants must submit to German military law. Every attack on the troops would be immediately punished with death. A shot rang out suddenly. The officer fell badly wounded. A group of eight Belgians, from whose midst the bullet was fired, were seized on the spot. A file of riflemen was drawn up. The eight, without attempt at discrimination, were summarily executed.

While the attack upon Visé was in progress, the German columns were concentrating on Liège. Their front line stretched roughly from Visé on their right wing to Nessonvaux on their left. Their centre rested upon Herve. Cavalry had cleared the way for them as they advanced. By evening their first line had halted before the forts and entrenchments of Liège, and were in readiness to attack.

The Germans were in great strength. They formed

the 3rd Army, called the Army on the Meuse. Their commander, General von Emmich, had known, during sixty-six years of life, nearly half a century of military experience, and had seen service in the campaigns of 1870. Before the outbreak of war he had been at Hanover in command of the 10th Army Corps, the famous Iron Division of Brandenburg. That corps, together with the 7th, were now with him before Liège. The 9th Corps was proceeding from Altona, and would join him later. His present forces numbered some 90,000 men, of all arms. A cavalry division was also at his disposal. Of field artillery the three corps mustered among them 72 six-gun batteries, and 12 four-gun heavy howitzer batteries. Each infantry regiment carried six machine guns. But no heavy siege artillery had been brought up. The heaviest guns that von Emmich could show, his six-inch howitzers, were inferior in calibre and in quality to many within the Liège forts. It was, indeed, a part of the German scheme to travel lightly equipped. Von Emmich's plans had been carefully prepared. He would 'take Liège in his stride'. It was not unlikely that the Belgians had calculated on at least twelve days elapsing from the commencement of the German mobilization before Liège could be attacked. Evidence already showed that they had been surprised. Probably there were only a few thousand troops in the city. He could engage the eastern forts with his artillery, push his forces through the wide intervals between them, and have the city at his mercy. If the forts held out, he would invest them, brush aside the Belgian field troops, and sweep forward as rapidly as possible. The country was rich in agricultural produce. The German troops would feed upon the fat of Belgian land. It seemed unnecessary to encumber themselves with great

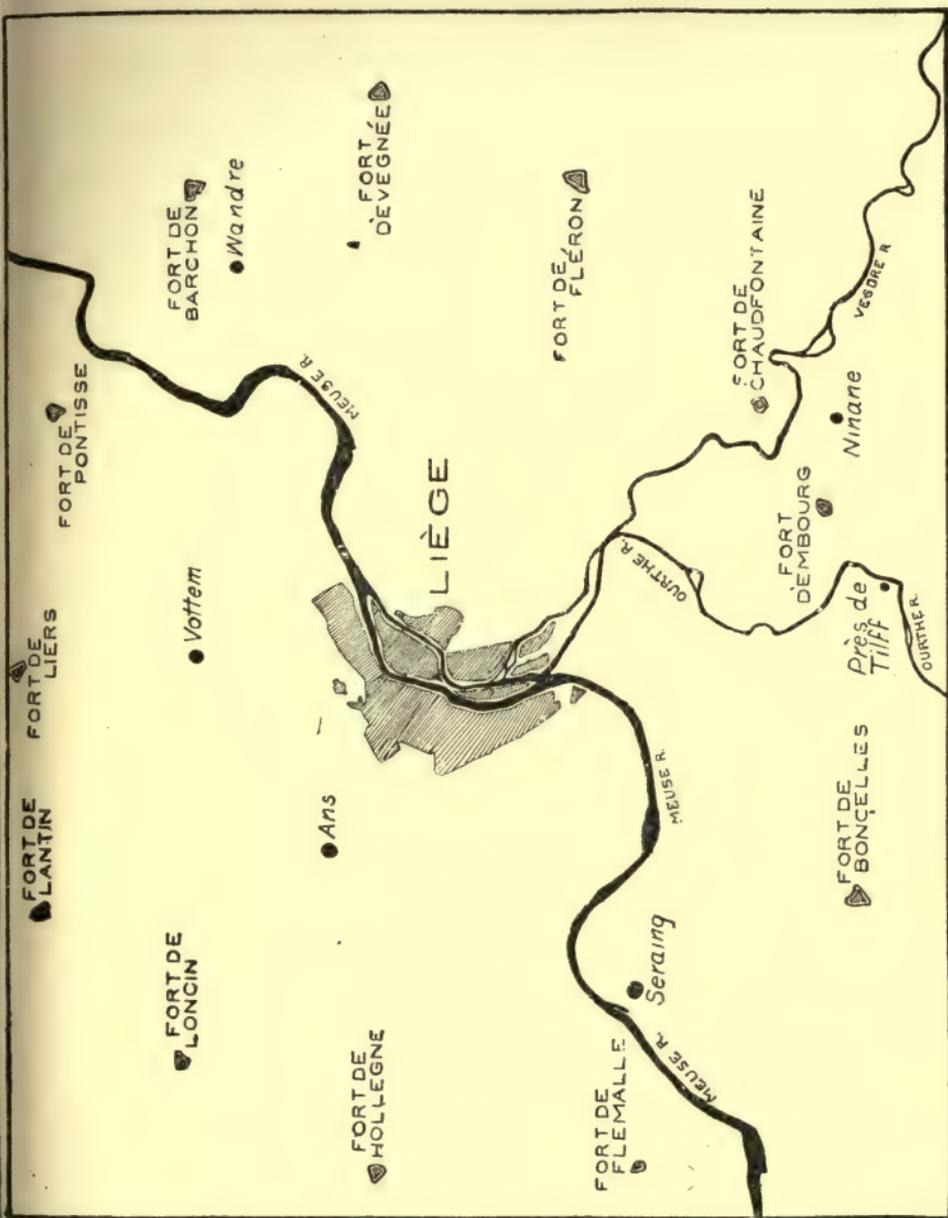
supplies of provisions and of baggage. Speed was the great object. If the Germans, by a sudden *coup de main*, could seize Liège, could scatter the Belgian field army before fully mobilized, could occupy Namur and Brussels, there was nothing to prevent their immediate advance upon Paris. The French would be unready. The British needed time. If, indeed, their 'contemptible little army' placed itself in the way, it should be instantly trampled down by weight of numbers and annihilated. The heavier German artillery, designed to shatter the fortifications of Paris, could have some preliminary practice upon the forts of Liège, did they refuse to yield. Their capture was not essential to the occupation of the city, nor to the crossing of the Meuse. But it would be necessary to drive the Belgians from the rampart of trenches between the forts. The 7th Corps was massing before the nearest three, Barchon, Evegnée, and Fléron. It was evening. Light showers had fallen during the day. The sky was overcast. But the light would still hold good for some hours. The first shells were sent screaming towards the Belgian lines. The firing soon became general. The German infantry prepared for action. A night attack, after the bombardment had weakened the Belgian defence, was contemplated.

Let us now return to Liège. The garrison had been busy. Scouts had kept General Leman informed of the enemy's movements. The forts were in readiness. Infantry manned the trenches on the eastern side of the city. Many buildings and obstacles which stood outside the line of defence, and which seemed likely to afford cover to the attackers, were demolished. The place was, indeed, naturally strong. But its governor laboured under a fatal disadvantage. The force at his disposal was altogether inadequate to its defence. It

had been estimated in 1890 that a garrison of at least 74,000 was essential. General Leman had only 40,000. The Germans brought against him first twice, then three times, that number. This disproportion was, however, in some measure compensated for by the skill, the resource, and the courage of Leman himself.

He was known as the silent general. He was essentially a man of action. But his personality was strong because he could be trusted implicitly. Other officers might be more popular among the troops. Leman was a martinet in discipline. He expected much from his men. He followed and studied his profession zealously. It is related that, after being all day on horseback, he would often sit up discussing problems of strategy and of tactics, of which he was a master, until early morning. He seemed, indeed, incapable of fatigue. He was a recognized expert in Roman law, in military architecture, in engineering science. To attributes of mind were added many qualities of heart and of temper. He mingled prudence with tenacity, kindness with force of will. His judgement was as cool, his resource was as ready, in pressing home a success as in sustaining a reverse. He knew accurately, indeed, the weaknesses and the capabilities of his position at Liège. Even had it been garrisoned by forces adequate to its sustained defence, instead of half that number, it was hardly impregnable. The fact that, without the necessary numbers, constituted its strength as a *place d'arrêt*, constituted also its weakness as a defensible stronghold. Its twelve works, though inter-supporting, were isolated from the city and from one another. There was no key-fort.

The rough circle of forts and trenches around the city formed a circumference of about thirty-three miles. Each fort lay about four miles from Liège, and two or



LIÈGE AND ITS FORTS

three miles from the next. The country within this circular area, covering many square miles, was in general, excluding the city itself, richly cultivated and thickly populated. The eastern half, the scene of the fiercest fighting, was hilly and wooded. A great number of men would obviously be required to ring this extensive district with a line of troops. Leman's force, comprising the regular garrison, his own 3rd Liège Division, and the 15th Brigade, numbered no more than 40,000. It was impossible for him to defend the whole of the circle at the same time. If the Germans crossed the Meuse, surrounded the city, and attacked the whole line simultaneously, the defence must instantly collapse, and the surrender of the field troops would become inevitable. Leman saw that he must at all costs prevent the enemy from crossing the Meuse. It was more likely that they would try to force a passage to the north than to the south of the city. Envelopment from the south would necessitate the bridging of three rivers instead of one, and would be considerably longer. He must also economize his men by manning only those trenches directly opposite the enemy's lines. His field troops were mobile, and included many cavalry. He would keep large numbers in reserve. He must be constantly on the watch. Immediately any unguarded portion of his line was threatened, he must hurry his reserves to the gap. At every point in the circle at which a German force appeared, a covering Belgian force must be waiting. It was conceivable that small detachments might enter at undefended spots. Mobile reserves must be ready to cut them off at once. Such was Leman's general strategy. The manner of the German advance confirmed his dispositions. The Germans had struck at Visé, and had seized it. But

Belgian troops now lay along the western bank of the river in readiness to repel any attempt at crossing. Small parties of German cavalry could be seen on the other side. Patrols were also observed near Barchon, Evegnée, and Fléron. It soon became evident that masses of infantry and artillery were concentrating opposite these three forts. The latter fired a few practice shots. Soon the woods were resounding to the roar of the first artillery duel of the war.

The bombardment continued without intermission for some hours. Both Belgians and Germans, under fire for the first time, no doubt experienced many new emotions. The Germans, however, suffered far more from the fire than their opponents. The defenders knew well the ground in front of them. The range of every landmark was known to them. Manœuvres had taken place in that district only the year before. The firing from the forts engaged was naturally far more accurate than from the German batteries. The guns of Evegnée destroyed two German pieces, without structural injury or the loss of a single man. Darkness began to set in. It became difficult to distinguish objects on the heavily-wooded slopes opposite each position. Little impression had so far been made upon the defence. The Belgian losses were inconsiderable. The forts were quite undamaged. As night deepened, the flashes of the guns grew more distinct, their booming louder. Search-lights in the forts were brought into play. Their beams, sweeping the wide area from Barchon to Fléron, disclosed masses of German infantry approaching the Belgian lines.

These lines described, from Barchon to Fléron, a curve. Both these forts were roughly triangular in form, were surrounded by a ditch and by barbed-wire entanglements. The works were of concrete, sur-

mounted by revolving turrets of steel, called cupolas. Within the latter were mounted the heavier guns, of which each fort possessed eight howitzers and mortars, and four quick-firers. Machine-guns for the repulse of storming parties stood upon the ramparts. Four others in the ring of forts were similar to Barchon and Fléron. Between the two latter, somewhat advanced from their line, was Evegnée, called, from its reduced size, a 'fortin'. It was similar to them in type, but much smaller in scale and less powerful in armament. Five others in the ring were 'fortins' like Evegnée. Open grassy slopes, called glacis, surrounded each fort, which presented, rising little above the glacis, but a small mark for fire. The total armament of the twelve works was some 400 pieces. Some of the heavier guns, indeed, the Germans would not expect to find. Some months before, the Belgian Government had ordered fortress artillery from Krupp of Essen. Early delivery was asked for, and payment was made. When the European horizon darkened a deputation was sent to Essen. The guns were overdue. A report had got abroad that treachery was afoot. What, indeed, was the cause of delay? The deputies were received cordially and feasted royally. The Germans, however, would not commit themselves as to the guns. There was nothing for it but to take other steps. Under cover of darkness, in a mysterious manner, to avoid detection by spies, pieces of heavy calibre were moved from Antwerp to bring the armament of Liège to full strength. Their efficacy had already been proved. It was no doubt a matter of surprise to German gunners that their artillery was easily outmatched.

Belgian officers, as they scanned the enemy's advance, must have knitted their brows in astonishment. They

could see the German infantry marching through the fields in close formation, without haste, without attempt to take cover, as if on parade. A deployment of barely five paces separated man from man. It is recorded that, forty-four years before, the battlefield of Gravelotte was strewn, behind the Prussian firing line, with skulkers who had left their ranks, while the more courageous had advanced. Some were lying down in the furrows, their rifles pointed towards the front as if in action; others had openly made themselves comfortable behind bushes and in ditches. It is not improbable that the Germans before Liège adopted advance in mass to check wholesale straggling. But the Belgians seized their opportunity. The cupolas in the forts swung round. The field artillery, the hotchkisses, the maxims, were trained upon the approaching columns. Flame sprang and thunder roared from the muzzles of a hundred guns. Bullets swept in a blast of death, gust after gust, the dim shadowy stretches, pasture and standing grain, woodland and broken ground, before the long front of battle. But the Germans maintained for some time an inexorable advance. At many points in the long line the stricken front ranks, falling back upon one another, formed a barrier of corpses. The woods, indeed, provided useful cover from which to fire. But the German artillery could not cover effectually such a form of infantry attack. The fighting was hottest near Barchon. The Germans pressed a fierce assault upon the trenches, held by two Belgian regiments. So near did the enemy draw, so sharp was their fusillade, that Leman, ever on the watch, hurried up reinforcements. It was determined to assume the offensive. A spirited bayonet charge followed. The Germans fled. Their main columns were forced to

retire for some distance to re-form their shattered ranks. The Belgians, indeed, resorted to the bayonet at many other points. The Germans, stoically brave in facing a devastating fire, rank behind rank, almost shoulder to shoulder, showed little inclination to face the bayonet. It was probably some hours before the last attack ceased. The defenders had maintained their ground. No portion of their line had been penetrated. The forts were undamaged. They must have inflicted enormous losses upon the enemy. Dawn broke. Daylight revealed a ghastly and a pitiable sight. From any point hundreds of bodies could be seen lying on the slopes. In some parts they lay piled four feet high. The woods were scarred and the fields furrowed by shell-fire. The Belgians themselves had suffered severely. Their wounded were carried into the city. The defenders were, however, allowed little rest. Early in the morning the bombardment was renewed.

Wednesday, August 5, opened dull and hot. The German firing line had lengthened. The 10th Army Corps had now come up on the left of the 7th, the corps repulsed during the night. The cannonade stretched from Visé to a considerable distance below Liège. Six of the most easterly forts, from Pontisse to Embourg, became involved. Their guns were well able to hold their own.

Within a few hours infantry attacks recommenced. The assaults, now along a wider front, were pressed as fiercely as ever. The enemy advanced across open country in close formation, as before, and by a succession of short rushes. They ran forward, dropped on their fronts, fired a rifle-volley, and ran forward again, with shells bursting in their midst. But each time they attempted to storm the Belgian lines they were

met by a terrible fire. At last a large body of Germans succeeded in gaining a footing on the near slopes of one of the forts. Its larger guns could not be depressed to reach them. Victory seemed within their grasp. But streams of bullets from machine-guns were suddenly played upon their ranks. They retired in disorder. The spectacle from the forts of attacks such as these moved the pity of the Belgians themselves. The smoke of the guns was soon carried away by the wind. Wounded Germans were observed struggling to release themselves from their dead comrades. So high in some parts became the barricade of the slain and injured that the fire of the defenders was in danger of being masked. The Germans did, indeed, in some cases make use of this human barricade to creep closer. At points where they came within 50 yards of the trenches the Belgians did not hesitate to rush out to attack them with the bayonet. One man is said to have dashed forward alone, and to have returned in safety after killing four of the enemy. All assaults were successfully repulsed. But the defenders were hard pressed. The firing line became so lengthened that Lemans had no alternative but to throw almost all his available troops into the fighting. During the morning, aircraft, both Belgian and German, eager to display their capabilities, hummed continually to and fro. Men who, in time of peace, would have fraternized as fellow adventurers in a new sphere of science, had in war become intent on one another's destruction. A Zeppelin appeared in the distance, but drew off. Belgian aeroplanes were notably successful. One airman, subjected to a fusillade of shots as he flew over the enemy's lines, remarked coolly on landing in safety, 'How badly these Germans shoot!' A German machine

was shot down near Argenteau. Another was inadvertently brought down by the Germans themselves. It was not easy, indeed, although the German Taubes bore a mark in black resembling the Iron Cross of Prussia, to distinguish between friend and enemy. Below, guns thundered without ceasing, and the drone of air-machines swelled the uproar. To the airmen above, deafened with the familiar sound of their engines, the battle-field was completely silent.

General Leman and his staff spent part of the day in council of war at the military head-quarters in the city. A review of events and of the present position did not present unsatisfactory features. It was, indeed, no small matter to have repulsed with untried troops the first onslaught of what was reputed to be the finest fighting machine ever evolved. So far they had done well. The Germans were at a standstill. All their efforts to break the line were being checked. They could not cross the Meuse in force. But how long could the defence be sustained? Could the Belgians hold out till relieved by the French? Much depended upon whether the enemy were successful in getting across the Meuse in large numbers. If so, it would become necessary for the field troops to retire before surrounded. The city would have to be abandoned. The forts, amply garrisoned and provisioned, must resist to the last and embarrass the German advance. There was no need yet to think of retiring. But preparations, in case it became necessary, should be made. Meanwhile, the city must be kept calm. Business was at a standstill. The populace were very agitated. Trains leaving the city were stormed. The citizens as yet knew little of what was happening in the firing line, and many contradictory reports were abroad. It

was, indeed, believed by many that some of the forts had been silenced. Spy-hunting had been in progress. The city was undoubtedly infested by spies. It might be possible to turn the fact to account. By a certain cunning ruse Uhlan patrols might be lured, in the hope of capturing Leman himself, into the suburbs, and there trapped. The wildest rumours also were current among the people of help at hand. It was realized that the journey by rail from the French frontier could be done in three hours, from Paris in five. Both French and British troops were reported to be approaching the city. The streets became filled with joyous crowds, who eagerly bought up the little tricolour flags opportunely vended by hawkers. The excitement was intense. It seemed, indeed, on the whole desirable that hope should be kept high. Leman and his officers were suddenly interrupted by a violent hubbub without. Loud cries could be heard. The General, followed by his staff, rushed anxiously outside. Had the Germans broken through? Shouts greeted his appearance. Leman observed eight soldiers, in some foreign uniform, hastening towards him. He scanned them in amazement. Major Marchand, one of his staff, scented danger. A fusillade of revolver shots was suddenly fired by the strangers. Marchand had thrown himself in front of the General, and fell, mortally wounded. 'Give me a revolver quickly,' cried Leman. But he was almost alone. A staff-officer, a man of Herculean build, shouted to him not to expose himself, and lifted him up over the wall of an adjacent foundry. He then swung himself over. Their assailants attempted to follow. Leman and his companion were drawn up through the windows of a neighbouring dwelling. But by this time Belgian officers and gendarmes, dashing

out to the General's help, had engaged the Germans in a desperate scuffle. An officer and two gendarmes were killed. But all the raiders were finally accounted for.¹

While these stirring events were taking place in the city, desperate attempts were being made by the Germans to cross the Meuse near Visé. The guns of Pontisse and Barchon covered the river-banks for some distance. Belgian cavalry and artillery were guarding the west bank between the forts and the Dutch frontier. The enemy's pontoon bridges were destroyed as soon as built. A favourite method of the Belgians was to wait until the structure was almost completed before wrecking it. This had been tried very successfully the day before at the ford of Lixhe. In some cases, indeed, the ordinary bridges had been left standing, and were carefully covered by concealed artillery and infantry. German columns were allowed to defile on to their structures. Shot and shell were then suddenly rained down. The bridge columns gave way. Horses and men were precipitated into the water, and the dead became massed between the parapets. The Germans, however, did not press their attack on the banks of the Meuse in sufficient strength or with sufficient skill. Some parties were, indeed, driven by the Belgians over the Dutch frontier. All attempts to cross the river were frustrated.

During the day the attack upon the forts was pressed stubbornly. Belgian outposts and cavalry patrols kept continual watch in the wooded ground in front of the defences to give warning whenever the enemy approached. At some points Uhlans made determined efforts to penetrate the line. Fierce encounters ensued

¹ Several versions are given of the attack upon Leman's life: as far as can be judged, the above account is substantially trustworthy.

between hostile cavalry. Near Fléron a squadron of Belgian lancers, about 150 strong, fell upon 500 of the enemy. The trampling of the horses, the jingling of the accoutrements, the cries of men and beasts, the flashing lances, the waving pennants, made up a sight and sound not the least splendid, though becoming rare under modern conditions, in warfare. The Belgians, despite the odds, scattered the hostile squadrons with great slaughter. But they themselves lost their captain, and were cut up very severely.

Night approached. The Belgians were weary. They had been fighting intermittently for many hours. Little relief from trench work was possible. The numerical superiority of the Germans enabled them constantly to renew their firing line. A bright moon came out. The searchlights were brought into play. For twenty-four hours fierce fighting had been in progress. But the position was substantially the same.

The night passed without serious event. Every few minutes, indeed, the crash of a heavy gun and its responding roll disturbed the silence. At some points night attacks were delivered, but successfully repelled. Towards dawn, rain began to fall. August 6 opened, dreary and windy. The soldiers were soaked to the skin, and fatigued by long duty. At about seven o'clock two aeroplanes, clearly visible against the low clouds, were observed above the Belgian lines. Fire was opened upon them both by the Germans and by the forts. The machines rocked dangerously in eddies caused by exploding shells. They were, however, piloted by Belgians, and flew off safely westwards into the country. During the day, as previously, the Belgian lines were constantly bombarded and assailed. The gloomy weather seemed to make the cannonade more sullen. The towns-

men of Liège, listening anxiously from their cellars, could hear, between short intervals of silence, the boom of guns, the rattle of rifle-shots, sometimes singly, often in a burst. The Liégeois were rapidly accustoming themselves to their novel conditions. Whenever a shell screamed towards the city a warning bell signalled danger, and prompted a rush to cellars. Every now and then, however, a shell would fall amid the houses and explode. The screams of the injured, the shrill cries of alarmed women and children, the shattered and sometimes burning dwellings, were remembered with horror by the survivors of the siege. Fabrications as to forthcoming relief continued to be circulated and believed. A British force was said to have been seen at Ans, only a mile away, and would shortly arrive by rail. The credulous who hastened to the railway station returned after a long wait disappointed and disheartened. Temporary panics were caused by two parties of Uhlans who had, by design, penetrated to the suburbs in quest of General Leman. It could be guessed, from the reception they received, that they had been expected. Not a man escaped. One detachment was all shot down, and the other all captured. But, in general, the city grew calmer. Old men began to recall the days when they had heard afar the cannonade of Sedan. An examination for the university degree, arranged for this day, was proceeded with. When German prisoners were brought through the streets, even ladies ventured to examine curiously, but without emotion, the conquered enemy. It is said that Lieutenant von Förstner, of Zabern notoriety, was one of the first to be taken. Intense enthusiasm and hope were everywhere manifested at the valiant conduct of the troops in the trenches. There was much uncertainty as to what had happened.

But it was known that Belgium had reason to be proud of her soldiers. Every one was anxious to be doing something to help. Large numbers of young men were enrolled in the Army and hastily taken off to Antwerp for a six-weeks' training. Many older citizens joined the Garde Civique, and were employed in preserving order, in guarding prisoners, and points of military importance. Some of the Garde, however, took part in the actual fighting. During the day a detachment was assailed near Bonnelles. The encounter that followed ended in the total discomfiture of the Germans. The enemy had, indeed, lost much of the buoyant enthusiasm in which they had opened the campaign. Their casualties had been terribly severe: some battalions had only a third of their officers left. Many of the wounded were dying in the open fields for lack of attention. Great relief, therefore, was felt when it became known that their commander had asked for an armistice.

Von Emmich had, meanwhile, been reinforced by the 9th Army Corps. They came up on the morning of August 6, and were badly needed. Von Emmich himself could not but be bitterly mortified at his unexpected check before Liège. Not only were his own plans upset, but the calculations of his Emperor and of the Army Staff at Berlin were in danger. He had hoped to earn the praises of his country. But what could he expect now but her reproaches? Repeated failure, disappointed anticipation, immense losses, had demoralized his men. Delay had disorganized his commissariat. He had counted on feeding upon the produce of Belgium. But the way to that source was blocked. The territory he had already occupied, even if the Belgians had not driven off most of the cattle, was too small to support his army. The vast supplies of bread that all the bakers

of Verviers were turning out, under military direction, were inadequate. Prisoners taken by the Belgians complained of ravenous hunger and thirst. It was told how, on the morning before, August 5, the men were vastly chagrined only to receive, when looking forward to ample rations of drink and food, a small piece of sausage. Von Emmich had asked for an armistice of twenty-four hours in which to bury the dead. That period would enable him to reorganize his forces. Strong reinforcements also were on the way. He had already another army corps, 40,000 strong, at his disposal. A great effort to cross the Meuse must immediately be made. Undoubtedly the clue to victory lay there. The city must be enveloped. The Belgians, though they had resisted so well the attack from the front, could hardly be expected to cope with a simultaneous attack from the rear. Von Emmich, despite his mortification, could not, indeed, resist admiration at the valour of the defence. He was, moreover, acquainted with General Leman, whom he had met on manœuvres the previous year. He could have wished that his unfortunate Uhlans had effected the Belgian leader's capture. Leman's answer to his request was brought to him. The armistice was refused.

Stirring events had, meanwhile, been taking place, during the morning and afternoon of Thursday, August 6, in the firing line. About half past eleven the enemy, under cover of artillery, crept up towards Barchon. The Belgians reserved their fire. The Germans, when within close range, drew together for the final onset. At a concerted signal the Belgians loosed upon them a hail of shrapnel and of bullets. The enemy were swept back with terrible slaughter, and abandoned seven machine-guns. At another point, where the defenders were

holding the stately Château de Langres against great odds, the Belgian commander tried a ruse. Quantities of explosives were carried within: a fuse was prepared. The Belgians made a show of resistance before quietly evacuating the building. A large body of Germans rushed in triumphantly, and commenced to ransack the rooms. The Belgians, waiting with nerves on edge at a safe distance, were suddenly stunned by the crash of a deafening explosion. A great column of flame shot up, carrying in its wake masses of shattered masonry and timber. An incident of a similar nature occurred to the north of the city. Under Leman's directions a field outside the Belgian lines had been skilfully mined. The General sent out a small detachment to take up a position just beyond this field. The Germans, as he had calculated, got in the rear of this force in order to cut it off. Electric wire connected the explosives to the defenders' lines. The current was switched on. A sheet of flame and smoke arose. The German force was annihilated. Trivial as they were, these successes contributed to raise the spirit of the Belgians. But more important operations were in progress on the banks of the Meuse north of Liège. At the end of the day it became evident that the Belgians could maintain their ground no longer.

Fighting had, indeed, opened propitiously in this quarter. A counter-attack, delivered by the Belgians from the heights near Wandre upon German outposts, had been attended with brilliant success. Many of the enemy had been cut off from their main body and forced to retire in disorder towards Visé. But around that town operations were in progress which augured ill for the Belgians. Great reinforcements of artillery and infantry had been hurried by the German General to

the river-banks. A crossing must be forced at all hazards. Batteries were placed so as to cover the engineering work. Large parties of Germans, working in little boats, were engaged in building pontoon bridges at different points. The fire from Pontisse and Barchon greatly hampered the operations. But the Belgian troops on the opposite bank were prevented by the German artillery from impeding effectually the enemy's crossing. The river-valley was low and flat, and afforded little cover. Large numbers were gradually passed over during the day. Horses were swum across. Cavalry took the field. Numerous bodies overran the surrounding district. One force was cut off and completely routed by Belgians, who took many prisoners. But by five o'clock in the gloomy and sultry afternoon the Germans had begun to spread out, and to advance southwards in the direction of Liège.

Leman, who had watched the movements he was powerless to prevent with dismay and sorrow, realized that all was over. He had to accept the inevitable. He had foreseen that, sooner or later, the Germans would make use of their superior numbers by enveloping the city. He had made plans in accordance. Delay would mean disaster to his field troops. He reluctantly gave orders for a general retirement. This was no easy operation. Large forces were ordered to continue throughout the evening to harass the advance of the Germans who had crossed the Meuse. Some German infantry who had reached Vottem, a village within the circle of forts, were surprised by the Belgians and hoisted the white flag. When the Belgians approached they were fired upon at close range. Numerous instances of treachery and inhumanity have been recorded, indeed, in the fighting at Liège. Germans in many cases fired

on doctors, on Red Cross ambulances and wagons, or marched into battle displaying Belgian flags and wearing Belgian cockades. The Liégeois watched with mingled emotions the retreat of their defenders westwards through the city. It was disappointing that the courageous resistance of the last two days should seem all to have been for nothing. The horses of the artillery trains and the cavalry squadrons were jaded and blood-stained. The infantry were tired out and footsore, but determined, since duty called them elsewhere, to escape capture by the Germans. During the evening and night the field troops were all withdrawn from the city, and marched off towards Louvain. A garrison of 250 men was left in each of the forts, all of which so far were in good condition. Leman decided to remain at his post. He could have retired with his army. He would, no doubt, have been received at Brussels with honour and enthusiasm. He might add to military renown already won in future operations. But better results, if less personally attractive, might be gained if he stayed to co-ordinate the defence of the forts, and to exercise moral influence upon the garrisons. From Loncin, which he took as his head-quarters, the long columns of the departing troops could be seen passing into the darkness. The retreat had been conducted without serious hitch. Some stragglers had, no doubt, been cut off. Minor street fighting, in which civilians had unfortunately taken a share, had occurred in parts where German cavalry had pressed forward. But the main Belgian army was in safety, and the enemy did not yet appear to be advancing. The twelve forts, calling to one another throughout the night in the rumble of their big guns, prepared doggedly to fight until the inevitable end.

The Germans, apparently, did not realize their success till some hours after the Belgians had evacuated the position. Perhaps the east frontal attack was not pressed home by the besiegers in the hope of restoring confidence to the besieged while the enveloping attack was progressing across the Meuse. The enemy could hardly anticipate, indeed, so sudden a retirement. But during the night and early morning large forces passed between the forts and entered the city. The Liégeois, rising from their slumbers, found the invaders within their gates, and guarding the principal points of advantage. One of the bridges, indeed, had been blown up the night before by the retreating Belgians. The railway tunnel had also been blocked. Kleyer, the burgo-master, had prepared the citizens for their fate the previous evening by a printed circular, outlining the laws of war with regard to the participation of civilians, and cautioning peaceful submission. Little panic was evinced. The German military authorities installed themselves in the Citadel and in the public buildings, and took over the administration of the city. Martial law was proclaimed. The Garde Civique were employed to keep order among their fellow countrymen. One hundred of the Garde, and later Kleyer, Bishop Rutten, and some principal citizens, were confined in the Citadel as hostages. The walls of the city were placarded with posters announcing that, if another shot was fired by the inhabitants upon the German troops, these hostages would be immediately executed. All weapons were ordered to be given up on penalty of death. So suspicious of a rising were the invaders that barricades were erected, machine-guns placed, and guards posted in many of the principal streets. Long columns began, during August 7, and continued for many days after-

wards, to file in endless procession through the town. They passed into the interior upon a mission more important and more arduous than the capture of Liège, which had been won only at great cost. Germany affected to see in the seizure of the city a brilliant military exploit and a propitious opening to the campaign. Boundless enthusiasm was everywhere manifested. At Hanover Frau von Emmich read the news aloud to the exulting populace. It was announced in Berlin by an aide-de-camp sent out by the Kaiser to the crowds before the castle ; and policemen on bicycles were dispatched to shout the joyful tidings along the Unter den Linden.

General Leman, meanwhile, had taken up his quarters in Fort Loncin. His army had got away safely and intact. Its adroit retreat had reserved it for future usefulness. He could turn to the next phase of the resistance conscious that his men and he had already rendered valuable service to their country and to their country's friends. The enemy's occupation of the city and advance over the Meuse had been delayed for over forty-eight hours. Even now a passage had been forced, the unbroken chain of forts could hinder the Germans from advancing except slowly and with difficulty. The days thus gained were of incalculable value for the completion of Belgium's mobilization, and to the allies who were coming to Belgium's aid. Leman saw in success already accomplished the inspiration of deeds that could yet be done. He must urge upon his fort commanders that they must struggle to the very last. They must harass the enemy's movements in every possible way. Pontoon bridges over the Meuse must be constantly destroyed by shell-fire. The forts had, indeed, an abundant supply of provisions, of water, and of ammunition. Little

material damage had so far been done to their structures. Leman would himself visit each fort daily, to bring news and instructions. The outer world was not entirely cut off. Under the protection of the guns of Loncin, light railway engines could still be run from the junction of Ans along the Brussels line. There seemed, indeed, little hope of relief. But the forts had so far proved able to resist the heaviest guns that the enemy had brought up. Belgium had spent much money, and had employed the greatest military engineer of the nineteenth century, upon their construction. They might be overcome by sheer weight. But they must not fall, other than as ruins, into the hands of the Germans.

Morning broke. The artillery remained silent. The Belgians in the forts could not doubt, from various signs, that the Germans were in the city. It remained to await vigilantly the enemy's next move. The day wore on, but without event. An occasional rifle-shot was the only sound of war. It was difficult to know what the enemy were doing. The combatants, indeed, needed rest badly. No doubt the Germans, like the Belgians, were resting. Night came. But silence still reigned.

This comparative calm lasted about three days. During that time the shots fired on either side were very few and intermittent. The Germans kept outside the range of the fort guns. Small parties approached, indeed, unmolested, to pick up their wounded. Gruesome stories are told of the cremation of their dead. Many corpses are said to have been pitched, under cover of darkness, into the Meuse. The total casualties were estimated at about 30,000. Aeroplanes were busy in the sky. Large forces of the enemy's cavalry seemed also to be scouring the country beyond the western forts. But this state of affairs could not

last long. The Germans had succeeded in occupying Liège, but they had so far gained little advantage from that success. Great armies would soon be hastening from all parts of Germany towards the Belgian frontier. But before they could advance across that frontier in any numbers or with any speed, the forts of Liège must be reduced. Pontisse and Barchon threatened the passage of the Meuse to the north of the city, Flémalle and Boncelles to the south. Embourg dominated the Ourthe valley for some miles. Fléron and Chaudfontaine overlooked the railway approach from Germany. Loncin guarded the line from Liège to Brussels. It became obvious to the Belgians that a great effort would soon be made by the Germans to break up the obstacles that impeded their progress. Guns were placed upon the Citadel, and in other parts of the city. On Monday, August 10, the great artillery duel was renewed.

The first phase of the defence of Liège began on the evening of August 4, and ended on the evening of August 6. During an interval of three days no fighting took place. The final phase lasted from the 10th to the 18th. Throughout this latter period, over a week, the forts were incessantly bombarded and frequently stormed. In one desperate attack upon Flémalle, delivered early in the morning of August 10, no less than 800 of the enemy were killed, many of them caught in barbed-wire entanglements. On some days rain fell; on others the sun shone. But the guns roared almost without pause. To make any impression upon those masses of earth, of stone, and of iron, the targets for innumerable shells, seemed at first impossible. The fort cupolas, revolving in wreaths of smoke, uttered thunder and darted lightning on all sides. Many outlying houses and farms were set ablaze by the Belgian guns.

Little clouds of smoke sprang constantly from the green hill-sides opposite, and denoted the position of the German artillery. The forts were soon completely invested. Leman visited each daily as long as possible. On one of his journeys he was injured in the leg by falling masonry. Undeterred, he took to using a motor-car. When the forts were each surrounded, however, he was confined to Loncin, where he prepared for a final stand.

One by one, as the days passed, the forts fell. The first and most persistent attacks were made on Fléron, Flémalle, Embourg, and Chaudfontaine. The guns of Embourg were, indeed, notably well served. Three motor-cars, driven by German officers along the Tilff road, were smashed by shells, one being hurled below into the Ourthe. Chaudfontaine also showed considerable accuracy. A detachment of the enemy, screening themselves behind a forage cart, was ascending a slope leading to Ninave, where German guns had been placed, when several shells, bursting in the cart, killed the whole party. Chaudfontaine, however, was soon after blown up. The Germans, after assailing the eastern forts, concentrated their fire upon the western, notably on Pontisse, Liers, and Lantin. Day succeeded day without the gain of any substantial success. The Germans realized that their artillery was inadequate. Unless the Belgian guns could be outranged and out-classed, there would be no end to this disheartening struggle. The forts were probably provisioned for months. It was, no doubt, with considerable impatience that the arrival of siege artillery was awaited.

Meanwhile, during the bombardment of the forts, a bombardment of the city itself was twice opened. This seemed, indeed, to afford some ground for a rumour

spread abroad that the Germans had threatened, if the forts were not surrendered, to shell the town. Few cases of civilian outbreaks seem to have taken place. The damage and the casualties, however, were not in either case severe. The inhabitants were prepared beforehand, and the troops in the city taken out of the danger zone. The Cathedral of St. Paul and the University building were partly demolished. Some of the streets were torn up and littered with wreckage. Otherwise than by these two outbreaks, the Germans appeared anxious to win the favour and to restore the confidence of the citizens. Few of the latter, indeed, would venture into the streets. It is said that, in a vain attempt to revive business, German soldiers were ordered by their officers to throng the food-stalls and the shops, while the Belgian authorities were forced to run the trams, which had ceased working, though no passengers appeared. The daily goose-step parade, however, attracted many spectators. The Liégeois gradually grew accustomed to the sight of German soldiers in their streets and cafés, drinking and playing cards, and to the sound of the guns, many placed in parts of the city itself, steadily bombarding the forts. As is usual in a city in a state of siege, the inhabitants looked upon themselves as the sole interest of the world. No news were forthcoming of the course of war outside. It was known that large forces of the enemy had passed through the city and into Belgium. Wild rumours were rife. Reports such as 'Berlin on fire', 'Great German disaster', picked up by railwaymen at Ans, were gloated over. More truthful accounts, however, soon got abroad regarding the behaviour of German troops in neighbouring villages, culminating in the burning of Visé.

It is recorded that, in the Franco-Prussian campaigns of 1870, an Alsatian named Hauff killed two Germans who were plundering his farm. He was seized and shot immediately. His wife found her little son crying over his father's body. 'Mamma,' said the boy, 'when I grow up I will shoot the Germans who killed Daddy.' The widow fled from the place and settled near Visé. Her son in due course grew to manhood, became a farmer, and married. He had two sons. One day he learned that the Germans were invading the country, to intimidate the Belgians. At length a party of Germans arrived outside his farm. Hatred blazed in Hauff's eyes as he took his rifle in his hand. There was a sharp report, and a German fell. The farmer was dragged outside, and placed against a wall. His last moments were spent in the bitterest anguish. His two sons were seized and placed beside him. All three were immediately executed. This occurrence was but a beginning. Several shots were fired at Visé on the evening of August 15. It is alleged that these were fired by drunken Germans at their own officers. The destruction of the town was begun during the night. It was almost entirely burnt. From all over the district, indeed, came tales of wanton and indiscriminate retribution wherever the laws of war were said to have been transgressed, perhaps unwittingly, by civilians. A splendid harvest had been expected. Many fields of wheat, already cut and placed in 'stooks', lay rotting for want of attention. Days afterwards observers were shocked at the desolate aspect of the countryside. In the village of Herve, famous throughout Belgium for its flavoured cheeses, 19 houses remained out of about 500. Corpses were strewn everywhere: a smell of burning pervaded the

atmosphere. The drastic nature of the reprisals could be estimated from notices such as 'Spare us!' 'We are innocent!' displayed upon houses still standing. The high roads around Liège were torn up at intervals of about forty yards. In rare cases, sights such as children playing innocently in pretty gardens, where houses had escaped demolition, recalled, amid the prevailing havoc, the happy days of peace. There was much to remind one of war. Long German columns continually passed through the district. Soon the heavier artillery began to arrive. One class of gun in particular might well arrest the attention of spectators. It was in four pieces, each drawn by three traction-engines. A thirteenth engine went on ahead to aid the ascent of hills. This gun was the new 16-inch siege howitzer. It had been constructed in secret, and was the largest piece in existence. A single shot was said to suffice to pierce the strongest steel armour. These guns were intended to batter Paris. Meanwhile, they were to be tested upon Liège.

The forts were still holding out stubbornly. A force of 30,000 of the enemy had been left for their reduction. They were shelled day and night. They were, indeed, proving a dangerous thorn in the enemy's side. They disconnected his lines of communication. They retarded the passage of troops and transport wagons. Pontoon bridges especially were objects of the attention of the fort artillery. One Belgian gun was said to have destroyed no less than ten. But on August 13 and 14 the German heavy artillery began to arrive. It was brought into action. Fort Boncelles was one of the first to receive the fire. Bombardment was opened at six o'clock on August 14, and continued for two hours. The guns were so placed that the garrison

could neither see nor fire at them. At eight o'clock two German officers approached, and called upon the fort to surrender. Guns still more colossal than those already used, they said, would render its destruction instantaneous. The Belgian commander replied that honour forbade surrender. His men burst into a cheer. The Germans returned, and the bombardment was continued. The fort began to feel the effects. The chimney of the engine-house fell in; part of the works caught fire; the electric light went out; suffocating fumes filled the galleries. Resistance was maintained throughout the day and night. But at six o'clock next morning the concrete chambers which held the guns began to give way. Several of the cupolas turned no more. Two hours later a shell pierced the roof and burst inside the fort. Several men were wounded. Further resistance seemed useless, and it was decided to surrender. Three white flags were hoisted. While the Germans were approaching the Belgians disabled their guns and rifles and destroyed their ammunition. The enemy took possession of the fort. The prisoners, looking back as they were marched off, could see nothing but a heap of ruins.

Similar destruction gradually overtook the remaining forts. Their fabrics crumbled under the constant impact of heavy shells. Their garrisons, forced to retire into the small chambers within the central concrete blocks, had to inhale oxygen to keep themselves alive. Many were, indeed, at last asphyxiated. Storming parties could no longer be resisted by machine-guns. The strongest of the forts, Loncin, the quarters of General Leman, succumbed in turn. It was shelled by the heavier German guns at a distance of seven miles. The batteries upon the Citadel of Liège were

also turned upon it. It is asserted that, during twenty-six hours of bombardment, shells were rained upon the works at the rate of six a minute. The incessant concussions and explosions at last shattered the structure to ruins. Leman saw that the end was inevitable. He destroyed all his plans, maps, and papers. The three remaining guns were disabled, and the ammunition kept beside them exploded. He had about one hundred men left. These he led out of Loncin in a daring effort to reach another fort. But they were seen by the enemy, and had to abandon the attempt. A German storming party rushed forward to a final assault. But suddenly a shell tore through the battered masonry, and exploded in the main magazine. The fort blew up. There was a terrific crash. Huge masses of concrete were hurled high into the air. An immense cloud of dust and fumes arose. When it had cleared away the Germans advanced. The ground was strewn with the bodies of their storming party. A Belgian corporal with a shattered arm raised his rifle and started to fire at them as they approached. Most of the garrison were buried under the ruins. Leman lay, white and still, pinned beneath a massive beam. He was drawn from his dangerous position, half suffocated by fumes, by some of his men. 'Respectez le général. Il est mort,' cried a soldier as the Germans came up. He was borne gently away to a trench, where a German officer gave him drink. He came to his senses and looked round. 'The men fought valiantly,' he said. 'Put it in your dispatches that I was unconscious.' He was placed in an ambulance, and carried into Liège. Shortly afterwards, when sufficiently recovered, he was brought before Von Emmich. The two commanders saluted. 'General,' said the German, holding out his hand,

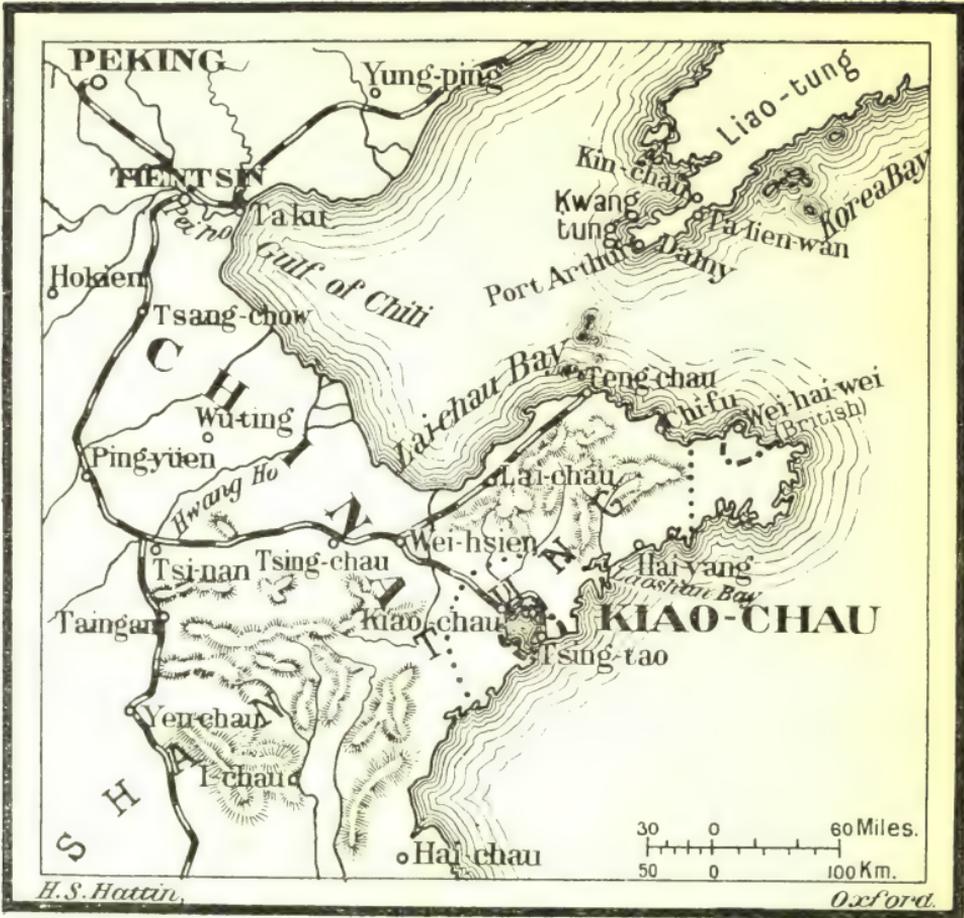
'you have gallantly and nobly held your forts.' 'I thank you,' Leman replied: 'our troops have lived up to their reputation. War is not like manœuvres,' he added, with a smile. He unbuckled his sword, and tendered it to the victor. Von Emmich bowed. 'No,' he said, 'keep it. To have crossed swords with you has been an honour.' A tear sparkled in the Belgian's eye.¹

Nothing more remains to be told. The forts were not built to resist the pounding of artillery as heavy as that brought against them. They had been constructed when the typical siege gun was the 6-inch howitzer. They had to contend with artillery the calibres of which ranged as high as 16 inches. Each was reduced in turn. The last fell on August 17 or 18.

Thus ended the memorable stand of Liège. The struggle was watched with the intensest interest and emotion by the whole of the civilized world. British statesmen paid tributes to the gallant city. France conferred upon it the Cross of the Legion of Honour. The Tsar of Russia expressed his admiration in a message to the Belgian King. Events which followed proved the importance of the time lost to the Germans before Liège. British troops were enabled, reaching Mons not an hour too soon, to oppose a second bulwark to the advancing tide. The strategic value of the defence was hardly greater than its moral effect. The spell of 1870 was broken. German arms were looked upon as invincible no more. The story is full of human interest and dramatic incident. The struggle brought out many noble sentiments. It stirred many brutal passions.

¹ This incident is taken from the narrative of a German officer, published in the press. There is no reason to believe it is not substantially accurate.

It indicated, as the opening chapter in the greatest and most modern of wars, some tendencies of the impending conflict. Science was to be the weapon. Method of mind, weight of metal, ingenuity of destructive device, were to decide the issue. Most of the ancient glamour of battle was gone. But war, maturing as mankind matured, still showed, as human nature showed, both flashes of its youthful chivalry, and traces of its primitive barbarity. Human passions and emotions, human ambitions and ideals, were again at open strife. Lasting peace was the ultimate quest. Christian principle was the issue.



THE SIEGE OF TSING-TAO

TOKYO, capital of Japan, lies at the head of Tokyo Bay, in the south-east of Nippon. Its two million inhabitants are distributed among houses and streets which present curious intermixtures of Japanese and European architecture, customs, or science. The jinrikisha notably has been displaced largely by tramcars which, carrying all passengers at a uniform rate of four sen, make it possible to travel ten miles for a penny. It is an industrial city, but on account of occasional earthquakes no very large buildings line the thoroughfares. The traveller can here observe to advantage the strange characteristics of the most stoical race upon earth, or can contrast, if he will, the courteous, imperturbably serene disposition of the most martial nation of the East with the present disposition of the most rabidly bellicose nation of the West. When Japanese and German, indeed, met in conflict before Tsing-tao in the autumn of 1914, there was seen, in the Japanese soldier, during a campaign of peculiar hardship and difficulty, a revival of the qualities of the old Samurai, with his quiet courage, his burning patriotism, his patience, his habitual suppression of emotional display in pain, pleasure, passion, or peril, qualities singularly distinct from those of the modern Goth. Nor was the statesmanship which brought about that conflict less admirable. Japan's alliance with Great Britain was at once a solemn pledge and the guiding principle of her foreign policy. August 1914 found British interests and the vast trade that centred at Hong-kong in danger :

German armed vessels prowled the seas, and the German naval base of Tsing-tao was busy with warlike preparations. Great Britain appealed to Japan to free their joint commerce from the menace. The Japanese Prime Minister, Count Okuma, might well hesitate, however, before recommending intervention. Was he the right minister to direct a war? He was nearer eighty than seventy years old, and recently had been for seven years in retirement: his Government had a minority in the Diet, and to the Genro his name was anathema: he claimed the allegiance of no party, and the powerful military and naval clans, Choshu and Satsuma, were openly hostile. He had been raised to power a few months before by public demand for progressive government. There were considerations other than domestic or personal, indeed, which might have tempted some statesmen to hold their hands. To temporize while events revealed themselves in Europe would be safer than immediate action; while to remain neutral might lead to the transference to the Japanese of much trade with China now in British hands, inevitably hampered by the menace of German commerce-destroyers. Nevertheless, Count Okuma's Cabinet came to a bold and loyal decision. Baron Kato, the Foreign Minister, reassured Great Britain of active Japanese aid, and on August 15 sent an ultimatum to Germany. The latter was requested to withdraw at once all German armed vessels from Eastern waters, and to deliver to Japan before September 15 the entire leased territory of Kiao-chau, with a view to its eventual restoration to China. The ultimatum was timed to expire at noon on August 23. That day arrived without satisfaction having been given to Japan. Within a few hours the 2nd Japanese squadron steamed off towards Tsing-tao.

Before the outbreak of hostilities with Great Britain, Vice-Admiral the Graf von Spee, who commanded the German Pacific squadron, had steamed away from Tsing-tao with most of his ships. To use Tsing-tao as a naval base while engaging in commerce-raiding seemed a sound and a practicable plan, since the British and Australian naval forces, though superior, were hardly strong enough simultaneously to blockade the harbour and to search the seas. The plan was, however, rendered impossible by the Japanese ultimatum, and the Admiral, after having lingered for some weeks in the Western Pacific, departed for other seas and other adventures. Such was the result of Japan's action, and thus dangerous were the tactics that Japan's action had frustrated. For Tsing-tao, situated upon one of the two peninsulas, divided by two miles of waterway, enclosing the bay of Kiao-chau, with its safe and spacious anchorage for vessels of any size, constituted one of the most important naval bases on the Chinese coast. It had, indeed, been described as the key to Northern China. Dominating the eastern coast of the Shantung peninsula, the port formed the centre of the semicircular area known as Kiao-chau, extending on a radius of 32 miles around the shores of the bay, with a population of 60,000. This area was, under the Chinese-German agreement as to Tsing-tao, influenced and controlled by Germany, though not strictly subject to her, and regarded as neutral territory. Its surface was mainly mountainous and bare, though the lowlands were well cultivated, but in parts it was rich in mineral wealth, large but undeveloped supplies of coal being present. In winter the port, connected to the junction of Tsi-nan by a German-built railway, was the natural outlet for the trade of Northern China. The heights which surrounded

the bay offered admirable sites for fortification, while the land-approaches to Tsing-tao were guarded by formidable defences stretched across its peninsula. In many quarters the stronghold was regarded as a second Port Arthur. The Germans had paid particular attention to defence, so much so, indeed, that over five-sixths of the white inhabitants were engaged in military occupations. Five thousand German marines constituted the normal garrison, though the outbreak of war in August called about a thousand more men—volunteers, reservists, and sailors—to the colours. The complement of the *Kaiserin Elizabeth*, an Austrian cruiser sheltering in the harbour, left for Tientsin, having received orders to disarm their ship, but returned in time to join the defenders. The garrison was amply provisioned for five or six months, and well provided with weapons, stores, and munitions. Most of the German ships off the Chinese coast at the outbreak of war, indeed, had made immediately for Tsing-tao, and discharged upon its wharves many thousand tons of cargo. When war with Japan became inevitable, therefore, the defenders could anticipate a successful resistance, provided the expected instantaneous victories in Europe materialized. Elaborate preparations were made for the defence. The harbour mouth was blocked by three sunken vessels, enabling only small craft to enter. Chinese villages within the leased territory, and the bridge where the railway crossed the boundary, were destroyed, partial compensation being paid to the inhabitants. Native labourers were engaged to throw up earthworks to strengthen the town fortifications. Many foreigners, women, children, and non-combatants, meanwhile, had left the town. On Friday evening, August 21, at roll-call, the Governor, Captain Meyer-Waldeck, read out a message from the German

Emperor exhorting the garrison to defend the town to their utmost, and to do their 'duty to the last'. It was listened to stoically. The following day a diversion occurred which opened hostilities propitiously for the Germans. The British destroyer *Kennet*, encountering the German destroyer *S. 90* off the coast, gave chase. The *S. 90* immediately made for port, and the *Kennet*, in the ardour of pursuit, closed in unawares within range of the German land batteries. The latter opened fire, and before she could draw off the *Kennet* sustained ten casualties, though little material damage. Next day the term of the Japanese ultimatum expired. It was doubtful at what point the Japanese would begin operations, or what tactics they would adopt. The fear was prevalent among Germans that the enemy would enter Chinese territory to reach the town from the land : newspapers under German influence, indeed, circulating in Chinese coast towns, started a press campaign with the object of stirring the Chinese Government to oppose by force any Japanese landing in her territory. Outposts were placed by the Germans along the shores of the neutral zone to watch for developments : they descried, on August 24, the approach of Japanese warships.

Vice-Admiral Sadakichi Kato, who commanded the approaching squadron, immediately upon arrival took measures to protect himself against danger from mines. Seven islets clustering round the mouth of Kiao-chau Bay were occupied, to form a convenient local naval base, while mine-sweepers swept the surrounding seas. No less than a thousand mines were taken from the water. A blockade of the whole Kiao-chau coast was declared, as commencing from 9 a.m., August 27, and war vessels patrolled the shores, some seventy miles

long. Action soon began, and continued during ensuing days, with shells that at intervals screamed towards the town. The position was, however, reconnoitred carefully. Japanese airmen went up frequently to scan the fortifications and to drop bombs. All protruding structures, spires and factory-chimneys, had been levelled to the ground by the Germans so as to afford no mark for fire. Bombs were dropped on the railway station and on one of the numerous barrack buildings. The operations continued spasmodically into September, while Kato was awaiting the approach by land of a co-operating army, which had now disembarked on the northern coast of the Shantung peninsula, about 150 miles due north of Tsing-tao.

The landing was effected on September 2, without hindrance or opposition on the part of the Chinese. The Government, following the precedent of the Russo-Japanese War, immediately published a declaration refusing to hold itself responsible for the obligations of strict neutrality in areas that formed, within Lung-kow, Lai-chau, and the neighbourhood of Kiao-chau Bay, passage-ways essential to the belligerent troops. It was, of course, incumbent upon the Powers involved to respect Chinese property and administrative rights. Japan, therefore, was permitted to make use of the main roads to transport an army to the rear of Tsing-tao. The forces landed composed a division numbering 23,000, and commanded by Lieutenant-General Mitsuomi Kamio. An advance-guard was sent forward without delay, but soon found its way rendered impassable by torrential floods which at this time swept down upon and devastated the province of Shantung, bridges, roads, and even villages being submerged and destroyed, with great loss of life, largely owing to Chinese official incom-

petence. The Japanese, after covering 20 kilometres in two days, reached a stream so swollen that crossing was impossible. The artillery had to return to Lung-kow. German diplomacy, meanwhile, exasperated at its inability to prevent a Japanese landing, had not been inactive.

The German and Austrian ministers at Peking, on hearing of the Japanese landing, protested strongly. China, it was claimed, ought to have forestalled and resisted the landing, but instead had deliberately extended the war-zone in order to facilitate Japanese movements. She would be held responsible for any injury to the German cause or property. To this China replied that, if it was incumbent upon her to prevent by force Japan operating in her territory, it was equally her duty to prevent by force Germany fortifying and defending Tsing-tao. China had endeavoured, indeed, but unsuccessfully, to preclude belligerent operations in her territory : only after the Japanese landing, when she was powerless to do otherwise, had she extended the zone of war. As to the responsibility, she reiterated her previous declaration. The baffled Germans fell back on threats : the right was reserved to visit upon China dire consequences for her alleged breach of neutrality. The incident, thrown into striking contrast with Germany's offer to Belgium, marked the unscrupulousness of German diplomacy, but stirred also many doubts among the foreign communities in China, in which the British, allied as they were to the Japanese, formed a predominating element. An anomaly of the situation was that British local interests had long conflicted with Japanese national interests. Japan's activities had, at every stage of her recent history, reduced British opportunities. Japanese trader competed with British trader



for the markets of China, and Japan's share of the annual trade expansion was increasing, that of Great Britain decreasing. High tariffs and preferential rates had closed Corea and Manchuria to British enterprise. It is easy to estimate in what commercial jealousy and rivalry such circumstances had resulted. While the expediency of the British-Japanese alliance was fully recognized, and its consequences admitted to be the freedom of the China seas from menace of commerce-destroyers, nevertheless the fact remained that the hostilities against Tsing-tao would constitute a fresh impulse to Japanese expansion. The operations in Shantung were watched with critical eyes by many British in the foreign settlements of China. The floods had, meanwhile, subsided considerably, and on September 12 Japanese cavalry reached Tsimo, ten miles outside the Kiao-chau zone. No trace of the enemy north of the Pai-sha River had been seen, beyond a German aeroplane that occasionally passed overhead on reconnoitring flights. On the following day a number of sharp skirmishes with outposts occurred, and one Japanese patrol found its way to the small town of Kiao-chau, situated at the head of the bay, some 22 miles from Tsing-tao itself. The brushes with the Germans became of daily occurrence, and in one of them a high official of the German Legation at Peking, who had volunteered for service, was killed. On September 17 the Japanese attacked Wang-ko-huang, 13 miles from Tsimo, the enemy being in a fortified position and provided with machine-guns. At sunset, however, they abandoned the village and withdrew under cover of darkness, leaving behind quantities of equipment and supplies. A little later a development came about that brought the dissatisfaction of British traders to a head.

About September 18, after hostile patrols had been driven away from the shore by the fire of destroyers, Japanese artillery and troops were landed at Laoshan Bay, north of Tsing-tao, just within the leased territory. Why was it necessary that troops should have been landed on the northern shore of the peninsula of Shantung, 150 miles from their objective, when guns could be disembarked with perfect safety on the eastern shore, not 40 miles from the objective, and within the German zone? The British were not as critical of Japan's strategy as they were suspicious of her policy. Dark suggestions got afoot that she had ulterior designs upon the whole Chinese province of Shantung. Such views could not but have reached the ears of the British authorities at Wei-hei-wei and elsewhere, nor could they have been deaf to previous murmurs. Diplomatic circles, however, could extend little sympathy to the critics. Nevertheless, it was undeniable that the latter were aggrieved, and that their attitude might produce unfortunate effects. If Great Britain herself took some share in the Tsing-tao operations, greater sympathy with their purpose might be induced, and a better state of feeling in the Orient between the two peoples might possibly result. It must have been some aim such as this that prompted the dispatch of a British force to the Tsing-tao area to co-operate with General Kamio, a step which the earlier symptoms of the British discontent cannot but have influenced. On September 19, however, 1,000 of the 2nd South Wales Borderers, a force so small as to be nominal, under Brigadier-General Barnardiston, left Tientsin and proceeded to Wei-hei-wei. Transport mules having here been taken on board, the expedition on September 22 coasted down the eastern shore of Shantung, and next day landed at

Laoshan Bay. A month later, as will be seen, they were joined by 500 of the 36th Sikhs.

Meanwhile, it was probably about this time, or shortly after, that the *Triumph*, a British battleship of nearly 12,000 tons displacement, 19½ knots speed, and four 10-inch guns primary armament, joined the Japanese squadron off Tsing-tao. A spasmodic bombardment had been maintained during the preceding weeks, and seaplanes had been busy, bombing and range-finding. The wireless station, the electric-power station, and several ships in harbour were damaged by explosive missiles. Little could be done, however, from the sea alone, and the attack by land, owing largely to transport difficulties, had still to develop. But the weather was now improving considerably. Another set-back to Japanese military ardour was, indeed, constituted by the marked reluctance of the Germans to form a line of resistance. German outposts, upon encountering hostile patrols, invariably retired after offering faint opposition. When the British troops, after a circuitous march of 40 miles, much hampered by bad roads, came up in the rear of the Japanese, then preparing to assault the enemy's advanced positions on high ground between the rivers Pai-sha and Li-tsun, the part that it had been arranged they should take in the Japanese attack, on September 26, fell through owing to a disinclination of the Germans to fight. Their resistance was so meagre that the Allies were hardly engaged, and next day gained without difficulty the easterly banks of the Li-tsun and Chang-tsun rivers, only seven miles north-east of Tsing-tao. The enemy at all points fell back, and the advance upon the town continued. The Japanese had now drawn their lines across the neck of the narrow peninsula upon which Tsing-tao stands. There were indications

that the main forces were now in contact. The only obstacle, but a formidable one, between the invaders and the forts themselves was constituted by the dominating height of Prince Heinrich Hill, from whose crest, rising some five miles from the town, all the forts could be bombarded. General Kamio estimated that three days of fighting would be required for its capture : it was as all-important to the defence as to the attack, and was sure to be strongly held. The forts themselves, of the latest type, were elaborately constructed, and equipped with concrete and steel cupolas, mounting high calibre pieces. They commanded both landward and seaward approaches to the town, those nearest the invading Japanese being situated upon, and named, Moltke Berg, Bismarck Berg, and Iltis Berg. Earth redoubts and trenches between formed the German line of defence. Plans for the most considerable engagement, the assault of Prince Heinrich Hill, that had so far taken place, to begin on Sunday, September 27, were made by the Japanese General. It developed more speedily than had been expected. German artillery opened a terrific cannonade upon the Japanese lines, while three warships shelled the attacking right wing from the bay. The German fire was heavy and accurate. Japanese warships and aeroplanes, and also the British battleship *Triumph*, however, created a diversion that relieved the assaulting forces. Two of the forts were shelled from the sea, and suffered serious injury, a barrack-house and other buildings being, moreover, damaged. For many hours the great guns, thundering their challenges from sea and land and estuary, maintained continual uproar. Darkness began to gather. Fighting continued into the night, and early next morning was renewed. But the defenders seemed to

lack enthusiasm. It is doubtful, indeed, whether their forces were sufficiently numerous to hold with strength their advanced positions, and at the same time to man adequately their main fortified positions. During the morning of the 28th the Germans withdrew from Prince Heinrich Hill, leaving fifty of their number and four machine-guns in Japanese hands, and many dead upon the slopes. The Japanese casualties numbered 150. By noon the whole position was in the attackers' hands, and the beleaguered town, visible from the height, was now face to face with siege. German officers who knew all the points, weak and strong, of the defences, could not but realize their inability to withstand the siege guns which Japan would sooner or later bring to the attack. But the heavy artillery was yet far away. A month was to elapse before the pieces could be dragged across the difficult country, and emplaced in prepared positions on Prince Heinrich Hill.

This month, which covered the whole of October, saw many interesting incidents, and betrayed no signs of idleness on the part of besiegers or besieged. The Germans, indeed, proved extraordinarily prodigal in ammunition, firing on an average 1,000 to 1,500 shells daily, a fact which lent support to the current view that, while undesirous of incurring their emperor's displeasure, they realized the hopelessness, so far as Tsing-tao was concerned, of their emperor's cause. Warships in the bay assisted the cannonade from the forts, and Lieutenant von Pluschow, the airman of the single aeroplane the town possessed, ventured forth at intervals to reconnoitre or to bomb. Life in the town itself continued to be quite normal. Japanese and British, meanwhile, drew their lines closer and closer to the fortress by sap and mine, though hindered

greatly by terrible weather, and occasionally having slight encounters with the enemy. In one of these, on October 5, a German night-attack was heavily repulsed, forty-seven dead being left behind by the attackers. At sea the operations were also spasmodic. At the end of September a landing force occupied Lao-she harbour, in the vicinity of Tsing-tao, where four abandoned field-guns were taken possession of. Mine-sweeping had constantly to be maintained, under fire from the shore, and proved a dangerous task. Several vessels thus engaged were sunk or damaged, though with comparatively few casualties, through coming into contact with mines. Some German gunboats, however, among them the *Cormoran* and the *Iltis*, were apparently sunk about this time, either deliberately by the Germans, or from the fire of the Japanese guns. A torpedo flotilla bombarded one of the barracks, moreover, to some effect, while Japanese aeroplanes were also active. Von Pluschow twice attempted to attack vessels of the blockading squadron, but unsuccessfully, and on one occasion a Japanese aeroplane pursuing him gave a German balloon, floating captive above the town, some critical moments before it could be hauled to safety. A few days later, about October 7, the rope which held this balloon was, during the spasmodic firing, severed by a shot, and the great bag floated away, apparently across the bay in the direction of Kiao-chau town and the railway line inland. In this quarter, indeed, over the line itself, serious friction had arisen between the Japanese and the Chinese authorities.

The line ran from Tsing-tao and Kiao-chau to the junction of Tsi-nan, a distance of about 250 miles, passing through the towns of Wei-hsien and Tsing-chau. It was German built and almost wholly German owned.

From some points of view it might reasonably be said to constitute an adjunct, if not a part, of the leased territory itself. In any case the Japanese claimed that, since the outbreak of war, the line had been consistently utilized to bring reservists, supplies, and ammunition to the town. The Austrian crew of the disarmed *Kaiserin Elizabeth*, both when they left and later returned to Tsing-tao, had used this means of transit. The railway, being still under German control, constituted a menace in the Japanese rear, which the latter, upon consolidating their position towards the end of September, took measures to remove. After occupying Wei-hsien, they began to arrange for the seizure of the whole line as far as Tsi-nan itself. Hints of such action drew forth protests from China, whose Government, however, adopted too compromising an attitude. The Japanese Government was firm. China's right to formal protest was admitted, but the occupation was stated to be an urgent military necessity, and without any prejudice to Chinese claims after the war. Since China was unable to enforce the neutrality of the line, flagrantly violated by the Germans, the Japanese had no alternative but to bring it under their own control. The Chino-German Treaty of 1898 and the German Government's charter clearly proved that the railway was essentially German. A compromise, hastened by the unhesitating and thorough measures taken by the Japanese to effect the occupation, was arrived at. The Japanese were temporarily to control the administration, while the Chinese conducted the traffic, of the railway. Its fate, since China did not admit the contention that it was purely German, was to be decided after the war. A bellicose attitude noticeable in Chinese military circles became very marked when,

three days later, on October 6, unquestionably in breach of the arrangement, Japanese soldiers arrived at Tsi-nan, and took over the control of the rolling stock on the Shantung line. It was alleged at Peking that this force had declared martial law in the town, which contained, indeed, many German sympathizers who, rumour added, had destroyed several collieries there in their anxiety to obstruct the Allies. But the Chinese Government submitted under further strong protest, and with a request that the troops should be withdrawn. The Japanese action occasioned, however, further distrust among British residents in the Orient. Meanwhile, a second British force, consisting of 500 Sikhs, was being prepared to reinforce General Barnardiston.

At one o'clock on October 12, Captain Meyer-Waldeck, the Governor of Tsing-tao, received a joint wireless message from the commanders of the besieging troops and the blockading squadron, offering a safe escort out of the town to Tientsin of neutrals and non-combatants. He at once assented. Delegates met next day at ten o'clock to discuss details, and on the 15th the American consul, accompanied by German women and children and Chinese subjects, left the town. On the previous day there had been a combined sea and air attack upon forts Iltis and Kaiser, in which the *Triumph* participated and suffered the only Allied casualties. It is recorded that, before reopening bombardment after the departure of the non-combatants, the Japanese, ever polite, signalled 'Are you now quite ready, gentlemen?' For reply a German sniper, taking careful but faulty aim, sent a bullet which removed three out of the eleven hairs of the signalman's moustache. Two days later, days notable for torrential rains, which intensified

the discomforts of the troops ashore, the Japanese suffered a severe naval loss. The *Takachiho*, an old cruiser of some 3,000 tons, which had seen service in the Chino-Japanese War, was on patrol duty on Saturday night, October 17, when she fouled a mine, released by and adrift in the rough seas. Destroyers hastened to her aid, but rescue work was difficult in the darkness and the heavy weather. The cruiser sank rapidly. Two hundred and seventy-one officers and seamen lost their lives. The rough weather which contributed to the disaster continued with little break, and hindered operations, till the end of the month. The landing of the Sikh contingent at Laoshan Bay on October 21 was, indeed, attended by great difficulties and some loss of life. A strong southerly gale had raised high seas, and enormous lighters and sampans, employed for disembarkation, were thrown high and dry upon the beach. Sixteen Japanese were drowned in trying to save other boats that broke loose. The Sikhs got safely ashore, but next morning again the winds blew and the rains descended, and the camping-ground was soon a miry pool. Circumstances other than the weather, however, helped to put the British officers out of humour. Trouble ahead threatened in connexion with transport arrangements. While the Chinese carts and drivers, brought hurriedly from Tientsin, were doubtfully reliable, many of the mules were raw and quite unused to harness. When a start for the front was preparing on the morning of the 23rd, it was found that the best of the harness, which had been purchased from peasants in the locality, had been stolen in the night by the people who had brought it in, and that what was left was tied up with string. The column, however, at length set off, and made a march memorable for hardship and difficulty.

From Laoshan to Lutin, where a metalled road began, was 30 miles, crossed by a track formed at one time by quagmire, at another by slippery boulders. During eleven hours 6 miles were covered, by which time the Sikhs were completely exhausted with digging carts or mules out of the mud, hauling them out with dragropes, reloading overturned carts, or unloading those immovable. Next day the column was on the road at seven o'clock, and covered 13 miles. So deep was the mud in parts that when, owing to the rotten harness giving way, a mule would occasionally lurch forward suddenly and walk away by itself, the body of the cart would be left floating on the surface. One cart was pulled completely off its axles by a squad of men, and slid along admirably for a considerable distance. Seventy Chinese wheelbarrows, however, obtained from a Japanese *dépôt*, rendered invaluable aid on this day. Tsimo, the halting-place, was reached in the evening, and next day, after the first ten miles, saw plain sailing. A few days later, on October 30, after the Sikhs had rested and recovered, the whole British force, now some 1,500 strong, moved up to the front in readiness for the bombardment of Tsing-tao, which had been arranged to begin next morning in celebration of the birthday of the Mikado. Siege artillery, 150 pieces, including six 28-cm. howitzers and some heavy naval guns, had now been brought up and placed in position. The shelling was timed to start, in royal salute, at dawn.

Men who, stationed upon Prince Heinrich Hill, could look below upon the doomed town, athwart the narrowing peninsula, with the sea, studded with grey warships, surrounding, had before them a wonderful spectacle as the morning sun, rising from the Pacific, slowly dispersed the darkness. The thunder of the great guns broke

suddenly upon that stillness which only dawn knows, and their discharges flashed redly on the darkling slopes. The Japanese shooting, it is related, displayed remarkable accuracy, some of the first projectiles bursting upon the enormous oil-tanks of the Standard Oil Company and the Asiatic Petroleum Company. A blaze roared skywards, and for many hours the heavens were darkened by an immense cloud of black petroleum smoke which hung like a pall over the town. Shells passing over these fires drew up columns of flame to a great height. Chinese coolies could be seen running before the spreading and burning oil. Fires broke out also on the wharves of the outer harbour, in which during the day a gunboat, apparently damaged fatally by a shot which carried away her funnel, disappeared. The redoubts and infantry works particularly were heavily bombarded. On the left of the German line 100 Chinese in the village of Tao-tung-chien were unfortunately caught by shell-fire directed on the redoubt close at hand, while the fort of Siao-chau-shan, near by, was set afire. The tops of several of the forts were soon concealed by clouds of dust and smoke. A heavy fusillade was concentrated upon an observation point which the defenders had constructed on a hill in the town, and had considerable effect. The Germans did not on this first day of general bombardment reply strongly, two only of the forts persistently firing. At length the sun sank and night obscured the conflict. It had been a bad day for the besieged : and dismantled guns, shattered concrete platforms and entrenchments, devastated barbed-wire entanglements, augured the town's approaching fate.

The bombardment continued for a week. During that period the Japanese and British guns, directed

from land and sea by a balloon, by aeroplanes, or by observation stations on the hills, in daytime thundered incessantly. The German shelling, though severe, was far less heavy, because, it is said, the men in the forts, sheltering most of the time in bomb-proof caverns, issued forth only at night and during pauses of the Japanese to return the fire. The airman von Pluschow actively directed the replies. The latter seemed not, indeed, impartially distributed. The marked attention paid to British troops and ships afforded an illustration of that attitude of peculiar malevolence which Germans have adopted towards the British nation and name. The German airman singled out the British camp, recognizable by its white tents, for his bombs, while for the German artillery it had an inordinate attraction. Officers on board the *Triumph*, moreover, observed that the largest German guns, of 12-inch calibre, were consistently directed upon their vessel. But of many projectiles one only, which struck the mast, being fired from Hui-tchien-huk, proved effective. This hit, however, caused rejoicing in Tsing-tao which, it is asserted, would not have been equalled by the sinking of a Japanese Dreadnought. The *Triumph* singled out for attack Fort Bismarck especially, and two of the German 6-inch guns were early put out of action. The British gunners adopted the ingenious plan of heeling their ship by five degrees, and bombarding the enemy, from sight strips specially calculated, without exposing themselves or their weapons. It became customary aboard to call the bombardment 'pressing the enemy', from an exhortation sent by the Japanese Crown Prince to 'press the enemy, braving all hardships'. Ashore, indeed, the pressure on the enemy developed steadily as the days passed. On

November 2 the Austrian cruiser *Kaiserin Elizabeth*, which had, with the German gunboats still afloat, been engaging vigorously in the fighting, sank, having probably been blown up deliberately, and the floating dock also disappeared. Iltis Fort, moreover, was silenced, two guns being smashed and ammunition giving out, and Japanese infantry advanced and captured an eminence in German hands. On another ridge, however, hard by the silenced fort, some German naval gunners carried out a ruse which saved for the present both their position and their battery, composed of naval 9-cm. pieces, which were exposed dangerously to fire from sea and land. Lieutenant von Trendel, in command, during the night constructed wooden models of cannon, which he placed in position 200 yards from his real guns. Next morning he exploded powder near by, and drew the fire of the besiegers, attracted by the flashes, upon the dummies. That day the wireless and electric power stations were wrecked, and large attacking forces crept further forward, despite severe fire, and entrenched closer to the enemy's lines. In the evening and night the latter showed special activity, star rockets and other fireworks being used to illumine the opposing positions, which were heavily fusilladed. A German night-attack was delivered, but was repulsed. Next day, the 4th, and on the two following days, progress was maintained. The Allied trenches were pushed forward until they were right up to and almost half round the nearest German forts. Many casualties were suffered, but the German fire was kept down by the Japanese guns, whose accuracy was remarkable. The weather conditions were unfavourable, high winds and heavy rains prevailing, and the troops in the trenches had to endure hard privations. So effective was the bombard-

ment, however, that during November 5 and 6 plans were prepared for the final assault. It was arranged that a general infantry attack should be made as soon as practicable. The garrisons in the forts, meanwhile, were beginning to exhaust their ammunition, of which they had been, during the preliminary operations, strangely prodigal. Guns lay silent for other reasons than structural injury, though the latter cause, indeed, was frequent, a single shot, in one case, from the *Suwo*, the Japanese flagship, having destroyed a 24-cm. gun and killed eight men on Fort Hui-tchien-huk. In the town itself the streets, not immune from falling projectiles, were deserted, and the only centre of social intercourse and conviviality was the German Club, where regularly officers or non-combatants slipped in for dinner, luncheon, or a glass of beer. But it was realized that the end was not far distant.

Early in the morning of November 6 the airman von Pluschow flew away across Kiao-chau Bay, and did not return. He escaped with the Governor's last dispatches into Chinese territory, where his machine was interned. That day and night saw no cessation of the firing, the guns of the defenders still roaring at intervals. About an hour after midnight the first impulse of the general attack took effect. While a particularly heavy artillery fire kept the Germans in their bomb-proof shelters, the central redoubt of the first line of defence, which had been badly shattered by the bombardment, was rushed by a storming party headed by General Yoshimi Yamada. Engineers had in the darkness sapped right up to the barbed-wire entanglements, which being cut provided way for the infantry, who, while part held the enemy in front, rushed the redoubt on both flanks. Two hundred

prisoners were taken, and the Japanese flag was hoisted. The besiegers were through the German line, but the position had to be consolidated, or disaster would follow. Danger from the flank was, however, soon obviated by advances in other parts of the line. Just after five o'clock a battery on Shao-tan Hill was captured; half an hour later another battery in Tao-tung-chien redoubt was taken, and Fort Chung-shan-wa, the base of the German right wing, fell. The shadows were still dense, and the final phase of the siege, viewed from Prince Heinrich Hill, presented a sight brilliant with many flashes and flaming fireworks, and a sound dominated by the thunder of the batteries. But dawn, as the besiegers began in mass to close in upon the main line of forts Iltis, Moltke, and Bismarck, was breaking. It was decided to storm these positions forthwith, since the German fire, owing to exhaustion of the ammunition, was dying away. Governor Meyer-Waldeck, who had been wounded, realized now that further resistance was futile. Shortly before six o'clock he sent Major von Kayser, his adjutant, accompanied by another officer and a trumpeter, from the staff headquarters bearing the white flag: at the same time a signal of surrender was made from the Observatory. This was not, however, observed, while von Kayser's party, coming under fire, was dispersed by a shell which killed the trumpeter and the adjutant's horse. Meanwhile, Japanese and British were closing in, and were tensely awaiting the final assault. It was never made. Soon after seven o'clock a welcome sight relaxed the tension of the troops, torn, dirty, and weary, calling forth cheers from the British, and shouts of 'Banzai!' from the Japanese. The campaign was over: Tsing-tao had fallen. White flags were fluttering from the forts.

That evening delegates from the two armies met and signed the terms of capitulation, which were unconditional. Honours of war were accorded the defenders, the Governor and his officers being permitted to retain their swords. The Allies marched into the town, and on November 10 the garrison was formally transferred. Over 4,000 Germans were sent to Japan as prisoners, and large quantities of war material were confiscated. The captures included 30 field-guns, 100 machine-guns, 2,500 rifles, 40 motor-cars, £1,200 in bullion, and 15,000 tons of coal. All ships in harbour, and also the floating dock, had been destroyed, but it seemed probable that the *Kaiserin Elizabeth* could be successfully raised. Sufficient provisions were found to feed 5,000 persons for three months, and the victors were able to regale their appetites with luxuries such as butter, crab, or salmon, which were plentiful. Looting, however, was strictly forbidden. For fastidious persons the bath, after many weeks, was again available, and proved, indeed, in view of steady accumulations of mud, a salutary course. Measures, meanwhile, were at once taken to restore the town to its normal condition. The troops and sailors were employed in removing débris or undischarged land and sea mines. Another Japanese gunboat was sunk, and several officers and men lost their lives, while engaged in this dangerous work. The victory had to be paid for, indeed, with a heavy toll of life and limb. The Japanese casualties numbered 236 killed and 1,282 wounded; the British, 12 killed and 53 wounded. On November 16 the Allies formally took possession of Tsing-tao; and a memorial service was held for the dead.

TROYON: AN ENGAGEMENT IN THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE¹

No conflict in history exceeds in magnitude or importance the battle which commenced on the banks of the Aisne on September 13, 1914. The numbers engaged were upwards of two millions. The area involved stretched on September 13 from Verdun to Noyon, a distance of about one hundred and thirty miles, and included Laon and Soissons, Rheims and Compiègne. The immense battle-line lengthened from day to day. On September 28, its western extremity was Peronne. On October 2, gun defied gun from Verdun to Laon, from Laon to Arras. The Battle of the Aisne, which already summarized many engagements that once historians would have dignified, but modern comparisons forbid to be described, as battles in themselves, became itself part of one gigantic conflict which raged from the bounds of England to the confines of Switzerland. The thunder of the guns reverberated from the cliffs of Dover to the gorges of the Swiss Jura. But of the whole battle-line of the Aisne no section was more strategically important than that occupied by the British. Not one of the separate engagements, of the British or of the French, which together comprised the battle, was more strategically important or more stubbornly contested than that fought in the woods and on the hill-sides around Troyon. The struggle

¹ An outline of this narrative may be found in Sir John French's dispatch dated October 8, and published October 18, 1914.

opened with a night-attack in the early hours of September 14. How that struggle was won it is our purpose to describe.

Shortly after midnight on September 14, the 2nd Infantry Brigade, billeted in Moulines, began to muster. The conditions, indeed, were favourable to a night-attack. Rain fell at intervals. Heavy mist intensified the darkness. Nevertheless, Brigadier-General Bulfin could not but feel anxiety as to his prospects of success. The force under his command, now mustering without bugle-call or beat of drum, only numbered some 4,000 men. It comprised battalions of the King's Royal Rifles, the Royal Sussex, the Northamptonshire, the Loyal North Lancashire Regiments, and was supported by the 25th Artillery Brigade, which was short of a battery. There was ground for believing, and it was afterwards clearly established, that in the previous week the Germans had carefully selected their position, had taken all ranges, had dug gun-pits and trenches, with the object of making a determined stand here, rather than upon the banks of the Aisne between Oeuilly and the Pont-Arcy. Only a few hours before, on the morning of the 13th, the whole 1st British Division had met with little opposition in crossing the river. But the formidable position to which the enemy had retired, south of the line of the Chemin des Dames, looked down at the wooded slopes around Troyon across a wide valley almost destitute of cover. Some of the oldest local inhabitants could remember that this very spot had been held by the Germans in the campaign of 1871. There was another tradition. Historians asserted that, a short distance away, on the hill above Bourg and Comin, Labienus, the lieutenant of Caesar,

had successfully defended Gaul against barbarians attacking from the north. Excavation a few years before had revealed in the huge quarries there, now occupied by modern artillery, a subterranean village containing quantities of Gallic pottery and arms. The Germans might well be expected to offer considerable resistance. Signs, moreover, were not wanting of the constant watchfulness and activity of both the opposing armies. Desultory firing and the occasional screech of a shell broke the silence at intervals. The Medical Corps were at work bringing in the wounded. Great search-lights swept ceaselessly the death-ridden valley of the Aisne. If those great shafts of light, which the mist hampered but did not destroy, were to play on the woods and fields of Troyon and Vendresse, the British could scarcely hope to deliver their attack without previous discovery. As Bulfin awaited somewhat anxiously the return of the officers' patrol he had sent out to reconnoitre, perhaps he recalled under what different circumstances he had fought in the highlands of Burma, or gained distinction in the South African campaigns. Shortly before three o'clock the officers returned. They reported to the General a considerable force of the enemy near a factory north of Troyon.

Troyon lies on the Laon road, about half-way between Cerny and Vendresse. Wooded slopes of considerable height separate it from where, to its north, near Cerny, the Laon road crosses the Chemin des Dames. West of Troyon, densely wooded country undulates towards the high hills around Braye. East of Troyon a spur of hills rises sharply. Southwards, between Moulins and Troyon, continuous woodland could conceal, but would not facilitate, the approach of the British.

At three o'clock Bulfin ordered the King's Royal

Rifles and the Royal Sussex Regiment to move forward from Moulins. The advance was made as noiselessly as possible. Everything depended upon the enemy being surprised. At length the British drew near. The apprehensions of some of the officers were at one point alarmed by hearing a sudden sharp cry. A stray shot, an effect of the general desultory firing, had shattered the arm of one of the men. He could not restrain a cry of agony. But next moment the brave fellow seized a piece of turf with his uninjured hand and thrust it between his teeth. He held it in this position till he was able to crawl back through the lines. Soon the British came into touch with the German outposts. To conceal their approach now was hardly possible, and they pushed on rapidly till they gained the ground just north of Troyon. A large factory, occupied by an expectant foe, now impeded further advance. The Germans opened fire. The alarm given, the German batteries covering the entrenchments near the factory also opened fire. Meanwhile, the British had formed a firing line, and had begun to creep forward. The skilful use they made of their ground on that day called forth the admiration of the Germans themselves. All efforts to advance, however, were soon checked by the continuous fusillade. The black heights, the factory silhouetted against the sky, the dark wooded slopes, presented to the British lying under cover a front sparkling with innumerable points of fire, illumined by the flashes and shaken by the thunder of numerous guns. Light rain and soaking mist aggravated the discomforts but lessened the dangers of the men. Reinforcements were at hand. At four o'clock the Northamptonshire Regiment had left Moulins and advanced to occupy the hills east of

Troyon. A considerable time passed with the line, thus extended, keeping up a hot fire and advancing where possible. All efforts to dislodge the enemy from the factory proved futile. It was held in considerable force. The darkness, the mist, the rain-sodden ground, hampered the advance of the artillery. The east was paling. The shadows in the woods were growing grey. Dawn would soon break. It was not unlikely that the Rifles and the Sussex Regiment would be unable to maintain their position when revealed by daylight. About six o'clock, therefore, Bulfin directed the Loyal North Lancashires, who had proceeded from Moulins to Vendresse, to support their comrades at Troyon in a determined effort to make headway. The effort proved unavailing. Shortly afterwards, however, the 1st Infantry Brigade arrived. The Coldstream Guards were hurried to the right, the Grenadier, the Irish, the Scots Guards to the left, of the 2nd Brigade.

These reinforcements soon made themselves felt. The very presence of the Guards, indeed, was of considerable moral value. The glory of innumerable campaigns had made them jealous of a reputation won upon such fields as Malplaquet and Fontenoy, as Talavera and Barrosa, and as Inkerman. No other corps of soldiers existing could show as fine a record as that which numbered among its achievements the capture of Gibraltar, and the defence of Hougomont at the crisis of Waterloo. The Coldstreams particularly could recall an old resentment against the foes they now faced. Over a hundred years before, in 1793, British and Prussians lay opposite French entrenchments in a forest. They were then allies. 5,000 Austrians had been thrice repulsed with a loss of 1,700 men. The Prussians were asked to undertake the attack.

Their general, who also commanded the British, sent the Coldstreams, only 600 strong, alone to the assault. It was impossible to carry the entrenchments. The regiment was cut up severely. But it could not be dislodged from the wood.

A vigorous attack was now made upon the German lines. The position was rushed at the point of the bayonet. Unsupported by artillery, the British met with a heavy rifle and shell fire before they reached the enemy's trenches. Tremendous hand-to-hand fighting followed. Fourteen years before, stout Boer burghers, impervious to fear of the bullet, had fled in terror at the flash of the deadly bayonet. The Germans had so far shown a partiality for artillery duels, for steady advance in packed masses, for the weight of numbers. They were not accustomed to calculate, nor inclined to rely, upon the dash and the *élan*, as the French say, of a charge with the cold steel. Unable to withstand the furious British assault, they abandoned five guns in a hurried retreat ; 280 prisoners were taken to the rear by the Sussex Regiment, 47 by the Scots Guards.

The capture of the factory could only be effected after a desperate struggle and with considerable loss. The Loyal North Lancashires lay opposite the position. It presented difficulties, indeed, which might well cause misgivings to the bravest. Every door was sure to be bolted and barred. Death lurked behind every window. But the Loyal North Lancashires could not hesitate while other regiments on their right and left were striking vigorously at the foe. A party of them forced a passage over shattered doors and barricades, over ruined furniture, over the piled corpses of the slain. Some prisoners and several machine guns fell

into their hands. The position thus won was held by men of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment throughout the day.

The morning, which had dawned amid the roar of action, was cold and windy, and showed the British how formidable was their task. The line to which the Germans had retreated was strong. Concealed artillery strengthened their entrenchments, which covered a long stretch of rising open ground. The fusillade recommenced and continued with renewed violence. At about nine o'clock the screech of shells coming from the British lines announced that at last the British artillery was able to render the infantry effective support.

Our purpose is merely to record the operations which took place in the neighbourhood of Troyon on September 14. But it is necessary to mention the position of the Allies on either flank of the brigades engaged, which belonged to the 1st Division. To the right of the line of the 1st and 2nd Brigades, on the further side of the spur of hills to the east of Troyon, the troops from French Morocco were entrenched in echelon. They came, indeed, from a region on which Germany had once cast covetous eyes. She had had, however, when she sent the *Panther* to Agadir, good reason to desire to make dependents, or at least allies, of the Moroccans. For they had proved terrible foes. On the left of the 1st Division the 2nd Division had been advancing since an early hour towards Ostel and Braye. The 6th Infantry Brigade, the right wing of the 2nd Division, at nine o'clock reached Tilleul. Here its progress was checked by that artillery and rifle fire which had checked effectually the progress of the brigades north of Troyon. A dangerous

interval of ground disconnected the firing lines of these two forces. Sir Douglas Haig grasped the importance of covering this interval. It was more than likely that the enemy would choose a point so vulnerable for counter-attack. The 3rd Infantry Brigade was at hand. At six o'clock it had left Bourg, where it had been billeted during the night, and had at ten o'clock reached a point one mile south of Vendresse. It was immediately ordered to continue the line of the 1st Brigade and to connect with and aid the right of the 2nd Division. This disposition was speedily justified. No sooner had the 3rd Brigade covered the interval, than a heavy shrapnel fire was opened upon them, and a strong hostile column was found to be advancing.

The commanding officer of the 3rd Brigade, Brigadier-General James Landon, took prompt and decisive action. Two of his battalions made a vigorous counter-attack. A battery of field-guns was rushed into action, and opened fire at short range with deadly effect. The German artillery, hurling a continuous shower of shells during the whole day upon and around Vendresse, could not inflict on the British such slaughter as one deadly hail of shell and bullet could inflict upon the close masses of German infantry. The advancing column, menaced on either flank, hastily recoiled.

Both British and German lines were now strongly held. The fighting during the whole of the morning and till late in the afternoon continued to be of a most desperate character. Both the opposing forces continually delivered attacks and counter-attacks. British and Germans advanced and retired in turn, surging and receding like breakers on a sea-coast. The men in the firing lines took turns in the dangerous duty of

watching for advancing enemies, while the rest lay low in the protecting trenches. Artillery boomed continually from the hill-sides. Maxim and rifle fire crackled ceaselessly in the woods and valleys. At times a sonorous unmistakable hum swelled the volume of sound. The aeroplanes, despite rain and wind, were continually upon the alert. The troops on solid ground watched them circling at dizzy heights amid the flashes of bursting shells, and marvelled at the coolness, the intrepidity, and the skill of those who controlled levers and recorded observations as they hovered, the mark for every hostile gun, in the open sky. No ditch or wall screened the airmen from the most certain and the most horrible of deaths. Only their speed and their good fortune could elude the stray bullet and the flying splinter of shell which would send those delicate mechanisms hurtling to earth. During the course of the struggle a German aeroplane flew at a great height over the British lines. It was well out of reach of fire. A British machine rose, swept in a wide semicircle around its opponent, and mounted steadily. The German, becoming alive to these movements, made efforts to attack his adversary from above. He swooped suddenly and fired. The British swerved giddily upwards, and gained the same altitude as the German. Those who watched from below that remarkable duel could see the two machines manœuvring at a great height for the upper place, and could hear distantly the sound of shots. The airmen showed superb nerve. The struggle ranged up and down for some minutes. Then the British seized a sudden advantage of superior height. The machines seemed to close. The German staggered, its pilot struck by a revolver shot. His slow descent to earth left his adversary in possession of the

air. The British aeroplane, skimming and humming downwards amid the cheers of thousands, could well claim to have marked a signal instance of that personal ascendancy which Sir John French so emphatically extols, and which seems to offer chances of Great Britain adding the dominion of the air to her world-wide domain of the seas.¹

Many instances are recorded of the successes and checks of that strenuous day. At one point the enemy were shelled out of their trenches and abandoned two machine guns. Fifty of them surrendered at the call of ten British. At another point a battalion of the Guards, the Camerons, and the Black Watch delivered in turn a fierce assault upon the German lines. It was necessary to traverse about half a mile of open ground. They went off with a cheer. The air was full of the scream of shrapnel and the whistle of bullets. So hot and so concentrated was the fusillade that the British were compelled to retire with severe loss. Equally unsuccessful but not less heroic was a charge of the Welsh Regiment. That occasion was rendered memorable by the gallantry of the captain who, struck down while leading the charge and laying about him with an empty rifle, kept uttering dying exhortations of 'Stick it, Welsh!' 'Stick it, Welsh!' His men were, indeed, compelled to retire over his body. But such was the devotion he had inspired that his soldier-servant, afterwards rewarded for his courage with the Victoria Cross, ran out about a hundred yards, exposed to heavy fire, to pick up and bring back to cover his mortally wounded captain. The energy and tenacity

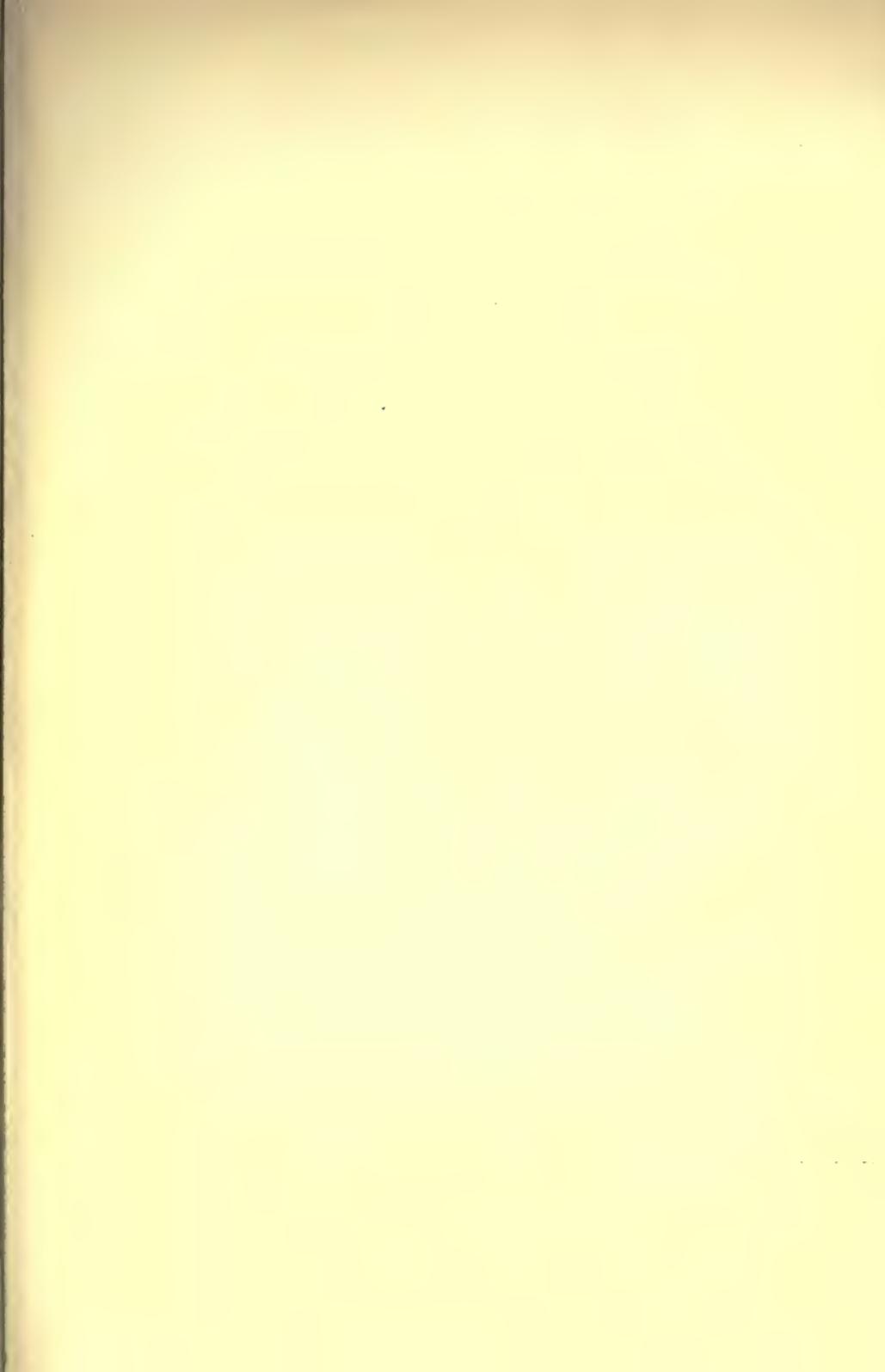
¹ It cannot be claimed as certain that this occurrence took place on September 14. Nevertheless, the evidence is sufficiently strong to warrant its insertion in the narrative of that day's events.

with which they were assailed, however, prompted some Germans to fall back upon a base expedient. A white flag was seen to flutter out at one point in the German lines. It was the token of surrender. A body of the Coldstreams, Grenadiers, Irish Guards, and Connaughts went forward to take the prisoners. No sooner were they well in the open than out burst a ring of fire from concealed artillery. The Germans who had affected to surrender poured in a hot rifle fire. The British, caught in a trap, were cut up in face of a withering fusillade. They perished as martyrs to the unsuspecting faith of chivalry, and as victims of the most disgraceful form of treachery.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon before a perceptible weakening of the German counter-attacks and resistance indicated that a general advance might safely be undertaken. Sir Douglas Haig ordered his whole corps to push forward. The enemy still offered considerable opposition, and maintained very heavy artillery and rifle fire. It was not found possible to advance far. Cerny was in possession of the Germans. The day had been long and strenuous. The enemy had been forced back a considerable distance. The troops were very weary. Nevertheless, most of the contested ground, from the Chemin des Dames on the right to Chivy onwards, was occupied by the British before night fell.

The 1st Army Corps, and particularly the 1st Division of that Corps, had, indeed, good reason to be satisfied with the result of the day's operations. They had gained a very considerable stretch of difficult and dangerous ground, covered with woods that harboured the infantry and concealed the artillery of the enemy. They had had to contest every yard, to dig trenches

continually, to creep forward slowly, and occasionally to retire. They had captured 600 prisoners and twelve guns. They had repulsed repeated and prolonged attacks. The Commander-in-Chief asserted in a dispatch that the advanced and commanding position they had won alone enabled him to maintain his ground for more than three weeks of very severe fighting on the northern bank of the Aisne. The casualties had indeed been severe. One brigade alone had lost three of its four colonels. But the captured trenches showed that the Germans had suffered far more heavily.



GHELUVELT

THE CRISIS OF THE FIRST BATTLE FOR YPRES

'Perhaps the most important and decisive attacks (except that of the Prussian Guard on 15th November) made against the 1st Corps during the whole of its arduous experiences in the neighbourhood of Ypres took place on the 31st October. . . . I was present with Sir Douglas Haig at Hooze between two and three o'clock on this day, when the 1st Division were retiring. I regard it as the most critical moment in the whole of this great battle. The rally of the 1st Division and the recapture of the village of Gheluvelt at such a time were fraught with momentous consequences.'—SIR JOHN FRENCH, in his dispatch dated November 20, and published November 29, 1914.

THE line of trenches which stretches from the sea at Nieuport to the Swiss frontier runs, in its course through Flanders, not through Ypres, but in a distinct curve around it. At the end of October 1914 the east abutment of this salient was formed by a trench-line crossing the Menin road east of Zonnebeke, of Gheluvelt, and of Zandvoorde, the salient curving back west on either flank, the southern 're-entrant' from Zandvoorde, the northern from Zonnebeke. The German attacks upon Ypres during the first period of their assault, from October 20 to November 17, took three directions, and had two objects: upon the northern and southern re-entrants in an effort to break through and to cut off from the city the British defending the easterly part of the salient; and against the east abutment itself in a direct attempt to drive the defenders back westwards through the city. The first attacks, October 21-3,

were made against the northern re-entrant in the neighbourhood of Bixschoote, held partly by British and partly by French, and against the east abutment in the neighbourhood of Becelaere, defended wholly by British. After its successful repulse the French relieved the British of part of their northern re-entrant front. A few days later, on October 29, the Germans commenced a series of fierce and unremitting assaults upon the eastern line of the salient, and upon the southern re-entrant in the neighbourhood of Hollebeke and Messines, where the London Scottish, the first Territorials to join battle with the enemy, won honour by a famous charge. The writer's purpose is to describe the fighting which raged, chiefly on October 31, in the neighbourhood of Gheluveld. That fighting consecrated to British hearts a district, already old in history, many of whose villages and features, Klein Zillebeke and Kruiseik, the Zandvoorde ridge, the woods of Polygone and of Veldhoek, will take rank with the most honoured battle-names in the story of our country. It added also to the desolation which hideous war had wrought upon a district of well cultivated fields, of windmills, of canals, of slow-moving streams winding between rows of pollards, of cottages nestling among fruitful gardens and orchards, of country-houses embowered in woods and pleasure-grounds, and of quaint villages with mediaeval churches whose spires, not too sacred for military necessity, rose prominently above the wide plains.

South-east of Ypres runs a canal to Comines. The Ypres-Moorslede road, passing through Zonnebeke, proceeds in a north-easterly direction, and the angle between this and the canal is bisected by the Ypres-Menin road, with the villages Hooge and Gheluveld upon its line. The rough quadrilateral formed by this angle and by

lines joining Zonnebeke to Kruiseik, and Kruiseik to the canal near Hollebeke, constituted, during the final days of October, the area covered by the British 1st Corps, to which were attached the 7th Infantry Division and the 3rd Cavalry Division. It is an area broken by numerous ridges and small hills, and covered by many woods. It has become an area of depopulated villages, of naked ruins, of shattered bridges, of fields of trampled crops, of improvised graveyards where the sods lie fresh and rough upon close-packed and numberless graves ; an area where cattle wander uncared for, where farmsteads lie open to the sky, with pigs and fowls roaming wild over scenes of waste and disorder. The gaunt ruins of old churches rear themselves amid havoc-stricken villages : beautiful houses, with every cupboard, every drawer ransacked, their rooms littered with broken furniture and tumbled garments, and everywhere, it is said, hundreds of empty bottles, stand with great chasms, where projectiles have struck, gaping in roof and walls. The woods are raked by shell-fire, the ground is pitted with huge shell-holes. Everywhere this corner of the wide plain of West Flanders bears marks of war more savage and more ineffaceable than those stamped upon it by the brutal soldiery of the Inquisition, or by the seven sieges which reduced Ypres from a city more populous than Cardiff to a town as sparsely peopled as Harrow or Pontefract. Every village, Kruiseik, Klein Zillebeke, Veldhoek, Hooge, Gheluvelt, lies bleak in death and ruin, and deserted except, where British head-quarters are placed, for numerous motor transport vehicles, and busy staff officers and orderlies. It was this area that Sir Douglas Haig, by a line of trenches stretching from Zonnebeke round the woods to the cross-roads a mile east of Gheluvelt, over the fields to

Kruiseik Hill, and westwards along the ridge of Zandvoorde to the château east of the village, was called upon to defend. He took over this position on October 27. Two days later there burst upon his front the opening phases of a storm of unprecedented force and fury.

October 29 dawned, crisp, clear, and sunny. Troops of the 1st Division in the trenches which crossed the Menin road about a mile east of Gheluveld, watching for the shadows to rise, were soon greeted, as a morning welcome, by the roar of the enemy's artillery and the screech and explosion of shell. They were not, indeed, unaccustomed to the dangerous visitors which they termed derisively 'Jack Johnsons' or 'Black Marias', diggers of vast pits, 'Little Willies' or 'White Hopes'. But the cannonade soon became exceptionally heavy; and after some time the grey-clad forms of German infantry were seen advancing.

For a while it was the turn of the British. Machine-guns, massed at various points, were brought to bear on the enemy with terrible effect. The Germans, dashing boldly forward across the open, fell in such numbers that wounded and dead piled themselves into heaps. Nevertheless, the enemy continued to advance in force, and heavy fighting went on for several hours. At length parts of the British line were penetrated, and some trenches were occupied, among them those of the Gordon Highlanders and the Yorkshire Regiment, who, however, recovered their ground by gallant charges. Sir Douglas Haig was informed that a portion of his front line had been forced back. The centre of attack was the Menin road; upon the right of this road lay the 7th Division and the 3rd Cavalry Division, upon the left the 1st Division and, farther on, the 2nd Division. The General counter-attacked, nearly the whole of his forces being

involved. The 7th Division, supported on its right by the cavalry, advanced upon Kruseik, where trenches had been lost, and upon the German front from there to the Gheluvelt cross-roads, while the 1st Corps struck at the opposing lines east of the Polygone Wood, on the other side of the road. But the enemy resisted stubbornly, and it was two o'clock before signs of their giving way offered encouragement to the British. The latter pressed their assault, and, as the day advanced, the issue of the struggle became decisive. Kruseik Hill was recaptured. Most of the line to the north of the Menin road was recovered, and in some places advanced, the enemy retaining possession at one point alone. By nightfall the position was much the same as upon the previous evening. Rain had begun to fall heavily at about six o'clock, and the night, without a moon to throw a ray of comfort to the men in the sodden trenches, was as black as pitch. A terrific thunderstorm broke; and heaven's artillery, perhaps to show Heaven's anger, for a while silenced the artillery of man. Soon, however, the Germans, taking advantage of the conditions, emerged from the darkness and fell upon the British lines at several points. They were repulsed, but considerable fighting occurred throughout the night upon the Menin road. It gradually lessened until, shortly after daylight, a tremendous artillery fire was opened upon the cavalymen defending the Zandvoorde ridge.

The 3rd Cavalry Division was commanded by Major-General the Hon. Julian Byng. It consisted of the 6th Brigade, containing the 'Fighting Tenth' Hussars, the 1st Dragoons, the 3rd Dragoon Guards; and of the 7th Brigade, containing the 1st and 2nd Life Guards and the Royal Horse Guards. It had accompanied General Sir Henry Rawlinson in his operations around

Ghent and Antwerp, and, as became the reputations of the regiments it included, had fought gallantly and suffered heavily in the severe fighting which had been necessary to stave off the German advance upon Ypres until supports arrived. The praise later bestowed upon the cavalry by Sir John French for the way in which they took turns in the trenches in the absence of reinforcements on no occasion more justified itself than upon the morning of October 30. Kavanagh's 7th Brigade occupied the front line upon the Zandvoorde ridge, with Makins's 6th Brigade as reserves in the rear. The Hussars and Dragoons were bombarded heavily, yet showed no sign of weakness. But at length many of the trenches were completely blown in, one troop being buried alive. Zandvoorde was shelled, whole houses lifting momentarily, it seemed, into the air, and falling, masses of pulverized masonry and débris, amid the roar of great explosions, and with columns of black smoke streaming upwards from their ruins for a hundred feet. The cannonade became so violent and the casualties so great after a while that Byng was compelled to withdraw. All the battles in his Egyptian campaigns put together could not form a shrieking inferno such as this. He moved back his division a mile or more as far as Klein Zillebeke. The Germans made a rapid advance, and took possession of the Zandvoorde ridge.

Sir Douglas Haig saw that the position was serious. The withdrawal of the cavalry to Klein Zillebeke involved the right wing of the 7th Division, which had to retire through the woods to conform with the new line. That line stretched now from Gheluvelt to where the canal turned westwards near Klein Zillebeke. Much ground had been lost, ground, moreover, the strategical value of which made it dangerous to relinquish. Sir

Douglas sent urgent orders to General Byng and to General Capper, the commander of the 7th Division, that the line from Gheluvelt to the corner of the canal must be consolidated and held at all costs. The Scots Greys and the 3rd and 4th Hussars, belonging to the 1st Cavalry Corps, were moved up to Klein Zillebeke as reinforcements. A battalion of the 2nd Brigade was placed in reserve behind the line in the woods about a mile south of Hooge, and the rest of this brigade was directed to concentrate in rear of the 1st Division and of the 4th Brigade, on the other side of the Menin road, where the Germans had also been pressing their attacks. But here on the left of Haig's line they had made only two efforts to advance, and had in both cases been stopped by wire entanglements and repulsed by close rifle-fire.

The enemy now continued to assail the cavalry line. The whole 15th Army Corps, with many guns, were in action at this part of the field, and it was the weight of their numbers that had caused the retirement from Zandvoorde. They were troops of the German Active Army, and had only just come up to reinforce the 14th Corps, which had delivered the attack of the previous day. A strong force of artillery was now brought into play, and a very heavy bombardment was maintained, many of the telephone cables which communicated with head-quarters being cut. The 6th Cavalry Brigade occupied the front line, with the Greys and the 3rd Hussars on their left, the 4th Hussars on their right. The defence was stubborn, and the Germans could make no headway. Little change took place in the situation during the rest of the day, and at dusk Lord Cavan came up with his 4th Infantry Brigade to relieve the weary cavalymen, who retired

for the night to a spot near their head-quarters at Zillebeke. Sir Douglas Haig took various precautions after nightfall to protect his right flank at Klein Zillebeke. General Moussy, sent by the commander of the French 9th Corps, came up in support with three battalions of infantry and a brigade of cavalry. The night was fine, and the moon shone brightly. Stretcher-bearers moved rapidly and silently in the darkness, carrying away those who had fallen. The outposts of the two opposing armies lay almost within a stone's throw of each other. German bands, not superior in tunefulness, it was noted in the trenches, to the kind familiar to English ears, sounded continually from the enemy's lines. In places the gramophone offered a tolerable substitute. Magnesium flares, which illumined the trenches and gave every object a ghastly hue, contributed also to the evening entertainment of the Germans ; while firing, rifle and artillery, was kept up at some parts of the line.

Sir John French was fully alive to the dangers likely to arise from the withdrawal of his line between Gheluvelt and the canal. Just to the south, moreover, the 3rd Cavalry Brigade had been forced to retire at midday from Hollebeke, in face of heavy German infantry attacks. This advance of the enemy in the direction of the canal threatened the communications of the 1st Corps through Ypres. In view of this the Field-Marshal, after a close survey of the positions, issued orders that every effort must be made to secure the line then held, and that, as soon as this had been thoroughly done, perhaps by morning, the 1st Corps must take the offensive, in order to relieve the pressure upon General Allenby on the opposite side of the canal. Meanwhile, a proclamation which had been discovered on the person

of a German prisoner was brought to Sir John French's notice. It indicated that the 2nd Bavarian and the German 13th and 15th Corps were entrusted with the task of breaking through the line to Ypres: the Emperor himself, it urged, considered the success of this attack to be of most vital importance. It was signed by the German commander, General von Deimling.

Von Deimling had come to be obsessed by a single purpose, the capture of Ypres at all costs. The Emperor and his General Staff had grasped the importance of this northern area of war. Calais had become their great objective. The deadlock into which the situation was threatening to develop could hardly be regarded by them with complacency. Their troops had first attempted to break the Allied line between Nieuport and Dixmude, where the Belgian Army, the 42nd French Division under General Grosetti, and the 7,000 Breton marines of Admiral Ronarc'h, held the line. Fierce fighting had followed, and supreme courage had been shown on both sides. It is said that, upon one occasion, the gigantic and genial Grosetti sat in an armchair for two hours near the ruined church of Pervyse, exposed to a rain of shell, as an encouragement to his men. The German assault had finally been repelled by the opening of the sluices and the flooding of the dunes. Ypres had thus become now the gate to Calais, and the vital importance of its capture was repeatedly urged by Berlin upon the German generals in Belgium. Fifteen army corps and four cavalry corps, under the Crown Prince of Bavaria, the Duke of Würtemberg, General von Fabeck, and General von Deimling, were assembled there. If the Germans, by the weight of overwhelming numbers, could hack their way through the British line, could seize Ypres, could push on with

all speed through the gap, the whole Allied line would be thrown back, the French and Belgians to the north of the city would be threatened with envelopment, and the way to Dunkirk and Calais would be open. The hated English in their snug island across the narrow seas would realize with fear and trembling that the army of Germany was almost within sight of their shores. Northern France would lie practically defenceless before the conquering hosts of the Rhine. Von Deimling, with the 2nd Bavarian and the 13th, 14th, and 15th Army Corps, lay immediately to the east of Ypres, and theirs would be the privilege of taking the city. But von Deimling knew the difficulty of attempting, as he had been attempting for many days, with disheartening failure, to pierce that obstinate British line. The latter was composed of tried and well-trained troops : his own forces were made up mainly of new and reserve formations, though he had, it was true, several great advantages. He could mass his men at a point for purposes of offensive by reason of his great numerical superiority. The immensely powerful armament of siege artillery which had wrought the destruction of Antwerp had been moved westwards to the support of the troops attacking Ypres. In this connexion, however, there was a consideration which gunners must bear carefully in mind. The Kaiser in person was coming to the scene. His Imperial Majesty specially desired to be present when Ypres was taken, and to have the peculiar satisfaction of viewing the discomfiture of the British. It was fitting that the War Lord of the Fatherland should be among the first to enter in triumph the last city of Belgium in hostile hands, and should return thanks on the spot for the complete deliverance of so fair and so rich a land from

the lawless tendencies of a progressive democracy to the influence of the rule of 'kultur'. But it certainly must not be a deserted and gutted mass of ruins from which he would proclaim with befitting ceremony and splendour, as it was said he desired to do, the annexation of the country. Artillerymen must therefore place special restraints upon their soldierly zeal, and must see to it that no shell fell upon the city, save at strategical points. After the visitation of the Emperor, indeed, in order to secure discipline amongst the populace, or if, by any chance, the attack failed, the imposing old mediaeval buildings, the magnificent Cloth Hall, with its frescoes and its statuary, the Cathedral of St. Martin, with its paintings, its pulpit of rich Baroque carving, its gorgeous rose window, its altar of Carrara marble, might then, perhaps, be given over to destruction. But at present German hands must be stayed. The artillery must busy themselves in earnest upon the enemy's lines, for it wanted but one day to the end of October, and the Kaiser had considered it specially desirable that the city should be won within the month. The morrow should see the final great assault, delivered with irresistible force: and the morrow would decide whether glory or dishonour, the price of failure before the Emperor's eyes, would be the portion of von Deimling and his army.

No sooner had the sun risen on the fateful last day of October than Haig's battle-line stirred into life. The rumbling of distant cannon soon became as insistent, the discharges of neighbouring guns as violent, as ever. His line had, indeed, changed considerably during the preceding twenty-four hours, and now stretched in a curve from Zonnebeke around Gheluvelt to the bend of the canal. At the latter point, on the extreme right,

lay General Moussy with the French troops who had come up as reinforcements on the previous evening. Moussy, in accordance with Sir John French's instructions, moved forward early in the morning to attack the enemy. After a preliminary bombardment he left his trenches and advanced across the open. The French ranks were scattered by shrapnel and rent by a fierce rifle and machine-gun fire. It soon became obvious that the Germans were massed very thickly in front. Moussy was brought to a complete standstill, but was able, in spite of heavy shelling accompanied by infantry attacks, to maintain his ground.

Meanwhile, Byng was mustering his 3rd Cavalry Division, then acting as reserves, near Hooze. It was a few minutes after eight o'clock upon a grey, murky, autumn morning. As the division transport was moving out of Zillebeke, the head-quarters, many shells began to drop upon the village. Violent explosions shattered every window-pane in the place, and many buildings were devastated. The transport successfully cleared the danger-zone, however, after suffering some inevitable losses. In about an hour's time a message was brought to General Byng: Allenby's cavalry corps on the other side of the canal was being heavily attacked again, and was sorely in need of assistance. The 7th Brigade were immediately dispatched, rode off as fast as the wooded country rendered possible, and were placed on the left of Allenby's line, which they held till nightfall. Some time later the 6th Brigade received a further message that sent them galloping down the Menin road to Veldhoek. The line of the 1st Division had been broken, and Gheluvelt was in the hands of the enemy.

Troops of the 3rd Brigade, under Brigadier-General Landon, had been defending the village. On their

right lay General Capper's 7th Division, on their left more troops of the 3rd and 1st Brigades. It was not long after daybreak when artillery thundering just south of Gheluvelt betokened the advance and assault of Moussy. Presently the cannonading spread to where the 3rd Brigade was posted. An artillery bombardment was maintained for some time, until the advance of German infantry along the Menin road brought about sharp hand-to-hand fighting in the neighbourhood of the famous cross-roads just east of the village. The struggle for some hours swayed to and fro in attack and counter-attack. The booming of guns, the shells soaring overhead, the explosions, the crackling of rifles in the woods, the deep droning note of aeroplanes, formed a medley of sound nerve-shattering to the spectator, but unheeded by the combatants in deadly warfare of point-blank rifle-shot, of bayonet or sword. At length, however, the German assault began suddenly to develop. British counter-attacks could make no headway. Great forces of the enemy swarmed forward, following the direction of the Menin road, and within a short time, in spite of desperate resistance, at some places swept over the trenches like a tide. The Coldstream Guards were cut up terribly: the Royal West Surreys, driven in on both flanks, were nearly surrounded, and lost their colonel. In the village itself the Welsh Regiment could hardly hold their own. The line was broken, and the danger was great. But Lomax and his 1st Division had been through the retreat from Mons, and knew the secrets of orderly and timely retirement which, even while dissolution threatened, would wrest victory from their foes. Each regiment had a record that for retreat had precedents, but for rout none: and each upheld that record upon this day.

Lomax extricated his two brigades, hard pressed, and retired westwards from Gheluvelt. The 6th Cavalry Brigade came galloping down to their support. Other reserves there were none to spare, for every portion of Sir Douglas Haig's line was now engaged, and south of the Menin road the 7th Division and the 2nd Brigade, on General Moussy's left, were being heavily shelled. Meanwhile, the Germans had swept forward, and had taken possession of Gheluvelt. As their advance threatened the left wing of the 7th Division, retirement became imperative, and Capper drew back on this flank, though not without loss. The Royal Scots Fusiliers, of the 21st Brigade, had, upon the retirement of the 1st Division, remained doggedly in their trenches. The Germans began to close round their rear. Brigadier-General Watts, upon receiving orders to retreat, tried to telephone to Colonel Baird-Smith, the battalion commander, but the wire had been cut by shrapnel. Two orderlies were dispatched, who, however, met death or wounds upon the way, and Baird-Smith, receiving no instructions to withdraw, held his ground. For a long time the Royal Scots made a gallant but unavailing stand, fighting, hemmed in on all sides, desperately to the end. It is recorded that, when later, with a few survivors, Baird-Smith had been taken off as a prisoner, a German general came up and congratulated him, with words expressing wonder how his men had held out so long. Meanwhile, the retirement of the rest of the brigade had been conducted successfully. No sooner, however, had Capper extricated and secured his left wing, than masses of German infantry began to assail desperately his right.

It was now well after noon. The 1st Division was still struggling hard to maintain ground, but was being

driven back slowly by overwhelming numbers of the enemy. A desperate conflict raged for a long time in the Polygone Wood. To Lomax, and to Monro of the 2nd Division, the seriousness of the position was apparent. The messages that flashed continually along the wires to their head-quarters at Hooge spoke always of tremendous odds and of inevitable retirement. The air, even around the Generals' head-quarters, was alive with shell and shrapnel. Shortly before two o'clock the building was struck. Whether spy or aeroplane signalled the range to the German artillery, that range was effectually mastered, and shells began to fall upon the head-quarters with deadly accuracy. Plans, maps, and papers were scattered amid the débris. Lomax was wounded, struck by a fragment of shell, and six staff officers, three of the 1st and three of the 2nd Division, fell, killed outright. Monro, dazed by the shock, staggered about in the smoke and fumes, and fell unconscious. Orderlies and ambulance men hastened up. Brigadier-General Landon for a time assumed command of the 1st Division, attacks upon whose front were still being pressed as violently as ever. Fighting was raging fiercely in the woods of Veldhoek, scarred and torn by shrapnel. But so severe was the pressure that the British were forced steadily back.

Meanwhile, the enemy had been assailing the right of the 7th Division, constituted by the 22nd Brigade, holding a line in the neighbourhood of Klein Zillebeke. This division, which gained, during its operations with Sir Henry Rawlinson in the neighbourhood of Ghent, and with Sir Douglas Haig in the neighbourhood of Ypres, a fame as glorious as that of any other division in all British military annals, was commanded by a general of unusual characteristics and attainments.

Known familiarly among his men as 'Tommy', Major-General Thompson Capper, shortly afterwards raised to knighthood, was essentially a fighting leader, so much so, indeed, that he laid himself open to the reproach of spending too much time in the fighting line with his men, and too little time at his own head-quarters. He gloried to be fighting in the cause of freedom, for which he considered any life cheap. His division in its operations during October and November 1914 was reduced to a fifth of its numbers: Capper himself met death, to which he was stoically indifferent, nearly a year later at the Battle of Loos. On this day, however, between the 7th Division and the French under Moussy were the 2nd and 4th Brigades, under Major-General Bulfin. Beneath a hail of exploding shells, of bursting shrapnel, of whistling bullets, the British held their ground for some time, but at length the 22nd Brigade was forced back. General Capper, however, had brought up his reserve battalions to this right flank, and he hurried them forward to restore the line. Before they came into action, Bulfin realized that his left flank, the 2nd Brigade, which had touched the right of the 22nd Brigade, was exposed to the enfilade fire of the enemy bursting through the gap. His line lay upon a ridge, and he could not fight upon two fronts: he was therefore forced to withdraw. Meanwhile, Capper's counter-attack, after a sharp action in which several machine-guns were captured, had proved successful, and thus the right of the 7th Division advanced as the left of the 2nd Brigade retired. The former troops, regaining their old trenches, found their right wing exposed. The Germans, however, were not pressing their attack so heavily, and the British were able to maintain the recovered ground. But the gap formed between Bulfin

and Capper had enabled large bodies of the enemy to penetrate into the heavily wooded ground east of Zillebeke and in Moussy's rear. One large force, a battalion strong, soon began to advance upon the village of Zillebeke itself.

It was now after two o'clock, and the Commander-in-Chief himself, alive to the grave danger of the position, had come upon the scene. Haig's centre was being driven in: his right wing was hard pressed, and one portion had withdrawn: large numbers of the enemy had penetrated into the woods in the rear, and were, did they but know it, within reach of Sir John French himself at Hooge. There were no reserves available to relieve this perilous situation. The shadows of disaster seemed to be gathering thickly around. But there was one chance, however slender, of retrieving the day. Though the right and centre were being hotly attacked, the left was only slightly engaged. A thick column of the enemy had torn its way through the centre and pressed on. If troops on the left, comparatively fresh, could strike hard at the right flank of that protruding column, if they could cut through it, could recapture Gheluvelt, could check the advance of the enemy, large forces of the latter would be surrounded, their offensive would be broken, and time, if only a breathing-space, would be gained in which to re-form the scattered lines, and to seek reinforcements from the French. Those scattered British lines were, indeed, in need of reforming. In the stress of counter-attack, of continual retirement, of fierce hand-to-hand fighting, many units had become inextricably mixed, and at some threatened points officers had had to collect and throw into the fighting whatever men they could, regardless of regiment or brigade. English, Scottish,

Irish, or Welsh would be jumbled hopelessly together in the same trench under the orders of some unknown subaltern : or a brigadier might at one time find himself in command of a few companies, at another time in control of a division. Monro's 2nd Division was, however, in more or less good formation. While part of his force could check by hot enfilade fire the advance of the Germans against the retreating 1st Division, other battalions must deliver at once that flank attack upon which the very existence of the 1st Corps was staked. It might not be unwise, in case of failure, for some artillery batteries to withdraw already behind Ypres to cover any retreat. But there was no time to lose. A little while later, at about half-past two, General Lomax, who had, in spite of his wound, resumed command of the 1st Division, reported to Hooze that he was again moving back, and that the enemy were coming on in great strength. He was ordered to take up a line roughly constituted by the road which ran from Frezenberg through Eksternest southwards to the Menin road. This line must be held at all costs.

Von Deimling had reason to congratulate himself now on being almost in sight of complete success. His objective seemed within easy reach. His men were swarming on, and the British were going back. He could already look forward to honours more to be desired even than the Iron Cross, distributed as it was rather too lavishly among fellow generals much less worthy than himself, and to imperial congratulations for a victory won before the War Lord's eyes. Germany might mourn great losses : but the name and the fame of von Deimling would resound from the Vistula to the Rhine.

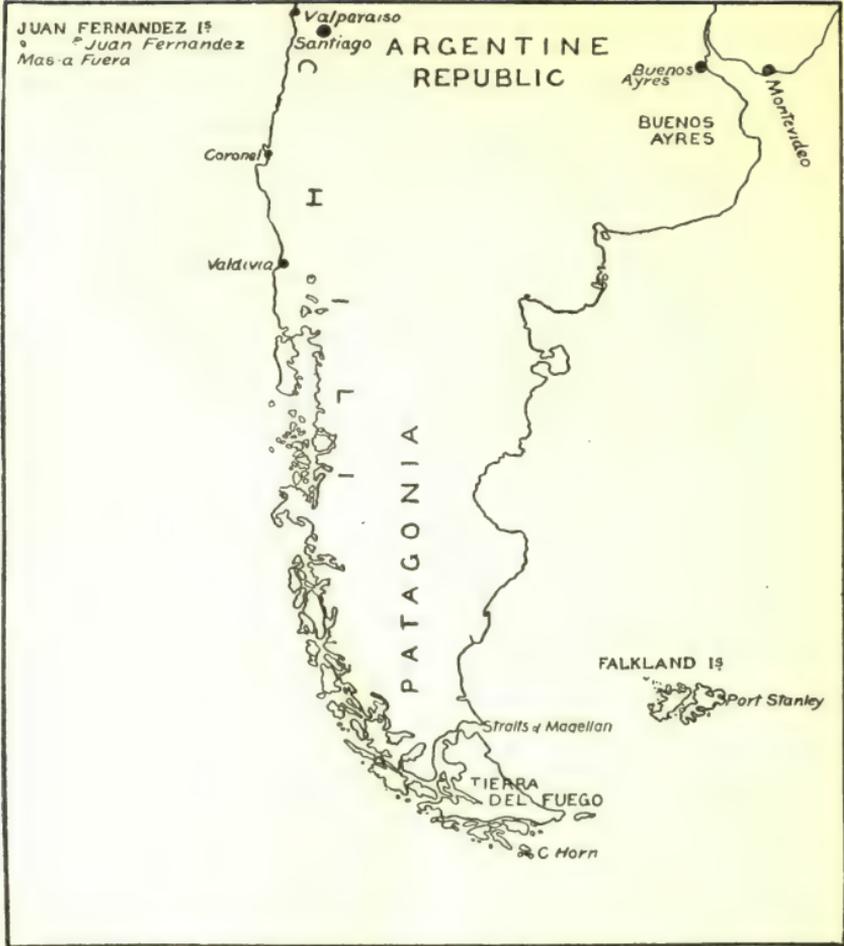
Meanwhile, some extraordinary happenings were in

progress on the right of Haig's line. General Moussy had discovered the presence in his rear of large bodies of the enemy, and he was soon informed that one detachment was making for Zillebeke. The French General was in great straits, for every available man he had was already in the fighting line. He sent back for reinforcements, but in vain. Finally, forming a desperate resolve, he ordered the corporal of his escort to collect whatever men he could, whether armed or unarmed, no matter what their business. Moussy had seen eight campaigns during nearly sixty years of life, and if this was to be his last he intended that France should not be able to reproach his name with neglect of any possible expedient that might avert the threatened disaster. The corporal and his men scoured the immediate countryside and appealed to every man they met with. Cooks in the bivouac and Army Service Corps men, hewers of wood and drawers of water, were requisitioned for the enterprise, and paraded, mostly, it is said, without arms, to the number of some 250, before the General. The 65 Cuirassiers of his escort were dismounted. Their gleaming breastplates and helmets with flowing mane, their high cavalry boots and their sabres, set off effectually the motley appearance of their ill-equipped comrades. Moussy guided his detachment stealthily towards Zillebeke, and caught the Germans, a battalion strong, by surprise. The French swept forward shouting, led by the General and his corporal, and the demoralized Germans fled before them as Englishmen had once fled before the camp-followers of Bruce at Bannockburn. They retired to the woods in disorder. There they still constituted a danger, but Moussy was soon relieved from anxiety on this score. Eight squadrons of the 6th Cavalry Brigade came

galloping down to clear the woods. Their services as supports to the 1st Division had been dispensed with ; for Gheluvelt had been recaptured, and the German assault had been broken.

French's plan had succeeded. The right wing of the 2nd Division and part of the 1st Division had advanced rapidly from the north, and had fallen upon Gheluvelt and the German right flank. There was a series of fierce bayonet charges, with the Worcesters to the fore. The regiment which Wellington had named the best in the army gained laurels now equally as honourable as those which had drawn such praise in the Peninsular campaigns. Closely supported by the 42nd Artillery Brigade and the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, the Worcesters, led by Major Hankey, rushed down upon Gheluvelt under a very heavy fusillade. They forced the Germans out of the Château and its grounds at the point of the bayonet, and fierce fighting followed in the streets. But the issue was never in doubt, and the enemy were soon driven headlong from the village. At other points the counter-attack had been equally successful. The 1st Division rallied, in accordance with orders, on the line of the woods east of where the Menin road bent round towards Ypres, and here stood their ground stubbornly, until presently the expected enfilade fire from the north checked assaults upon their front. The Germans were now in danger of being cut off by the capture of Gheluvelt, and the British attack from the north had prevailed. Everywhere the enemy's offensive was broken and his discomfited infantry forced to withdraw. The 7th Division followed in their wake almost as far as its original line, where it entrenched, while the 1st Division advanced and re-established connexion on the left. The menace of the enemy in

the woods between Hooge and Klein Zillebeke was at once dealt with. Two regiments of Makins's 6th Cavalry Brigade, in eight squadrons, were sent in this direction, and had a short but most successful engagement. Advancing with dash and vigour, some mounted, others dismounted, they took the enemy by surprise, and killed and wounded large numbers. The woods having been cleared effectually, the cavalry occupied the gap between the 7th Division and the 2nd Brigade. The line was now quite restored, and the crisis was over. Long and terrible had been the struggle, and those who survived it could justifiably feel that hardly any other conflict in the war had been more desperately fought, or had had issues more momentous in the balance. As evening drew on, the enemy were forced back steadily from the woods in front of the 7th Division, where they threatened to concentrate, and by ten o'clock practically all the line as held in the morning had been reoccupied. To the south, as the weary men sought what rest was possible, guns thundered and battle raged as loudly as ever : the Germans, by the light of a blazing haystack, had come into touch with the London Scottish.



SOUTHERN SOUTH AMERICA

CORONEL AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PACIFIC TRADE ROUTES

IN 1592, John Davis, the arctic explorer, after whom the strait between Greenland and the North American mainland is named, made an attempt, in company with Thomas Cavendish, to find a new route to Asia by the Straits of Magellan. Differences arose between the two leaders. One was an explorer : the other had a tendency towards freebooting. They parted off the coast of Patagonia Davis, driven out of his course by stormy weather, found himself among a cluster of unknown and uninhabited islands, some three hundred miles east of the Straits of Magellan. This group, after many changes and vicissitudes, passed finally into the hands of Great Britain, and became known as the Falkland Islands.

They consist of two large islands and of about one hundred islets, rocks, and sandbanks. The fragments of many wrecks testify to the dangers of navigation, though masses of giant seaweed act as buoys for many of the rocks. So numerous are the penguins, thronging in battalions the smaller islands and the inland lagoons, that the governor of the colony is nicknamed King of the Penguins. As New Zealand is said to be the most English of British possessions, the Falklands may

perhaps be appropriately termed the most Scottish. Their general appearance resembles that of the Outer Hebrides. Of the population, who number some 2,000, a large proportion are of Scottish extraction. The climate is not unlike that of the north-west of Scotland. The winters are misty and rainy, but not excessively cold. So violent are the winds that it is said to be impossible to play tennis or croquet, unless walls are erected as shelter, while cabbages grown in the kitchen-gardens of the shepherds, the only cultivated ground, are at times uprooted and scattered like straw. The surface, much of which is bogland, is in some parts mountainous, and is generally wild and rugged. Small streams and shallow freshwater tarns abound. A natural curiosity, regarded with great wonder, exists in 'stone-rivers'; long, glistening lines of quartzite rock débris, which, without the aid of water, slide gradually to lower levels. There are no roads. Innumerable sheep, the familiar Cheviots and Southdowns, graze upon the wild scurvy-grass and sorrel. The colony is destitute of trees, and possesses but few shrubs. The one tree that the Islands can boast, an object of much care and curiosity, stands in the Governor's garden. The seat of government, and the only town, is Port Stanley, with a population of about 950. Its general aspect recalls a small town of the western highlands of Scotland. Many of the houses, square, white-washed, and grey-slated, possess small greenhouse-porches, gay with fuchsias and pelargoniums, in pleasing contrast to the prevailing barrenness. A small cathedral, Christ Church, and an imposing barracks, generally occupied by a company of marines, stand in the midst of the town. The Government House might be taken for an Orkney or Shetland manse. The administration of the colony and of its

dependencies is vested in a Governor, aided by a Colonial Secretary, and by an executive and a legislative council. The Governor acts as Chief Justice, and the Colonial Secretary as Police Magistrate. There is a local jail, capable of accommodating six offenders at a time. Its resources are not stated, however, to be habitually strained. Education is compulsory: the Government maintains schools and travelling teachers. The inhabitants are principally engaged in sheep-farming and seafaring industries. The colony is prosperous, with a trade that of late years has grown with extraordinary rapidity. The dividends paid by the Falkland Islands Company might excite the envy of many a London director. Stanley's importance has been increased by the erection of wireless installation; and as a coaling and refitting station for vessels rounding the Horn, the harbour, large, safe, and accessible, is of immense value.

To this remote outpost of empire came tidings of war in August, 1914. Great excitement and enthusiasm prevailed. News was very slow in getting through: the mails, usually a month in transit, became very erratic. But the colony eagerly undertook a share in the burden of the Empire; £2,250 was voted towards the war-chest; £750 was collected on behalf of the Prince of Wales's Fund. Detached, though keen, interest changed, however, as the weeks passed, to intimate alarm. The Governor, Mr. Allardyce, received a wireless message from the Admiralty that he must expect a raid. German cruisers were suspected to be in the neighbourhood. Never before had the colony known such bustle and such excitement. They, the inhabitants of the remote Falklands, were to play a part in the struggle that was tugging at the roots of the world's civilization. The exhilaration of expectancy and of

danger broke suddenly into their uneventful, though not easy, lives. But there was cause for keen anxiety. The colonists were, however, reassured for a time by a visit from three British warships, the cruisers *Good Hope*, *Monmouth*, and *Glasgow*, with the armed liner *Otranto*.

The *Good Hope* had, at the declaration of war, been patrolling the Irish coast. She was ordered to sweep the Atlantic trade routes for hostile cruisers. She reached the coast of North America, after many false alarms, stopping English merchantmen on the way, and informing the astonished skippers of the war and of their course in consequence. When forty miles east of New York, Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock came aboard with his staff, and hoisted his flag. The Admiral turned southwards, sweeping constantly for the enemy. Passing through the West Indies, he proceeded to the coast of Brazil. Here he was joined by the *Glasgow*. The *Good Hope* had picked up the *Monmouth* previously. The three ships, accompanied by the auxiliary cruiser *Otranto*, kept a southerly course. The discovery at Pernambuco of twenty-three German merchantmen snugly ensconced behind the breakwater, in neutral harbour, proved very galling. The Straits of Magellan and the cold Tierra del Fuego were at length reached. The squadron was on the scent of three German cruisers, the *Leipzig*, *Dresden*, and *Nürnberg*. It was suspected that they had gone to coal in this remote corner of the oceans. Their secret and friendly wireless stations were heard talking in code. The British made swoops upon wild and unsurveyed bays and inlets. The land around was covered with ice and snow, and the many huge glaciers formed a sight wonderful to behold. But the search had proved fruit-

less. After rounding the Horn several times, the squadron had turned towards the Falklands.

The inhabitants could not long rely, however, upon these powerful guardians. The squadron, after coaling, departed, again bound for the Straits of Magellan and the Pacific. Its strength was certainly adequate to tackle with success the three German ships believed to be in the vicinity. The colony could depend upon Admiral Cradock to protect it to the best of his ability. But it was not improbable that the enemy might evade the patrolling cruisers, and descend upon the hapless Falklands without warning. The Governor saw the advisability of instant preparation. On October 19 he issued a notice that all women and children were to leave Stanley. Provisions, stores, and clothes were hastily removed into the interior, which was locally termed the 'camp'. The colony possessed a Volunteer Rifle Company, some 120 strong, and two nine-pounder field-guns. Further volunteers were enrolled and armed. Suddenly, on November 3, an alarming wireless message was received. The *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* were reported to have been sunk off the coast of Chili. It was unsigned. There was no proof of its authenticity. But the next day another message followed from the captain of the *Glasgow*. The disaster was confirmed. The *Glasgow*, in company with H.M.S. *Canopus*, was running with all speed for the Falklands. They were probably being followed by the victorious Germans. Four days of acute suspense followed. The situation seemed critical. The Governor passed several nights without taking off his clothes, in expectancy of wireless messages that needed instant decoding. People slept beside their telephones. Early in the morning of Sunday, November 8, the two warships arrived.

The *Glasgow* was badly damaged. An enormous hole, three feet by nine feet, gaped in her side. A shell had wrecked Captain Luce's cabin, giving off fumes such as rendered unconscious several men who rushed in to put out the fire. The vessel had escaped any serious outbreak, however, and had suffered only four slight casualties. Warm tributes were paid by the captain to the cool and disciplined conduct of both officers and men. The *Canopus* had not been engaged. But a narrative of the preceding events may now be appropriate.

Vice-Admiral the Graf Maximilian von Spee was in command, at the outbreak of hostilities, of the German China fleet stationed at Tsing-tao. A successor, indeed, had been appointed, and was on the way to relieve him. But just before war was declared von Spee and his squadron steamed off into the open seas. To remain at Tsing-tao while vastly superior forces were closing in upon him would be to little purpose. Commerce raiding offered a field for rendering valuable service to the Fatherland. The *Emden* was dispatched to the southern seas. The *Leipzig* and the *Nürnberg* proceeded across the Pacific, and began to prey upon the western coast of South America. Half the maritime trade of Chili was carried in English ships. Many of them might be seized and destroyed at little risk. The Admiral, with his two remaining vessels, the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, successfully evaded the hostile fleets for some time. On September 14 he touched at Apia, in German Samoa, familiar to readers of Robert Louis Stevenson. It could be remembered how, fifteen years before, this colony, shortly to fall before a New Zealand expeditionary force, had been a bone of contention between Great Britain and Germany. Captain Sturdee, whom von Spee was soon to meet in more arduous

operations, had on that occasion commanded the British force in the tribal warfare. Eight days later, on September 22, the two German cruisers arrived off Papeete, in Tahiti, one of the loveliest of Pacific islands. A small disarmed French gunboat lying there was sunk, and the town was bombarded. The Admiral, planning a concentration of German ships, then steamed east across the Pacific. He got into touch with friendly vessels. By skilful manœuvring he finally brought five warships, with colliers, together near Valparaiso.

The German ships were all of recent construction. The *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* were armoured cruisers of 11,600 tons. The *Leipzig*, the *Nürnberg*, and the *Dresden* were light cruisers of about 3,500 tons. The armament of the larger vessels included eight 8.2-inch and six 6-inch guns. The smaller relied upon either ten or twelve 4-inch pieces. Each ship carried torpedo tubes, and the speed of each was about twenty-two or twenty-three knots an hour. The *Dresden*, however, could go to twenty-seven knots. The squadron possessed all-important allies. Several German merchant-marine companies, notably the *Kosmos*, plied along the Chilian coast. The tonnage of their vessels, indeed, amounted to no less than half that of the English companies. The advance of German enterprise in Chili in recent years had been very marked. Von Spee's great stumbling-block was coal. The laws of war prevented him from sending more than three of his warships into a neutral port at the same time, from staying there more than twenty-four hours, from taking more coal than was necessary to reach the nearest German harbour, from coaling again for three months at a port of the same nationality. But if German merchantmen, hampered by no such restrictions,

could constantly renew his supplies, the difficulty of fuel could be to some extent met. Provisions and secret information as to British movements could also be obtained through the same source. Such employment of merchantmen, however, being contrary to international law, would have to be clandestine. The great Pacific coast offered numerous harbours and abundant facilities for being utilized as a base under such conditions. It showed many historic precedents for bold and adventurous exploits which could not fail to appeal to an admiral whose family, ennobled by the Emperor Charles VI, took pride in its ancient and aristocratic lineage. The occasion seemed opportune, moreover, for the accomplishment, by himself, his officers, and men, of deeds which should inspire their posterity as British naval traditions, for lack of other, at present inspired them. They could recall how, on this very coast, in 1578-9, Drake, the master raider, had seized a Spanish treasure-ship off Valdivia, had descended like a hawk upon Callao, had pounced upon another great galleon, taking nearly a million pounds in gold and silver; and how the intrepid mariner, sailing off into the unknown ocean, had circumnavigated the globe, while the furious de Toledo waited, with eleven warships, in the Straits of Magellan. Why, indeed, should not the Germans imitate, in the twentieth century, the deeds of Drake in the sixteenth? If they preyed ruthlessly upon English merchantmen, laden with the wealth of the West, if they made a descent upon the Falkland Islands, if then they were to disappear into the wide Pacific, a career of splendid adventure and of unbounded usefulness would earn for them both the respect and the plaudits of the world. Australian and Japanese warships were sweeping the eastern Pacific

for them. Many British vessels, called from useful employment elsewhere, would have to join in the search for them. But so vast was the area that they might elude their enemies for months. British ships were already cruising near the Horn, possibly unaware that a concentration of the Germans had been effected. It was not unlikely that von Spee might be able to cut off and to destroy stray units of the patrolling squadrons. The Graf could see many opportunities of serving effectively the cause of the Fatherland. He must utilize them to the full.

Sir Christopher Cradock, meanwhile, had rounded the Horn once more, and was cruising northwards up the coast of Chili. That coast, indeed, once the haunt of corsairs and filibusters, was rich in historic associations and in natural beauties. An element of grandeur and of mystery seemed to hover around the countless ridges and peaks of the Andes, stretching, with the gleam of their eternal snows, for four thousand miles, and gazing down across the illimitable waters of the occident. Upon the plateaux, miles above sea level, stood old stone temples and pyramids which rivalled in massiveness and ingenuity those of Egypt and of Babylon. The student of ancient civilizations could trace, in the mystic deities of the Incas and Araucanians, a strange similarity to the deities of the Chaldeans and Babylonians. Speculation upon this analogy formed a fascinating theme. This coast, too, was sacred to memories that could not but be dear to sailors as gallant and daring as Cradock, since his services in China, in 1900, was known to be. Among other familiar British names, Cochrane, Lord Dundonald, had won enduring glory in the struggle for Chilian independence, nearly a hundred years before. The conditions of naval warfare had, indeed, through the

introduction of armour and the perfection of weapons, radically changed since Cochrane, in a series of singularly audacious exploits, had overcome the fleets of Spain. Sea-fighting had become purely a matter of science. The object of strategy was to concentrate faster ships and more powerful guns against weaker force. The odds with which Cradock was to contend against the Germans were greater in proportion, if less in bulk, than the odds with which Cochrane had contended, with his peasant crews and his hulks, against the Spanish 'wooden-walls'. Admiral Cradock now knew that there were two more cruisers in the neighbourhood than had at first been supposed. The *Canopus* had accordingly been sent to join his squadron. But she was a battleship, and much slower than the cruisers. She could travel no faster than at eighteen knots. Cradock proceeded northwards, ahead of the *Canopus*, made a rendezvous off Concepcion Bay for his colliers, and went into Coronel and on to Valparaiso to pick up news and receive letters. The squadron then returned to the rendezvous and coaled. This completed, the Admiral directed the *Glasgow* to proceed again to Coronel to dispatch certain cables. Captain Luce duly carried out his mission, and left Coronel at nine o'clock on Sunday morning, November 1, steaming northwards to rejoin the other ships. A gale was rising. The wind was blowing strongly from the south. Heavy seas continually buffeted the vessel. At two o'clock a wireless signal was received from the *Good Hope*. Apparently from wireless calls there was an enemy ship to northward. The squadron must spread out in line, proceeding in a direction north-east-by-east, the flagship forming one extremity, the *Glasgow* the other. It was to move at fifteen knots. At twenty minutes past

four in the afternoon, smoke was observed upon the horizon. The *Glasgow* put on speed and approached. Officers soon made out the funnels of four cruisers. It was the enemy. The Germans, their big armoured cruisers leading, and the smaller behind, gave chase.

The *Glasgow* swept round to northward, calling to the flagship with her wireless. Von Spee, anticipating this move, at once set his wireless in operation, in order to jamb the British signals. Captain Luce soon picked up the *Monmouth* and the *Otranto*, and the three ships raced northwards towards the flagship, the *Glasgow* leading. At about five o'clock the *Good Hope* was seen approaching. The three ships wheeled into line behind her, and the whole squadron now proceeded south. Von Spee, coming up from that direction in line ahead, about twelve miles off, changed his course and also proceeded south, keeping nearer to the coast. The wind was now blowing almost with the force of a hurricane. So heavy was the sea that small boats would have been unable to keep afloat. But the sky was not completely overcast, and the sun was shining. Firing had not opened. The washing of the seas and the roaring of the wind deafened the ear to other sounds. The warship of to-day, when her great turbines are whirling round at their highest speed, moves without throb and almost without vibration through the waves. The two squadrons, drawing level, the Germans nearer to the coast, raced in the teeth of the gale, in two parallel lines, to the south.

Sir Christopher Cradock could not but realize that the situation was hazardous. He had three vessels capable of fighting men-of-war. The *Otranto* was only an armed liner, and must withdraw when the battle developed. The *Good Hope* displaced some 14,000 tons, and was

armed with two 9·2-inch and sixteen 6-inch guns. The *Monmouth*, with a tonnage of 9,800, carried fourteen 6-inch pieces, but the *Glasgow*, a ship of 4,800 tons, had only two of the 6-inch weapons. It was certain that the German 8·2-inch guns, if the shooting was at all good, would be found to outrange and outclass the British. Cradock was certainly at a disadvantage in gun-power. His protective armour was weaker than that of the enemy. Nor did his speed give him any superiority. Though the *Glasgow* was capable of twenty-six knots, the flagship and the *Monmouth* could only go to twenty-three. But there was another consideration which the Admiral might weigh. Coming slowly up from the south, but probably still a considerable distance off, was the battleship *Canopus*. Her presence would give the British a decided preponderance. She was a vessel of some 13,000 tons, and her armament included four 12-inch and twelve 6-inch pieces. How far was she away? How soon could she arrive upon the scene? Evening was closing in. Cradock was steering hard in her direction. If the British, engaging the enemy immediately, could keep them in play throughout the night, when firing must necessarily be desultory, perhaps morning would bring the *Canopus* hastening into the action. It was possible that the Germans did not know of her proximity. They might, accepting the contest, and expecting to cripple the British next morning at their leisure, find themselves trapped. But in any case they should not be allowed to proceed without some such attempt being made to destroy them. It must not be said that, because the enemy was in greater force, a British squadron had taken to flight. Perhaps it would be better, since darkness would afford little opportunity of manœuvring for action, to draw nearer and to

engage fairly soon. It was about a quarter past six. The Germans were about 15,000 yards distant. Cradock ordered the speed of his squadron to seventeen knots. He then signalled by wireless to the *Canopus*, 'I am going to attack enemy now'.

The sun was setting. The western horizon was mantled by a canopy of gold. Von Spee's manœuvre in closing in nearer to the shore had placed him in an advantageous position as regards the light. The British ships, when the sun had set, were sharply outlined against the glowing sky. The Germans were partly hidden in the failing light and by the mountainous coast. The island of Santa Maria, off Coronel, lay in the distance. Von Spee had been gradually closing to within 12,000 yards. The appropriate moment for engaging seemed to be approaching. A few minutes after sunset, about seven o'clock, the leading German cruiser opened fire with her largest guns. Shells shrieked over and short of the *Good Hope*, some falling within five hundred yards. As battle was now imminent, the *Otranto* began to haul out of line, and to edge away to the south-west. The squadrons were converging rapidly, but the smaller cruisers were as yet out of range. The British replied in quick succession to the German fire. As the distance lessened, each ship engaged that opposite in the line. The *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* had to bear the brunt of the broadsides of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*. The *Glasgow*, in the rear, exchanged shots with the light cruisers, the *Leipzig* and the *Dresden*. The shooting was deadly. The third of the rapid salvos of the enemy armoured cruisers set the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* afire. Shells began to find their mark, some exploding overhead and bursting in all directions. In about ten minutes the *Monmouth* sheered off the line to westward

about one hundred yards. She was being hit heavily. Her foremost turret, shielding one of her 6-inch guns, was in flames. She seemed to be reeling and shaking. She fell back into line, however, and then out again to eastward, her 6-inch guns roaring intermittently. Darkness was now gathering fast. The range had narrowed to about 5,000 yards. The seven ships were all in action. Many shells striking the sea sent up columns of white spray, showing weirdly in the twilight. It was an impressive scene. The dim light, the heavy seas, the rolling of the vessels, distracted the aim. Some of the guns upon the main decks, being near the water-line, became with each roll almost awash. The British could fire only at the flashes of the enemy's guns. Often the heavy head seas hid even the flashes from the gunlayers. It was impossible to gauge the effect of their shells. The fore-turret of the *Good Hope* burst into flames, and she began to fall away out of line towards the enemy. The *Glasgow* kept up a continual fire upon the German light cruisers with one of her 6-inch guns and her port batteries. A shell struck her below deck, and men waited for the planks to rise. No explosion nor fire, however, occurred. But the British flagship was now burning brightly forward, and was falling more and more out of line to eastward. It was about a quarter to eight. Suddenly there was the roar of an explosion. The part about the *Good Hope's* after-funnel split asunder, and a column of flame, sparks, and débris was blown up to a height of about two hundred feet. She never fired her guns again. Total destruction must have followed. Sir Christopher Cradock and nine hundred brave sailors went down in the stormy deep. The other ships raced past her in the darkness. The *Monmouth* was in great distress. She left the line

after a while, and turned back, steaming with difficulty to north-west. She had ceased firing. The vessels had been travelling at a rate which varied from seven to seventeen knots. The *Glasgow*, now left alone, eased her speed in order to avoid shells intended for the *Monmouth*. The Germans dropped slowly back. The *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* now concentrated their salvos upon the *Glasgow*. The range was about 4,500 yards. A shell struck the second funnel: five others hit her side at the waterline, but fortunately not in dangerous places. Luce, her captain, since the flagship was no more, was senior officer. He brought his vessel round and moved rapidly back.

The *Monmouth* had now fallen away to a north-easterly course. Luce stood by signalling, Could she steer north-west? She was making water badly forward, Captain Brandt answered, and he wanted to get stern to sea. The enemy were following, Luce signalled again. There was no reply. The *Glasgow* steamed nearer. The *Monmouth* was in a sinking condition. Her bows were under water, and the men were assembled at the stern. The sea was running very high. Rain and mist had come on, though a moon was now rising. The enemy had altered course, and were approaching in line abreast about 6,000 yards away. A light kept twinkling at regular intervals from one of the ships. They were signalling in Morse, and evidently were forming plans of action. Firing was still proceeding intermittently. It was about half-past eight. Captain Luce could see nothing for it but to abandon the *Monmouth* to her fate. To rescue her crew, under such conditions, was impossible, while to stand by and endeavour to defend her would be folly. The *Glasgow* was not armoured, and could not contend with

armoured vessels. Of the two guns she possessed capable of piercing the enemy's armour, one had been put out of action ten minutes after the start. If she stayed and fought to the end, 370 good lives, in addition to the sufficiently heavy toll of 1,600 in the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*, would be needlessly sacrificed. The *Canopus*, moreover, must be warned. She was coming up from the south to sure destruction. She could hardly be expected successfully to combat the whole German squadron. Nevertheless, it must have been with heavy hearts that the men of the *Glasgow* turned away to seek safety in flight. It is recorded that, as they moved off into the darkness, a cheer broke forth from the *Monmouth's* decks. Before the sinking vessel became lost to sight another and a third went up. At about a quarter past nine the *Nürnberg*, which had not been engaged in the main action, came across the *Monmouth*. It is said that, though in a sinking condition, the British ship attempted to ram her enemy. But the *Nürnberg* began to bombard her, and she capsized.

The *Glasgow* steamed off in a north-westerly direction. A few minutes before nine the enemy became lost to sight. Half an hour later many distant flashes of gunfire, the death-struggle of the *Monmouth*, were seen. The play of a searchlight, which lasted a few seconds and then disappeared, was also observed. The vessel bore round gradually to the south. Her wireless was put into operation, and she made efforts to get through to the *Canopus*. But the Germans had again set their apparatus in motion, and the messages were jammed. Only after some hours was the *Glasgow* successful. Steaming hard at twenty-four knots through the heavy seas, her engines and boilers fortunately being

intact, she at length joined the battleship. The two ships made straight for the Falkland Islands.

The news of the disaster stirred great alarm in the colony. Before the day on which the ships arrived was out the dismay was further increased. The *Canopus* at first expected to stay ten days. Her presence provided substantial relief. If the enemy appeared, she and even the damaged *Glasgow* could give a very good account of themselves. But during the morning Captain Grant of the *Canopus* received a wireless message from the Admiralty. He was to proceed immediately to Rio de Janeiro with the *Glasgow*. The Brazilian Government had granted the latter permission to enter the dry dock there to make urgent repairs. But seven days only were allowed for this purpose. In the evening the warships cast off, and steamed away to northward.

Stanley was now in an unenviable situation. A powerful German squadron, flushed with victory, was probably making for the Islands. The colony was almost defenceless. All the opposition that the enemy would meet would be from a few hundred volunteers. A wireless message that came through emphasized the imminence of the danger. Warnings and instructions were outlined. If the enemy landed, the volunteers were to fight. But retiring tactics must be adopted. Care should be taken to keep out of range of the enemy's big guns. The Governor at once called a council of war. There could be little doubt that a descent would be made upon the colony. The position was full of peril. But resistance must certainly be offered. The few women, children, and old men who still remained at Stanley must be sent away immediately. Fortunately the time of year was propitious. November is, indeed, in the Falklands

considered the only dry month. The ground is then covered with a variety of sweet-scented flowers. Further, all the stores it was possible to remove must be taken into the 'camp'. Quantities of provisions must be hidden away at various points within reach of the town. In order to add to the mobility of the defending force, it would be well to bring in another hundred horses from the 'camp'. Every man should be mounted. These measures were duly carried out. Every preparation was made and every precaution taken. Everybody began to pack up boxes of goods. Clothes, stores, and valuables were all taken away to safety. Books, papers, and money were removed from the Government offices, and from the headquarters of the Falkland Islands Company. What was not sent away was buried. The official papers and code-books were buried every night, and dug up and dried every morning. The Governor's tablecloths gave rise to much anxiety. It was thought, since they were marked 'G. R.', they would be liable to insult by the Germans. They were accordingly buried. This conscientious loyalty, however, proved costly. The Governor's silver, wrapped in green baize, was, unfortunately, placed in the same hole. The tablecloths became mixed up with the baize. The damp got through, and the linen was badly stained. There was a feeling that the attack would come at dawn. People sat up all night, and only went to bed when morning was well advanced. All offices were closed and business was suspended. This state of tension lasted several days. At length, from the look-out post above the town, a warship, apparently a cruiser, was seen making straight for the wireless station. When she got within range she turned broadside on. Her decks were cleared for action.

There was a call to arms. Church and dockyard

bells pealed out the alarm. Non-combatants streamed out of the town into the 'camp'. The volunteers paraded, and lined up with their horses. It would soon become a question whether to resist a landing or to retire. In any event the men were ready and provided with emergency rations. But no firing sounded. Signals were exchanged between the vessel and the shore. It was a false alarm. The newcomer was H.M.S. *Canopus*.

She had proceeded, in accordance with her orders, towards Rio de Janeiro with the *Glasgow*. When two days' journey off her destination, however, she received another message. She was directed to return and to defend the Falklands in case of attack. These instructions were received with mingled feelings. To fight alone a powerful squadron was by no means an attractive prospect. Duty, however, was duty. The *Canopus* turned about, and retraced her passage. She set her wireless in operation, and tried to get through to Stanley. But for some reason she was unable to do so. It was concluded that the Germans had made a raid and had destroyed the wireless station. Probably they had occupied the town. The outlook seemed serious. The *Canopus* had her instructions, however, and there was no drawing back. The decks were cleared for action. Ammunition was served out. Guns were loaded and trained. With every man at his post the ship steamed at full speed into the harbour. Great was the relief when it was found that all was well.

The inhabitants were not less relieved. The presence of the battleship was felt to add materially to the security of the town. The Germans would probably hesitate before attacking a ship of her size. If they sustained damage involving loss of fighting efficiency, there was no harbour they could turn to for repair,

except so far as their seaworthiness was affected. Nevertheless, it was almost certain that some raid upon the Islands would be attempted. Guns were landed from the ship, and measures were taken to make the defence as effective as possible. Perhaps if the enemy blockaded Stanley, the British would be able to hold out until other warships, certain to be sent to avenge the defeat, arrived. Relief could hardly be expected for two or three weeks. The Falklands formed a very distant corner of the Empire. It was doubtful, indeed, whether even the ubiquitous German spy had penetrated to these remote and barren shores. It could, however, be recalled that, in 1882, a German expedition had landed on South Georgia, a dependent island of the Falklands, eight hundred miles to their south-east, to observe the transit of Venus. Upon that same island, indeed, another and a quite unsuspecting expedition had landed, early in that very month, November. Sir Ernest Shackleton, the explorer, had left Buenos Ayres on the morning of October 26, on his way across the antarctic continent. His little vessel of 230 tons, the *Endurance*, passed through the war zone in safety, and reached South Georgia on November 5. He remained for about a month before leaving for the lonely tracts for which his little party was bound. The island was his last link with civilization. Though sub-antarctic, it possessed features as up-to-date as electric-light, universal even in pigsties and henhouses. And the march of man, it was observed, had introduced the familiar animals of the farmyard, and even a monkey, into a region whose valleys, destitute of tree or shrub, lay clothed with perpetual snow.

Meanwhile, November passed into December without any appearance of the Germans off the Falklands. The

tension became very much relieved. Women and children were brought back to Stanley, after being away a month or six weeks. Messages emanating from the hostile squadron, registered by the wireless station, indicated that the enemy were still in the vicinity. But the condition of the colony became again almost normal. The relief and security were complete when, at length, on Monday, December 7, a powerful British squadron, under Vice-Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee, arrived at Port Stanley. There were seven warships, besides the *Canopus*. The *Invincible* and the *Inflexible* had left Plymouth on November 11, and had proceeded to the West Indies. Their mission was to avenge Coronel. They had picked up at Albatross Rock the *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, *Bristol*, *Kent*, *Glasgow*, now repaired, and *Macedonia*, an armed liner. All had then steamed southwards towards the Falklands. The vessels started coaling. Officers came ashore to stretch their legs. Certain stores were laid in. It was anticipated that the squadron would depart in search of the enemy on the evening of the following day. That search might, indeed, be a matter of months. Early next morning, December 8, at about eight o'clock, a volunteer observer posted on Sapper's Hill, two miles from Stanley, sighted two vessels upon the horizon. Twenty minutes later the smoke of two others came into view in the same direction. They were soon recognized as German cruisers. The excitement was intense. The news was immediately carried to the authorities. It was hastily signalled to the fleet. Most of the ships were at anchor in Port William, the outer entrance to Port Stanley. Some of the naval officers were aroused from their repose. It is recorded that, upon hearing the news, the flag-lieutenant dashed down to Admiral Sturdee's cabin, clad in his

pyjamas. Sir Doveton was shaving. The lieutenant poured forth his information. 'Well,' said the Admiral, dryly, 'you had better go and get dressed. We'll see about it later.'¹

The Graf von Spee had, meanwhile, after the Battle of Coronel, been devoting himself to harrying maritime commerce. The Falklands could wait for the present. Since the beginning of hostilities the work of his light cruisers had been moderately successful. The *Nürnberg* had cut the cable between Bamfield, British Columbia, and Fanning Island. The *Leipzig* had accounted for at least four British merchantmen, and the *Dresden* for at least two more. The armed liner *Eitel Friedrich* had also achieved some success. Several traders had had narrow escapes. The Chilian coast was in a state of blockade to British vessels, the ports being crowded with shipping that hesitated to venture forth into the danger zone. The Germans were masters of the Pacific and South Atlantic trade routes. The Straits of Magellan and the Horn formed a great waterway of commerce, which for sailing vessels was, indeed, the only eastern outlet from the Pacific. But completely as he had the situation in hand, von Spee was experiencing increasing problems and difficulties with regard to supplies of coal and provisions. Without these he was impotent. He had been employing German merchantmen to great advantage for refueling. But trouble was brewing with the Chilian authorities. Many signs were leading the latter to suspect that, contrary to international

¹ The writer cannot vouch for the truth of this anecdote, which he merely records as given in a letter published in the press. But the source from which it was taken, together with many of the preceding details of the condition of Stanley during the period of tension, has proved so accurate in essential points of fact, that their insertion seems justifiable.

law, German traders were loading at Chilian ports cargoes of coal and provisions, contraband of war, and were transferring them at sea to the German warships. There were other causes of complaint. Juan Fernandez, the isle of romance and of mystery, the home of the original of Robinson Crusoe, was said to have been degraded into use as a base for apportioning the booty, coals and victuals, among the belligerent vessels. The island was a Chilian possession. It was practically certain that von Spee's squadron had stayed there beyond the legal limit of time. A French merchantman had, contrary to rule, also been sunk there by the *Dresden*, within Chilian territorial waters. Inquiries in other quarters were being made, moreover, as to the friendly wireless stations which the Germans had been utilizing secretly in Colombia and Ecuador; while a rumour was current in the United States that neutral vessels had been seized and pillaged on the high seas. Von Spee soon found that he was nearing the end even of his illegitimate resources. He had tried the patience of the Chilian authorities too far. About the middle of November they suddenly prohibited, as a provisional measure, the vessels of the Kosmos Company from leaving any Chilian port. On November 24 a Government ship was sent to Juan Fernandez to investigate, and to see that Chilian neutrality was upheld. Many such signs seemed to warn von Spee that the time was appropriate to a sudden disappearance. He gathered his squadron for a descent at last upon the Falklands. His plans must be, not merely for a raid, but for an occupation. There were probably two or three small ships there. They should be sunk. The wireless station must be destroyed. The Islands, after a landing had been effected and the defence reduced, could be used

as a base for the German operations. There were large quantities of coal and stores at Stanley. The harbour possessed facilities for refitting. To dislodge a strong German naval force, with adequate guns, placed in occupation of the colony, would be a difficult task for the enemy. The Falklands had many possibilities. According to von Spee's information they were feebly defended and would fall an easy prey. At length, early in the morning of December 8, the Admiral brought his fleet off Stanley. His five cruisers approached from the south. They were, of course, observed. A warning gun, probably from one of the small ships which he would shortly sink, sounded the alarm inside the harbour. There was no need, however, for haste. At twenty minutes past nine the *Gneisenau* and the *Nürnberg* moved towards the wireless station, and brought their guns to bear upon it. But suddenly from inside the harbour there came the thunder of a big gun. Five shells, of very heavy calibre, screamed in quick succession from over the low-lying land. One of the vessels was struck. Surprise and bewilderment took the Germans. This was most unexpected. The *Gneisenau* and the *Nürnberg* hastily retired out of range.

Sir Doveton and his fleet, meanwhile, had gone to breakfast. Steam for full speed was got up as rapidly as possible. Coaling operations had recommenced at 6.30 that morning. The colliers were hurriedly cast off, and the decks were cleared for action. Officers and men were delighted at the prospect of an early fight. The Germans had saved them a long cold search around the Horn by calling for them. There was going to be no mistake this time. The enemy could not escape. Sturdee's squadron was superior both in weight and

speed to the German. It consisted of two battle-cruisers of over 17,000 tons, the *Invincible* and *Inflexible*; of three cruisers of about 10,000 tons, the *Carnarvon*, *Kent*, and *Cornwall*; and of two light cruisers of 4,800 tons, the *Glasgow* and *Bristol*. The primary armament of the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* was eight 12-inch guns; of the *Carnarvon*, four 7.5-inch; of the *Kent* and *Cornwall*, fourteen 6-inch; of the *Glasgow* and *Bristol*, two 6-inch. The speed of the battle-cruisers was twenty-eight knots; of the three middle-class cruisers, twenty-two to twenty-four knots; and of the light cruisers, twenty-five to twenty-six knots. In size, in armament, in speed, the British squadron would decidedly preponderate. Admiral Sturdee, however, though confident of victory; was determined to take no risks, and to minimize loss in men and material by making full use of his superior long-range gunfire, and of his superior speed. He would wait, screened by the land, until the Germans had drawn nearer. Everything should be got ready carefully. Undue excitement was to be deprecated. Meanwhile, he watched the enemy closely. At about a quarter to nine, Captain Grant of the *Canopus* reported that the first two ships sighted were now about eight miles away: the other two were still at a distance of some twenty miles. The *Kent* passed down the harbour and took up a position at the entrance. Five minutes later the smoke of a fifth German vessel was observed. When, in about half an hour's time, the two leading enemy ships made a threatening move in the direction of the wireless station, the Admiral ordered a swift counterstroke. Officers upon the hills above the town signalled the range, 11,000 yards, to the *Canopus*. She opened fire with her 12-inch guns. The Germans hoisted their colours and drew back.

Their masts and smoke were now visible from the upper bridge of the *Invincible* across the low land bounding Port William on the south. Within a few minutes the two cruisers altered course and made for the harbour-mouth. Here the *Kent* lay stationed. It seemed that the Germans were about to engage her. As, however, they approached, the masts and funnels of two large ships at anchor within the port became visible to them. The *Gneisenau* and the *Nürnberg* could hardly expect to contend alone with this force. They at once changed their direction, and moved back at increased speed to join their consorts.

The morning was gloriously fine. The sun shone brightly, the sky was clear, the sea was calm, and a breeze blew lightly from the north-west. It was one of the rare bright stretches that visit the Islands, for usually rain falls, mostly in misty drizzles, on about 250 days in the year. At twenty minutes to ten the *Glasgow* weighed anchor, and joined the *Kent* at the harbour-mouth. Five minutes later the rest of the squadron weighed, and began to steam out. The battleship *Canopus*, her speed making her unsuitable for a chase, was left in harbour. The *Bristol* and the *Macedonia* also remained behind for the present. By a dexterous use of oil fuel the two battle-cruisers were kept shrouded as much as possible in dense clouds of smoke. The enemy for some time could not gauge their size. But as vessel after vessel emerged, Admiral von Spee grew uneasy. The English were in altogether unexpected strength. His squadron could not cope with such force. He had played into the enemy's hands, and unless he could outspeed their ships, the game was up. Without hesitation, he steamed off at high speed to eastward. The British followed, steaming

at fifteen to eighteen knots. The enemy, to their south-east, were easily visible. At twenty past ten an order for a general chase was signalled. The *Invincible* and the *Inflexible* quickly drew to the fore. The Germans were roughly in line abreast, 20,000 yards, or some eleven miles, ahead. The morning sunlight, the gleaming seas, the grey warships, white foam springing from their bows, tearing at high speed through the waves, formed a magnificent spectacle. Crowds of the inhabitants of Stanley gathered upon the hills above the town to view the chase. The excitement and enthusiasm were intense. The vessels were in sight about two hours. At about a quarter past eleven it was reported from a point in the south of East Falkland that three other German ships were in sight. They were probably colliers or transports. The *Bristol* signalled the information to Admiral Sturdee. He at once ordered her, with the armed liner *Macedonia*, to hasten in their direction and destroy them. The newcomers made off to south-west, and the British followed. Meanwhile, the rest of the squadron, now travelling at twenty-three knots, were slowly closing upon the enemy. The distance had narrowed to 15-16,000 yards. The British were within striking range. Nevertheless, Sturdee decided to wait till after dinner before engaging. His guns could outdistance those of the enemy. It would be advisable for him to keep at long range. The Germans, on the other hand, would be forced, when firing commenced, to alter course and draw in, in order to bring their own guns into play. The men had their midday meal at twelve o'clock as usual. It is said that comfortable time was allowed afterwards for a smoke. The *Invincible*, *Inflexible*, and *Glasgow* at about 12.30 increased their speed to between twenty-five

and twenty-eight knots, and went on ahead. Just after a quarter to one there was a signal from the Admiral: 'Open fire and engage the enemy.' A few minutes later there were sharp commands. The ranges were signalled, and the bigger guns were laid. Fiery glares and dense clouds of smoke burst suddenly from their muzzles. The air quivered with their thunder. Shells went screaming in the direction of the nearest light cruiser, the *Leipzig*, which was dropping rapidly astern. The firing was uncomfortably accurate. The three smaller German cruisers very soon left the line, and made an attempt, veering off to the south, to scatter and escape. Flame and smoke issued from the *Leipzig*, before she drew clear, where a shell had struck. Sir Doveton Sturdee directed the *Glasgow*, *Kent*, and *Cornwall* to pursue the German light cruisers. With his remaining vessels, the *Invincible*, the *Inflexible*, and the slower *Carnarvon*, he turned upon the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, and began operations in earnest.

The interval of sunlight which had opened the day with such promise was of short duration. The sky became overcast. Soon after four o'clock the air was thick with rain-mist. From 1.15 onwards for three hours a fierce duel was maintained between the two British battle-cruisers and the two German armoured cruisers. The enemy made every effort to get away. They replied to the British fire for some time, having dropped back to within 13,500 yards. But shortly after two o'clock they changed their course, and began to haul out to south-east. The *Invincible* and the *Inflexible* had eased their speed, and the range now widened by about 3,000 yards. A second chase ensued. A full-rigged sailing-ship appeared in the distance at about a quarter to three. Her crew must have beheld

an awe-inspiring scene. Shortly before the hour firing recommenced. The action began to develop. Great coolness and efficiency were shown on board the British vessels. Every man was at his battle-station, behind armour. Fire-control parties were at their instruments. Water from numerous hoses was flooding the decks as a precaution against fire. The roaring of the discharges, the screaming of the shells, the clangour of metal upon metal, the crashes of the explosions, made up a tumult that was painful in its intensity. During intervals in the firing came the rushing of the waves and of the breeze, and the grinding and grunting of the hydraulic engines in the turrets, where swung, training constantly upon the enemy, the greater guns. The Germans soon began to show signs of distress. The *Scharnhorst* particularly suffered. Dense clouds of smoke, making it difficult for the British accurately to gauge the damage, rose from her decks. Shells rending her side disclosed momentarily the dull red glow of flame. She was burning fiercely. The firing on both sides was deadly, though the German had slackened considerably. But the British vessels, through their preponderance in gunfire, suffered little damage. Their 12-inch guns hit their marks constantly, while the 8·2-inch guns of the *Scharnhorst* were accurate, but ineffective. She veered to starboard at about 3·30, to bring into play her starboard batteries. Both her masts and three of her four funnels were shot away. At length the German flagship began to settle down rapidly in the waters. It was about a quarter past four. There was a swirl of the seas and a rush of steam and smoke. The *Scharnhorst* disappeared. She went down with her flag flying to an ocean grave, bearing 760 brave men and a gallant admiral, whose name will deservedly

rank high in the annals of German naval history. The *Gneisenau* passed on the far side of her sunken flagship. With the guns of both battle-cruisers now bearing upon her alone, the German was soon in sore straits. But she fought on gallantly for a considerable time. At half-past five she had ceased firing, and appeared to be sinking. She had suffered severe damage. Smoke and steam were rising everywhere. Her bridge had been shot away. Her foremost funnel was resting against the second. Her upper deck was so shattered that it could not be crossed, and every man upon it had been killed. An exploding shell had hurled one of the gun-turrets bodily overboard. Fire was raging aft. Her colours had been shot away several times, and hoisted as often. One of the flags was hauled down at about twenty to six, though that at the peak was still flying. She began to fire again with a single gun. The *Invincible*, the *Inflexible*, and the *Carnarvon*, which had now come up, closed in upon the doomed vessel. Firing was recommenced. The *Gneisenau* was not moving. Both her engines were smashed. Shells striking the water near her sent up colossal columns of water, which, falling upon the ship, put out some of the fires. She soon began to settle down in the waves. All her guns were now out of action, and Sturdee ordered the 'Cease fire'. There could be little doubt that her stubborn resistance was nearing its end. The German commander lined up his men on the decks. The ammunition was exhausted. The ship would soon go down. Some six hundred men had already been killed. The survivors had better provide themselves with articles for their support in the water. At six o'clock the *Gneisenau* heeled over suddenly. Clouds of steam sprang forth. Her stem swung up into the

air, and she sank. Large numbers of her crew could be seen floating in the icy waves, hanging on to pieces of wreckage, and uttering terribly uncanny cries. The sea was choppy. Drizzling rain was falling. The British steamed up immediately. All undamaged boats were got out. Ropes were lowered. Lifebuoys and spars were thrown to the drowning men. But many of them, numbed by the freezing water, let go their hold and sank. About 180, among them the captain of the *Gneisenau*, were saved. It is said that much agreeable surprise, upon the discovery that their anticipations of being shot would not be realized, was manifested by the German sailors.

Meanwhile, battle had been in progress elsewhere. The *Bristol* and the *Macedonia* had overtaken the transports *Baden* and *Santa Isabel*, had captured their crews, and had sunk the ships. The armed liner accompanying them, the *Eitel Friedrich*, had, however, made off and got away by means of her superior speed. The *Kent*, *Glasgow*, and *Cornwall* had pursued the German light cruisers in a southerly direction. The *Dresden*, the fastest, proved too speedy a vessel to overtake. She was ahead of her consorts, upon either quarter, and made her escape whilst they were being engaged. The *Kent* gave chase to the *Nürnberg*. The *Glasgow*, in pursuit of the *Leipzig*, raced ahead of the *Cornwall*, and by about three o'clock in the afternoon had closed sufficiently, within 12,000 yards, to open fire with her foremost guns. The German ship turned every now and then to fire a salvo. Soon a regular battle began which was maintained for some hours. Shells fell all around the *Glasgow*. There were several narrow escapes, but the casualties were few. Shortly after six a wireless message was received from Admiral Sturdee,

announcing that the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* had been sunk. A cheer surged up, and the men set to work with renewed spirits and energy. The *Cornwall* had come up some time before, and the *Leipzig* was now severely damaged. But she fought on for three more hours. Darkness came on. The German cruiser began to burn fore and aft. It was nine o'clock before she at last turned over and sank.

The British vessels had, during the course of the action, steamed miles apart, and far out of sight of land. During the evening and night they began to get into touch with one another and with Stanley by means of their wireless. All the ships except the *Kent* were accounted for, and reported all well. But no reply was forthcoming to the numerous calls, 'Kent, Kent, Kent', that were sent out. She had, in chase of the *Nürnberg*, lost all touch with the rest of the squadron. There was great uneasiness. It was feared that she had been lost. The other ships were directed to search for her, and for the *Nürnberg* and the *Dresden*. Late in the afternoon of the following day, however, she entered Stanley harbour safely. Her wireless had been destroyed, but she had sunk the *Nürnberg*, after a very stern struggle. The German captain, Schönberg, is reported, indeed, to have said at Honolulu, 'The *Nürnberg* will very likely be our coffin. But we are ready to fight to the last'. He had fought and died true to his words. The German ship was ordinarily more than a knot faster than the British. But the engineers and stokers of the *Kent* rose magnificently to the occasion. Fuel was piled high. Her engines were strained to the utmost. Soon she was speeding through the waves at twenty-five knots, a knot and a half more than her registered speed. The *Nürnberg* drew nearer. At five o'clock she was within range, and

firing was opened. A sharp action began which lasted some two and a half hours. The *Kent* was struck many times, and lost several men. She had one narrow escape. A bursting shell ignited some cordite charges, and a flash of flame went down the hoist into the ammunition passage. Some empty shell bags began to burn. But a sergeant picked up a cordite charge and hurled it out of danger. Seizing a fire hose, he flooded the compartment and extinguished the fire. A disastrous explosion, which might have proved fatal to the vessel, was thus averted. Her silken ensign and jack, presented by the ladies of *Kent*, were torn to ribbons. The gallant captain collected the pieces, some being caught in the rigging, and carefully preserved them. The *Nürnberg*, however, was soon in sore straits. Many shells struck her, and she was set afire. Day drew into evening, and darkness deepened. The Germans ceased firing, and the *Kent*, within about 3,000 yards, followed suit upon the enemy's colours being hauled down. The *Nürnberg* sank just before half-past seven. As she disappeared beneath the surface, men upon her quarter-deck were waving the German ensign. The *Kent*, after picking up some survivors, put about, and returned to Stanley.

Here the rest of the squadron soon gathered. Congratulatory telegrams began to pour in to Sir Doveton Sturdee. And the curtain closed, in the flush of triumph, upon the most memorable and most dramatic episode in the history of the Falklands.

One further episode remains to complete the story. The *Dresden* and the armed liner *Eitel Friedrich*, the sole survivors of the German squadron, made once more for the Pacific. They were lost sight of for many weeks. Suspicious movements and activities on the part of

German merchantmen were, however, again observed. The Government wireless station at Valparaiso intercepted messages from the *Dresden* summoning friendly vessels to bring her supplies. Persistent rumours began to be circulated that she was hiding in the inlets of southern Chili. During January, 1915, the *Eitel Friedrich* seized and destroyed six vessels, chiefly sailing-ships, some in Pacific, most in Atlantic waters. In February she accounted for four more. Towards the end of the month a British barque was sunk by the *Dresden*. The position was again rapidly becoming troublesome. The movement of British shipping on the Chilian coast had to be suspended. But the *Glasgow* and the *Kent* were on the *Dresden's* track. The *Kent* entered Coronel on March 13, coaled, and departed the same night. The *Eitel Friedrich*, meanwhile, had arrived at Newport News, a United States port, with her engines badly in need of repair. Much indignation was aroused among Americans by the announcement that one of her victims had been an American vessel. The German liner had many prisoners on board. Declarations of a resolve, if he had been caught by the British, to have sunk fighting to the last, were repeatedly and emphatically declaimed by the German captain. Five days later he learned that the *Dresden* had tamely surrendered off Juan Fernandez after a five minutes' action. The *Kent*, at nine o'clock on the morning after she had left Coronel, together with the *Glasgow* and the auxiliary cruiser *Orama*, came up with the *Dresden* near the island. A sharp encounter followed. The German cruiser was hit heavily. Fire broke out. In five minutes' time she hauled down her colours and hoisted a white flag. The crew were taken off. The *Dresden* continued to burn for some time, until finally her magazine exploded and

she sank. The German officers contended that their vessel was sunk within Chilian territorial waters. It had not hitherto been noticeable that their consciences were concerned to maintain Chilian neutrality inviolate.

The Battle of the Falkland Islands was the first decisive naval contest of the war. It removed a formidable menace to the trade routes. It relieved British convoys and transports from danger of interruption. It freed many battleships and cruisers, engaged in sweeping the oceans, for other usefulness. It gave Great Britain effective mastery of the outer seas. Henceforth German naval ambition, frustrated in its endeavour to disorganize the trade routes, was forced, within the limits of the North Sea and of British waters, to seek less adventurous but more disreputable ends. A series of bombardments of coast towns was planned. A preliminary success was followed by a galling disaster. Foiled a second time, Germany is attempting now to terrorize British waters, by deliberate submarine piracy, to all maritime commerce. Her project has elicited the protests of neutral States. It has excited no dismay among the allied nations.

THE BATTLE OF NEUVE CHAPELLE

I

THE Battle of Neuve Chapelle is in many ways not only more remarkable and more obscure than, but equally important as, any engagement that the War has seen. Its purpose and its conduct still dwell to a great extent in deep mystery: its result has been largely misconstrued. Undoubtedly it constituted, nevertheless, one of the principal factors which determined British strategy for many months of 1915. What was its issue? London hailed it as a glorious victory: Berlin acclaimed it as a British defeat. But in effect it was indecisive. It sundered for 4,000 yards and hollowed to a depth of 1,200 yards the German line, it brought about the capture of a village, of important fortified positions, of some 1,700 prisoners, of many machine-guns, it cost nearly 13,000 British casualties, and probably some 18,000 German. It resulted, however, in no great British forward movement, as had been confidently hoped, by which whole German armies would have been forced, through threatened communications, to retire for many miles. Nor even was Sir John French's first strategical objective, the capture of the Aubers ridge, attained. The tactics by which he won Neuve Chapelle were successful, but the strategy by which he purposed to gain the dominating heights beyond was disappointed. The conditions, the mis-carriages, the evil chances of battle, the mistakes, which

frustrated his strategical purpose still appear to the public eye, and rightly so, as through a glass, darkly. No better summary of the battle than a simple narrative of its events and phases, so far as various sources, chiefly unofficial, have revealed them, is as yet possible. Only to the casualty lists can we turn for substantial fact. At Neuve Chapelle about a tenth of the total British casualties up to that time were sustained. It is doubtful whether the moral and material gain was so proportionate to the cost in life and limb as to make the engagement, close, involved, bitter, and prolonged as it was, a real success. The loss seems greater than the gain. The chief value of the battle lies no doubt in the lessons it taught and in the experience it afforded. But the knowledge was dearly bought.

On March 8, 1915, in a simple little room above whose mantelpiece Nelson's prayer was displayed, Sir John French met the corps commanders of Haig's 1st Army. These were Sir Charles Monro, Sir Henry Rawlinson, and Sir James Willcocks, commanding respectively the 1st, 4th, and Indian Corps. The Field-Marshal outlined plans which he had been maturing for over a month for a great onslaught upon the German defensive line. All England had been waiting and hoping for the great Allied offensive which, it was confidently asserted, the warm spring weather would bring, as the real beginning of the war. March had now come, and spells of bright and dry weather were succeeding to the damp and chill of winter. Expectations were to be fulfilled by a determined assault at a certain point in the hostile trench lines. A secret memorandum setting forth the object, nature, and scope of this attack, and giving instructions for its conduct, had been communicated to Sir Douglas

Haig a fortnight before, while full directions for assisting and supporting it were being issued to the general officers commanding the troops of the 2nd Army. Many vital considerations had arisen, in connexion with the aspect of the Allied situation throughout Europe, which called for the immediate execution of the plan. Not only were the Russians, with marked success, repelling the violent onslaughts of Marshal von Hindenberg, but the French, with the object of holding as many hostile troops as possible in the Western theatre, were attacking vigorously at Arras and in Champagne. It was important that the British should lend support to the efforts of their allies ; moreover, it was vital that the offensive spirit should be rekindled in the rank and file, whose *morale*, indeed, could not but have suffered to some extent after the severe trench warfare of winter. The enemy seemed to be weakening on the British front, while the latter had been enormously strengthened. Now was the time and here was the opportunity to deliver the tremendous thrust which was to sunder that massive band of steel and fire stretching from the shores of the North Sea to the foothills of the Alps. No time was to be lost : within forty-eight hours a blow was to be struck at the village of Neuve Chapelle, near La Bassée ; while diversions were to be made at St. Eloi, L'EpINETTE, and Givenchy. Six miles east of Neuve Chapelle lay Fournes, with Lille eight miles beyond, and a ridge of hills, extending between these two towns, at Fournes divided into two spurs, before whose fork lay the Bois du Biez and Neuve Chapelle itself. If, after a bombardment so close and shattering as utterly to destroy the German lines, troops of the British 1st Army, descending like an avalanche upon the village and the wood, could gain the heights in front and on

either flank ; if, in the impetus of the advance and before the enemy had recovered, they could win the whole of the ridge, they would command, from the dominant summits, a wide and wealthy plain stretching far into the enemy's acquired territory, and immediately below, the important towns of La Bassée and of Lille. Such a position would probably compel the withdrawal of the enemy's line for many miles. It was protected from seizure at present by strong entrenchments and works : the whole of the 4th and the Indian Corps, with infantry of the general reserve, supported by the 2nd Cavalry Division and a brigade of the North Midland Division, would have to be employed for their reduction. Arrangements had already been made by which great forces of British and French artillery, heavy and light, were now secretly massing before the village ; on the night of March 9 the reserves of the 1st Army would be brought up. Next morning a sudden terrific bombardment, unprecedented for power and concentration, would prelude, at a specified hour, a rapid rush forward of the infantry ; success and opportunity granted, the cavalry would be thrown through the gap formed, and, overrunning the country beyond, would disorganize the enemy's resistance, and embarrass the advance of hostile reinforcements. Calculation showed that before these could be brought up in substantial numbers at least thirty-six hours must elapse. The success of the operations was essentially dependent upon every movement being made to exact time and without a hitch. Sir Douglas Haig would give full directions : it was vital that they should be carefully observed.

If in later years, when the wounds have healed and the tears are dried, our sons raise, whether by accident or design, a new Neuve Chapelle upon the now blasted

foundations which shall form an exact replica of the old, before bombardment wrought upon it, through the alien dwellers who had sought its shelter, the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, the traveller who comes to view the famous field will behold none of the customary stern features of heroic lore, neither massive castle, treacherous morass, nor frowning crag, but, settled in the smiling meadow-land, merely an unimportant collection of houses and small farms, scattered about a junction of country roads, and centring upon a church. It will be seen to be a small place, very like any other in this part of Flanders, and covering, owing to the universal tendency of these villages to straggle, each house being apparently built without reference to its neighbours, a considerable extent of ground. Neat villas, with gaudy shutters, line the main streets, in which stand a brewery and half-a-dozen *estaminets*. On the eastern side a row of old cottages rises, interspersed with a few modern red-brick houses ; and on the western side some detached dwellings of a better class, surrounded by enclosures and orchards bounded by tall hedgerows, look down upon where, some hundreds of yards across the open space west of the village, the trench lines of British and Germans, just before the battle, were drawn. A little old white château appears on the northern outskirts, where a small piece of ground, covered by enclosures and encompassed on three sides by roads, will perhaps be pointed out as having figured prominently, known as the 'Triangle', in the fighting of October 1914 ; while at the cross-roads in the south the famous 'Port Arthur' will also attract attention. The country surrounding Neuve Chapelle forms mainly an expanse of pasture and heavy arable land, flat and uninteresting : but the Bois du Biez, a small, rectangular wood of saplings,

planted very close and interspersed with a few taller trees as is usual in these parts, lies about a thousand yards to south-east. High hedges and pollarded trees all around the village restrict the view. Away to north-east, however, may be seen a prominent landmark, the sinister Moulin de Pietre, while about a mile and a half beyond this the red roofs of Aubers crown the long ridge dominating all the lower ground to the east. One other feature should be observed. The village is separated from the ridge and from the Bois du Biez by the River des Layes, a stream broad and deep.

Such was the battlefield of Neuve Chapelle. The possession of the village itself secured to the Germans a strong defensive position, the numerous scattered houses affording excellent vantage points at which to place machine-guns. Preponderance in these weapons was more essential to the defenders than preponderance in numbers, a fact which the battle emphasized. On the morning of March 10 the German forces before the prepared British front of attack, stretching from just south to a short distance north of Neuve Chapelle, amounted to only three infantry battalions. It is stated, on the authority of a captured German officer, that three German princes, including Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, were serving with one of these. Only one German army corps, indeed, the 7th, or Westphalian, forming part of the 6th Army, which Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria commanded, garrisoned the trenches before the whole line of the two British armies; this was the same army corps, troops of which had, four and a half months earlier, expelled a British force from Neuve Chapelle. It was doubtful whether there were more than four battalions of reinforcements which could be hurried to the danger-point within twenty-four hours

of the beginning of the attack. Early on that fateful morning, however, so secretly and skilfully had the British made their preparations, the Germans manning the trenches before the village were quite unconscious of their danger. At one point, indeed, a German captain perceived that something was wrong. Signs of unusual movement could be observed opposite: the British trenches were full of men. He sent back an urgent message to this effect to the commander of his supporting battery. The artillery officer was polite, but unappreciative: he unfortunately had strict injunctions not to open fire without express orders from the corps commander. Nothing occurred for some time which seriously belied this attitude of false security. Spasmodic shells soared across from the British lines at intervals: that these were ranging shots, and precluded a bombardment then unparalleled in warfare, was not suspected.

Meanwhile, since midnight the British forces detailed for the attack had been mustering. The numerous heavy howitzer and field-gun batteries, forming an armament of probably over 300 guns, were already in position. The bulk of the infantry battalions arrived, in accordance with orders, between 2 and 3 a.m. Endless files of men came marching in strict silence across the desolate approaches to the firing line, and were grouped in prepared ditches or trenches behind sandbag breastworks at allotted points. The night, fortunately, was very dark. Many a famous regiment, from every part of the British Isles, or from the hills and plains of India, lined the roadways. It was realized that this was the eve of a great movement. Suppressed excitement and eager expectation were in the atmosphere. Hot coffee served out to the troops in the early hours contributed

to heighten their spirits and their confidence : army orders exhorting duty and courage were also distributed. Many of the men got a few hours' sleep, but it was still dark when they stood to arms. Dull with sleep, and weighted with equipment and ammunition, men stumbled up into their places, and tireless non-commissioned officers hustled them into wakefulness. At length dawn, grey and ashen, streaked the horizon with silvery light. The hour of attack was not yet at hand, for the artillery bombardment was not timed to open till half-past seven. Guns began to boom intermittently miles away. As the shadows lifted and the light strengthened, British aeroplanes soared over the lines, drawing hostile fire, on preliminary reconnaissance. It was now six o'clock. For a long time guns continued to fire at intervals, registering their respective ranges. Preparations for the attack were now consummated. Thousands of men were lining the breastworks and trenches, awaiting the appointed hour. For many it was to be the hour of death.

Exactly at half-past seven a sudden tearing thunder-peal, followed for thirty-five minutes by a tumult like a hundred thunder-claps a second, so loud, so incessant, so startling, so immense, that the senses and brains of men were dulled and rendered inert by its shock and volume, rended the morning calm. A sea of appalling sound, wild and measureless, thundering upon rocks in splintering, explosive crashes, drowned the mind as it swelled and broke : or a thousand Vulcan's hammers, wielded by Titans before their roaring forges, clanged and clamoured upon a thousand giant anvils. A dense pall of smoke, in which red flashes leapt high with each explosion in a long line of fire, a sight fearful and grand, hung over the German lines after the first shells had plunged, casting up clouds of earth and débris, into the

trenches. The British infantry, waiting to assault, watched the bombardment with excitement that grew to fever heat as the minutes, wearing on, drew nearer the time for advance. It is said that in some places they jumped up on the parapets brandishing their rifles towards the Germans and shouting remarks that were drowned in the thunder of the batteries. It was a dramatic moment. Sickening lyddite fumes were wafted back by the breeze. Where the opposing trenches, usually divided here by 100 or 150 yards, lay closer, the troops were smothered with dust and earth, or even spattered by blood from mangled remains hurtling through the air. Many of the shells, so low was their trajectory, screamed by only a few feet above the British trenches; since the main object of the gunners was to tear away the formidable barbed wire defences that barred advance. Right along the front of attack, for two miles, this object, save at the extreme northern and southern ends, was in a few minutes effectually achieved. The entanglements, severed like twine or blasted from the ground, lay scattered over wastes of tumbled earth and broken pits strewn with dead and wounded which marked where the German lines of entrenchment had been drawn. But in this connexion there arose some unfortunate miscarriages: these proved of vital moment to the issue of the battle. Considerable sections of barbed wire, at important places, were unaccountably missed by the artillery. At the extreme north of the front of attack, and to a less extent at the extreme south, portions of the enemy's line had, by five minutes past eight, escaped serious damage. That moment had been fixed for the cessation of the shelling of the trenches, to permit of an infantry advance, and for the opening of the bombardment of the village itself, where

the German supports were quartered. Exactly to time, along the whole front, the gunners lengthened their fuses and lifted their shells upon the buildings of Neuve Chapelle. Débris flew upwards as masonry and stone were blown asunder, and soon a cloud of smoke and dust rendered the havoc invisible. Meanwhile, the three front British infantry brigades had clambered from their trenches for advance. Whistles were sounding along the line.

The northern wing of the attacking army was formed by the 23rd Brigade, made up of the second battalions of the Cameronian, the Devon, the West Yorkshire, and the Middlesex regiments. At this part, just north of Neuve Chapelle, the British trenches ran along the line of the Rue de Tilleroy, a bare and ugly highway, opposite which lay the main section of German barbed wire entanglements only partially destroyed by the artillery. In front of the Cameronians and the Middlesex the wire barrier was quite unbroken, that before the latter, where the surface dipped a little, being concealed in a fold of ground. The gunners had now lengthened their ranges, and the time had come for the infantry to advance. Orders could not be disregarded, in spite of the unbroken wire. It was a terrible ordeal. The brave men went forward to their deaths, and a lane of dead and wounded, wide and thick-strewn, across the 120 yards between the opposing trenches, marked their impotence and their glory. The Middlesex, on the right of the Cameronians, were somewhat crowded as they left their trenches and dashed forward. Two hostile machine-guns swept away the leading ranks, but the Middlesex, unwavering, struggled up to the wire, at which they tore with naked hands or hacked with bayonets. Three times they essayed to force a passage, but at length,

their colonel having sent back a message to the artillery, they withdrew and lay down, exposed to shot and shell, among the dead in the open. Powerful artillery support was presently forthcoming. The gunners shortened their fuses, and shrapnel was soon ripping up the barbed wire. Meanwhile, the Cameronians, a famous old regiment, better known as the Scottish Rifles, whose battle record, from Blenheim to Spion Kop, indicated their temper, had also been checked by the unbroken entanglements. Of the two front companies, A and B, while the latter was able, where the wire was partly destroyed, to get through with little difficulty, A Company, finding undamaged wire and a prepared enemy, met with a storm of machine-gun and rifle fire. Lieutenant-Colonel Bliss and his adjutant fell side by side leading the attack. Like the Middlesex, the Scottish Rifles, with fearful loss, reached the wire barrier, before which, impotent, but clutching and tearing desperately with bare hands and rifles, they were mercilessly shot down. There was no alternative but to withdraw and take what little cover the open and the bodies of the dead afforded. Eventually, however, bomb-throwers, working their way slowly along the section of trench taken by B Company, drove out the Germans and enabled the troops held up by the wire to advance. It was about half-past ten before it was possible to move forward. Terrible loss had been sustained by the Scottish Rifles; at the close of the battle, indeed, Lieutenant Somervail and about 150 men only survived. Nor had the other regiments of the Brigade escaped lightly. The Devons, pouring through gaps in the German entrenchments closer to the village, stormed a large orchard around a farmhouse strongly defended by the enemy, and a fierce struggle ensued. Presently the Middlesex, whom now

more complete artillery preparation had enabled to advance, joined them. In advancing, a bombing party of the Middlesex, composed of an officer and six men, came across some Germans in an intact trench who, having signified their readiness to surrender, upon noticing the number of the party took cover and reopened fire. These the British, closing immediately, chased into the open, where a maxim gun was waiting. It was now nearly eleven o'clock. The orchard still defied all attempts at capture, though the 24th Brigade had advanced from the Rue de Tilleroy, and joined in the attack. With this exception resistance in this quarter, just north of Neuve Chapelle, was now ceasing : for the 25th Brigade, immediately to the south of the much harassed 23rd, had made such progress as to turn the flank of those German forces opposite the latter brigade.

While unbroken barbed wire had impeded advance at the northern end of the front of attack, the artillery had, in the centre, and at the southern end save for one small portion, accomplished their task so effectively that at first negligible resistance was encountered. The 25th Brigade held the centre, and an Indian brigade, the Garwhal, the southern wing. Upon the deflection of the artillery fire at five past eight, these two brigades swept forward, and carried the enemy's entrenchments, save at one point in the extreme south of the front of attack, without difficulty. So effective had been the British bombardment that the greater portion of the defences were blown into unrecognizable ruin ; while only a few Germans, nerveless with shock, and ghastly yellow with lyddite dust, remained of the defenders. Some of these, utterly dazed, crawled painfully from their trenches and knelt on the ground, holding up

their hands. The leading half of the 25th Brigade, the Lincoln and the Berkshire regiments, having taken the first line of trenches opposite their section of the Rue de Tilleroy, swerved to right and left respectively in order to afford passage for the remaining battalions, the Royal Irish Rifles and the Rifle Brigade. Each regiment met with some opposition, the Berkshires encountering two German officers who fought with stubborn gallantry, serving a machine-gun, until bayoneted. Many prisoners were taken, both now and later during the attack upon the village, one regiment capturing a Prussian colonel, who, seemingly delighted to be taken, formed up his fellow prisoners on his own initiative, and marched them back through the British lines. While many of the captured Germans were being assembled, the Rifle Brigade and the Royal Irish Rifles came up, ready for the advance upon the village just beyond, which was, however, still being bombarded by the artillery. Some time elapsed before the shelling was completed effectually, during which the captured lines were cleared of prisoners and wounded. The infantry detailed for the next attack waited, laughing and cracking jokes amid the uproar and rattle of the firing. At length, at 8.35, an advance upon Neuve Chapelle was made.

The Rifle Brigade is credited with being the first regiment to enter the village. They viewed, rushing headlong through the ruins, a scene of utter chaos and desolation. Falling tiles and tottering walls endangered the search for stray parties of Germans hiding in cellars or basements. Not an edifice but was shattered, not a street but was blocked and almost obliterated by masses of rubble and bricks. It seemed as if an earthquake, dissolving all in ruin, had shaken down the very features and soul of the place, yet had left standing,

by divine ordinance, amid havoc and violence indescribable, the symbol of Christian faith and suffering. Two large wooden crucifixes alone of all around them remained intact, one standing in the graveyard of the church, whose devastated pile reared itself from a waste of overturned tombs and effigies, the broken coffins, cast up from the depths, mingling their desecrated dead with the fresh corpses of German soldiers, half interred or re-interred by the fallen masonry of the edifice; and the other crucifix, a dead German prostrated at its foot, standing erect at the cross-roads near the château just north of the village. Among the stricken dwellings dazed German soldiers met the eyes of the advancing British. Many surrendered without a blow, but numbers, peering and dodging through the smoke of the shells that still hung heavily around, began firing from windows, from behind carts, or even overturned tombstones. From some houses in the Rue de Bois, on the farther southern outskirts of the village, some machine-guns opened fusillade until, as the Rifle Brigade advanced in their direction, their sound ceased suddenly. Pressing onwards, the Riflemen found that the maxims had been silenced by a battalion of the Garhwal Brigade, advancing from south-west, the 3rd Gurkhas. With the latter the Rifle Brigade had, by curious coincidence, been recently brigaded in India. Enthusiastic greetings were exchanged, and the two battalions, jovial in the flush of victory, cheered themselves hoarse until, military necessity overriding social amenities, they had to continue the advance towards where, outlined against the sky not far beyond, a fringe of scraggy trees marked the Bois du Biez. Meanwhile, though most of the Garhwal Brigade, which included, in addition to the 3rd Gurkhas, the 2nd Leicesters, and the 1st and 2nd

39th Garwhalis, were now pressing in this direction, with one of its battalions things were going awry.

A group of ruined buildings, known by the sinister name of 'Port Arthur', stood on the extreme right of the front of attack, at the angle of the cross-roads south of the village, where the 1st 39th Garwhalis were posted. Elaborate defences, the work of months, had been constructed at this point. The Garwhali was a tribesman of sturdier build, owing to a strong Mongolian strain, than the Gurkha, but in cast of features and in characteristics akin. When the battalion attempted to advance at the preconcerted hour, they were faced by the same unfortunate circumstance that was impeding their comrades at the extreme north of the line. Two hundred yards of barbed wire stretched intact and guarded before them. On the left the Leicesters went through the enemy with a rush, but the 1st 39th Garwhalis, trained to hill warfare in the best of all schools, the Punjab frontier, were met by a withering fusillade from behind the untouched wire. The officers leading the charge ahead of their companies were all killed. An artillery lieutenant, employed as observing officer, at once proceeded to lead one line forward, but also fell after twenty yards. The battalion, losing its direction, swung to the right, where, after a fierce struggle with bayonet and knife, it captured a section of trench. In this position, however, the Garwhalis were cut off, with the enemy to right and left. The Leicesters, meanwhile, having broken through on the other side of 'Port Arthur', found themselves checked by this obstacle, and noticed the plight of the Garwhalis. Bomb-throwers, creeping down the trenches, immediately made efforts to eject the enemy and to establish contact with the Indians. For hours a hard struggle

raged around the spot, and all progress here was checked. Reinforcements had soon to be brought up. In the meantime the rest of the Garwhal Brigade, with the 25th Brigade, having gained a solid footing, were engaged in clearing Neuve Chapelle and its environs of the enemy, whose gunners, indeed, were still so taken by surprise that British supports were able to move up the roads in fours. The Germans were effectually prevented from sending up reinforcements by a curtain of shrapnel fire interposed by the artillery between the village and the country beyond. The fire of one heavy howitzer was directed on Aubers with a remarkable result, a prominent tower suddenly jumping skywards, and descending, dissolving in mid-air, in clouds of dust and rubbish. It was some time before resistance was completely stamped out. At the north of the attacking line, moreover, most of the 23rd Brigade were, until about 10.30, held up before the unbroken wire entanglements; and the orchard previously referred to, defying capture for hours, threatened the flank of any advance upon the Aubers ridge: while in the south 'Port Arthur' held out stubbornly. But by eleven o'clock the whole of the village of Neuve Chapelle and the roads containing its eastern side, running to north and to south-west, were in British hands.

II

There is no greater problem in modern warfare than the difficulty of inter-communication between the firing line of infantry and batteries or head-quarters far in rear. Flag-signalling is at the mercy of the weather; dispatch-carrying is unavoidably slow; telephone wires, even if triplicated, are frequently severed by exploding shells. But inter-communication, both for the guidance of the

artillery and for the direction of the operations, is vitally essential. Battery-commanders must be kept constantly informed of the positions of the advanced infantry: head-quarters—brigade, divisional, corps, and army—must keep in close touch with all units to ensure that each is fulfilling its allotted part and is adequately supported. The Battle of Neuve Chapelle found this problem as vital as ever and as troublesome as ever, artillery observation being difficult owing to the flatness of the country. Severed wires, as soon as the German artillery, recovering from surprise, brought guns to bear on the British position, interrupted communication between front and rear, in spite of the promptness and courage with which signallers went out repeatedly to repair the damage. The result was that the leading infantry brigades, greatly disorganized by their rapid and violent advance, could not be co-ordinated without considerable delay. The 23rd and 25th Brigades formed, with the 24th Brigade, the 8th Division, which with the 7th Division, comprising the 20th, 21st, and 22nd Brigades, constituted the 4th Army Corps, under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Rawlinson. Not only was the 23rd Brigade held up for a long time through inadequate artillery preparation, but the 25th Brigade, becoming involved in this miscarriage, moved its fighting line northward out of its proper direction of advance. Neuve Chapelle was, however, in British hands by eleven o'clock. Why Sir Henry Rawlinson was unable to bring the reserve brigades of his corps into action until half-past three is as yet obscure. Delay, occasioned not only by the checks at the extreme north and extreme south of the attacking line, but also by the absence of reserves to carry forward the advance while the scattered leading brigades were readjusting

themselves and consolidating the ground won, proved fatal to greater success. It enabled the Germans to organize a stubborn resistance along the Pietre road and the fringe of the Bois du Biez. The clear directions of Sir Douglas Haig should, according to the Commander-in-Chief, have precluded the necessity for this delay. When advance was continued at 3.30 the enemy, at little damaged and important points in rear of where the British artillery had failed to shatter the entanglements, were prepared and active, though indications that in parts the German resistance was temporarily paralysed were not lacking. The two principal points which, strongly placed and defended, now impeded all advance were the Moulin de Pietre and a certain bridge over the River des Layes. These two points were connected by the stream, along whose line the British were held up. The bridge, which crossed the river in the south of the front of attack, formed, apparently, the only available structural passage to the opposite side: the enemy, anticipating its immediate seizure, took instant measures to secure it, and it became speedily the crucial point of the battle-line. During the rest of the day, and for the following two days, fighting raged chiefly about these two positions: the Moulin de Pietre lay to north-east of Neuve Chapelle, in rear of where the Scottish Rifles and the Middlesex had struggled impotently before unbroken wire; and the bridge lay to south-east, in rear of where the undamaged entanglements of 'Port Arthur' throughout the first day checked the Leicesters and the 1st 39th Garwhalis.

Between 3 o'clock and 3.30 the brigades of the famous 7th Division, to whose steadfast bravery the Battle of Ypres in the previous October had borne witness, came forward into the battle-line. Not a shot was fired at

the 21st Brigade as it formed up in the open on the left, and the German resistance seemed for the time being to be nerveless in this quarter, where the orchard so strongly defended by the enemy had some while before been taken. The Devons and the Worcesters had at length penetrated the defences, and, pursuing the defenders round the scarred trees with the bayonet, had killed or captured all. The brigade proceeded to advance in the direction of the Moulin de Pietre, making for some time good progress. But on the left the 22nd Brigade, where its right flank faced prepared entrenchments centring upon a strongly held redoubt, was soon held up. Machine-gun fire from the redoubt, moreover, began to enfilade the 21st Brigade. As the latter pushed its way towards the Moulin de Pietre fusillade from houses in front and from the redoubt on the left became so determined and severe that the four battalions were at length brought also to a standstill. To the south the 24th Brigade, whose objective was the village of Pietre, was similarly checked. At a road junction about a third of a mile north-west of this village galling fire from trenches and houses, in which troops had hastily been massed and machine-guns placed, barred advance. Nor was the southern attacking wing, where the Indian Corps were posted, faring better. The brigade which had led the assault, the Garwhal, had now, with the aid of the Bareilly Brigade, firmly established and consolidated much of the new line gained, and was still assailing 'Port Arthur'. But the remaining infantry brigade, the Dehra Dun, of their division, the Meerut, in advancing to the attack of the Bois du Biez found itself enfiladed by machine-gun fire from a bridge over the River des Layes. Despite the support of the Jullundur Brigade of the Lahore Division,

the Indians were held up along the line of the broad stream, whose greenish-yellow waters, five feet deep, stretching north-east and south-west, divided them from the cover of the woods beyond. Not only the Dehra Dun and the Jullundur Brigades, but also the bulk of the 25th Brigade, between the 24th and the Indians, had all their efforts to advance impeded by this obstacle, the position of the bridge and its neighbourhood enabling the Germans to sweep with their fire considerable stretches of the river and its opposite banks. Some companies of the Lincolns, indeed, who had found a plank sufficiently stout and long to bridge the water, and had crossed to form a firing line on the opposite side, had to recross to gain the advantage of a slight rise in the rear; though close by the Royal Irish Rifles, having crossed, succeeded in entrenching and maintaining themselves on the further bank. Farther to the north some battalions were able to wade the stream, its waters reaching their necks, and, advancing under fire across open fields and ditches, where the morning's curtain of shrapnel fire had fallen and had left its mark in an upheaval of earth, stones, and débris, they drew their firing line a considerable distance beyond. Immersion in the stream could not damp the spirits of the men, who, in all parts of the battlefield, were elated beyond measure at the success that so far had attended the engagement. Many wounded men insisted on remaining in the front line despite their hurts. It was afterwards remarked, indeed, that this battle filled the hospitals and ambulances with the cheeriest lot of wounded ever previously observed: and on the very battlefield injured men talked and laughed gaily as they limped back out of the firing line, each with the eternal cigarette in his mouth. Many, to whom it was the first

occasion of their being in action, were to be seen laden with *pickelhauben* and other trophies.

However, it soon became evident that this point, the bridge over the River des Layes, was considerably more important than had been previously realized. A message was sent back to the artillery, but circumstances militated against its support being effective: for not only had the ranges to be ascertained under difficult conditions, the bridge being beyond the village and presenting little mark for fire, but the danger of hitting friendly troops, separated from hostile only by a stream, was considerable. Two Indian battalions, indeed, the 2nd and 9th Gurkha Rifles, of the Dehra Dun Brigade, which succeeded eventually in penetrating into the Bois du Biez, had to be withdrawn on this account. Sir Douglas Haig, watching the operations at this point closely, saw that the support of infantry as well as of artillery was needed. Afternoon was now passing into evening, and it was doubtful whether much more could be done that day. But reinforcements from the 1st Corps, entrenched in the neighbourhood of Givenchy, which lay some miles south, were available, and the General directed that one or more battalions of the 1st Brigade should be sent up. During the morning the 1st Corps had, while the assault on Neuve Chapelle was in progress, delivered from Givenchy simultaneously a supplementary attack, which, however, accomplished nothing more than the holding fast of the enemy in front, the German wire being insufficiently cut. Three battalions could be spared, and were accordingly sent to Richebourg St. Vaast as supports for the Indians. But the sun, blood-red against the ruined village, was declining, and darkness was beginning to settle. Meanwhile, at half-past five 'Port Arthur' had fallen. Reinforcements

from general reserve, including the Seaforth Highlanders and the 3rd Royal Fusiliers, had been brought up. The Highlanders delivered a notably dashing charge, and the stronghold was at length stormed successfully at the point of the bayonet. But no further progress had been made at the bridge, which the Germans, who had brought up some reinforcements, were defending more strongly than ever. Nor had the brigades attacking Moulin de Pietre been more successful, the enemy having firmly secured themselves at the threatened points. Night coming on gradually brought operations to a standstill. The Indian and the 4th Corps proceeded to consolidate the positions they had gained, which, however, included little more than the village and its outskirts.

Fighting continued long after darkness had set in, but died away towards midnight. Flares were sent up into the sky, and occasionally searchlights, illuminating in their cold beams the battered parapets, the dark patches of blood, and the still forms of the dead, played across the battlefield. The water filling many of the trenches, ditches, and shell craters glittered back their radiance. It was still dark when the troops again stood to arms, and twilight saw a reopening of the battle. Within the next few hours reserves and battalions from the 1st Corps, deployed in line of platoons with bayonets fixed, came hurrying up to reinforce the front line, and met, in their rough passage in short rushes over the pitted ground, withering fusillades from the enemy, who, also reinforced and with recovered nerve, were now prepared to offer desperate resistance. The events of the day, indeed, gave proof of this, for little headway could be made by the British at any point. It became obvious that further advance would be impossible until

the artillery had dealt effectively with the various houses and defended spots which held up the troops along the entire front. But efforts made accordingly to direct the fire of the guns encountered an unfortunate mischance. Mist had allied itself with the difficulty of broken wires, severed over and over again under the heavy cannonading now brought to bear by the reinforced Germans, to render impossible accuracy or skilful distribution of fire by means of aerial observation and telephonic communication. The artillery duel proved a trying ordeal to the infantry. All day long the great guns, whose tremendous detonations, in rapid, merciless succession, boomed or banged to the accompaniment of hammering, racketing maxim fire, roared and bombarded, with shrapnel wailing and bullets whistling overhead. Men lay with nerves and senses jangled painfully by the ceaseless din. Once or twice only during those weary hours was there a minute's silence, when somewhere far above a lark was actually heard singing. But to bring fire to bear with sufficient accuracy on the vital points, the Moulin de Pietre and the bridgehead, was found impossible. Little progress could be made : the enemy were too strongly entrenched in front. And even where the British here and there succeeded in advancing and in occupying some ruined building, they had to be withdrawn owing to the difficulty of warning the batteries far in rear of their new positions. The Germans attempted several counter-attacks, repulsed with loss, especially in the neighbourhood of the Bois du Biez, upon which, however, the British opened so effective an artillery fire that the enemy finally would not emerge from its shelter. Two regiments are believed to have been decimated here ; and for days afterwards the Germans were observed to

be bringing bodies out of the wood and burying them in its rear. Towards the end of the afternoon there came a lull. Those wounded who could dragged themselves painfully to the rear, where, among the ruins of Neuve Chapelle, the Medical Corps were working under great difficulties. And at length, with the thunder of the guns lessened, but still growling, the shadows of night came stealing again over the battle-ground.

Between 4.30 and 5 o'clock next morning, just at dawn, shouts of 'Stand to!' at many points in the line, whose hasty entrenchments had during the night been strengthened with barbed wire defences by the engineers, roused the British from their uneven slumbers. The Germans were counter-attacking on left, front, and right. A tremendous bombardment precluded their infantry attacks, but at every point they were repelled easily and with heavy loss. It was hoped that during this day, March 12, the British offensive might be resumed with favourable results: and the 2nd Cavalry Division, with one Brigade of the North Midland Division, were placed at Sir Douglas Haig's disposal in order to render, should opportunity offer, immediate support to the infantry in their struggle for the Aubers ridge. The cavalry were accordingly moved forward during the afternoon with this purpose in view, an attempt, which proved, however, abortive, then being made to carry the enemy's positions along the Pietre road. But the initiative had by now been lost, and the battle was to take a different turn.

It assumed, during the greater portion of the day, the form of incessant efforts on the part of the enemy to regain what had been lost. Reinforcements, Bavarian and Saxon regiments, were hurried into the fighting. These regiments, indeed, expressed great indignation at

the manner in which they were flung into action during counter-attacks from the Bois du Biez. Behind the German lines, notably at Lille, something like a panic had occurred when the news of the British onslaught became known. Many German officers billeted at Lille retired to Tournai to sleep, and the large hospitals in the town were also removed there. But the Bavarians and Saxons had been billeted at Tourcoing, where they were resting after a spell in the trenches before Ypres. They were told that a slight mishap had occurred, and that a few British soldiers had penetrated into Neuve Chapelle, out of which these were to be driven. The orders given them were to reinforce the firing line, which, however, on advancing from the wood, they could not find, but discovered instead that they were alone and unsupported. In consequence the German attacks showed indications of half-heartedness as well as of exhaustion, and there were many surrenders in mass. On more than one occasion the men of the attacking line lay down and held up their hands as soon as fire was opened upon them. In this quarter, the Bois du Biez, one Bavarian force met with fearful losses at the hands of the Worcesters. It is recorded that, expecting apparently to find the British much farther back, they advanced in column of route, an officer on horseback with drawn sword in their midst, and a non-commissioned officer using a whip to spur them forward. Blundering into the fire of twenty-one machine-guns, their ranks dissolved into piles of convulsive forms. Nor were other attempts in this neighbourhood more successful. Near the cross-roads south of the village, in front of 'Port Arthur', some seventy of the enemy who had got into a communication trench were captured in a body. Only at several points on the left of

the British line, not far from the Moulin de Pietre, did the Germans succeed in reaching the opposite trenches, from which, instantly expelled, they were pursued towards their own lines. The men of one British battalion, who had just had dinner and a rum ration served out to them, were attacked as they settled down to the meal and forced to evacuate their trench by Germans armed with bombs. A few moments later the indignant men retook the trench in a counter-attack of unparalleled fury, a substantial number of the enemy being captured. Little of the dinner remained, however, and nothing of the rum.¹ Another assault upon a second trench taken by the Germans gained the Victoria Cross for a brave captain, who, after one counter-attacking party of twenty-one men had been almost annihilated, dashed forward with eight men, under heavy fire, attacked the enemy with bombs and captured the position, with the fifty-two Germans occupying it. At various points in the line of battle, where hostile attacks grew feeble as the day advanced, the British took the offensive. No small hopes were raised by the evident exhaustion of many of the German troops. Prisoners stated that their trenches had been full of water, that they had been for days without food, that all their officers had been killed, that whole battalions had been destroyed. Nevertheless, while the enemy showed this exhaustion in some places, at other places their determined and active resistance prohibited progress. The battle degenerated into a fierce trench engagement, and artillery duels, with infantry attacks and counter-attacks, displaced manœuvring upon any set plan. The broken German line had been able to readjust itself ; and deadlock once more set in.

¹ It is not clear whether this incident took place on this day or on that preceding : but March 12 seems the more likely.

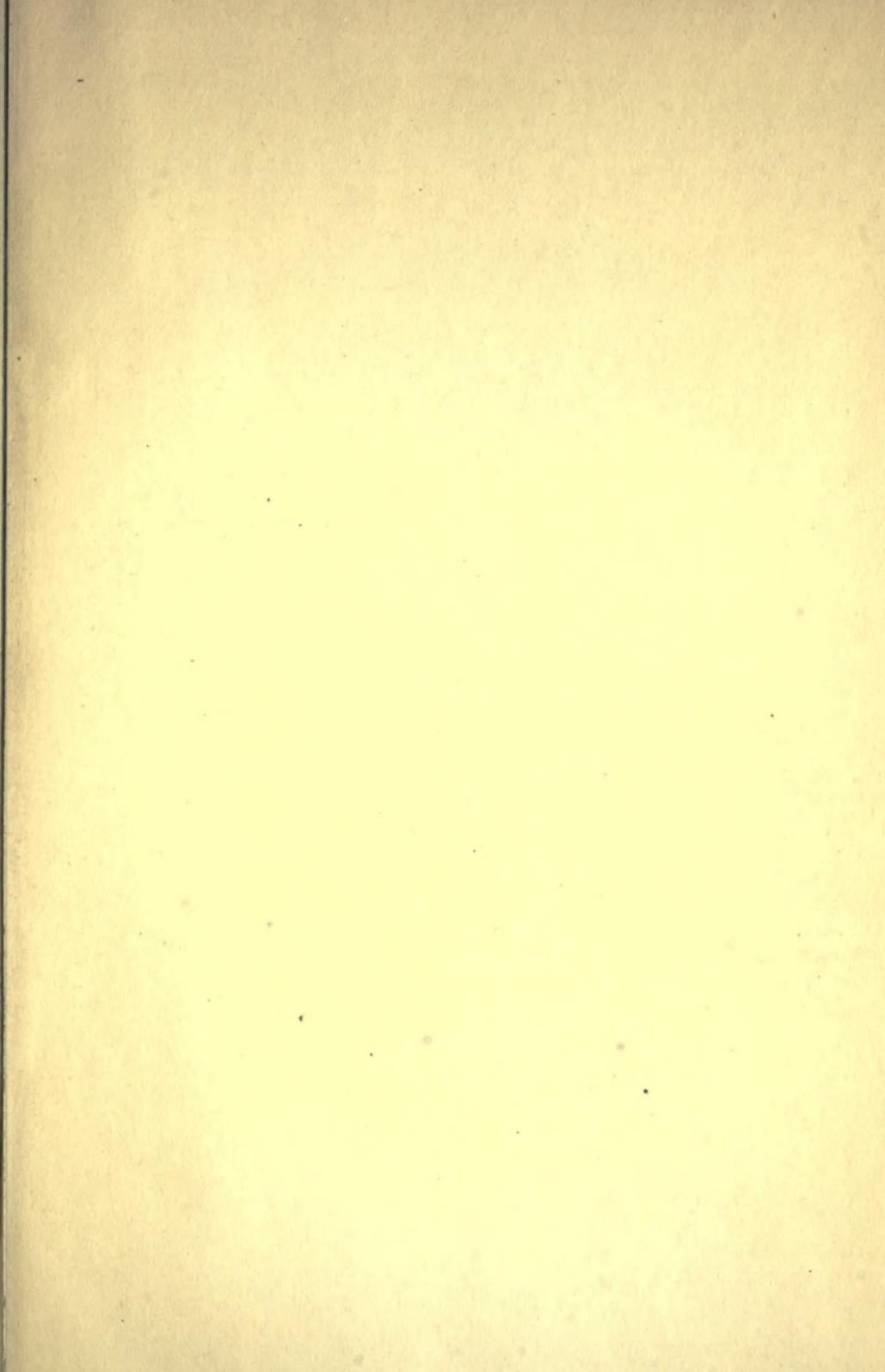
The Moulin de Pietre and the bridge over the River des Laves still formed the bases of the German resistance, which thick mist, as on the day before, hindered the artillery from shelling. But all the characteristic difficulties of warfare on these flat plains asserted themselves also. Comparatively small parties of Germans, posted in groups of isolated houses or hasty entrenchments, were able to cause advancing forces infinite delay. They made special use of houses so situated that machine-guns, skilfully placed, could sweep with their fire the adjacent fields : and these buildings, in some of which half a dozen maxims had been placed, had to be taken one by one after desperate fighting at close quarters. Under such conditions heavy British losses were inevitable : it was, indeed, during the two last days of the battle that the principal casualties were sustained, those of the first day numbering, it is said, not more than 2,500. Early in the afternoon, however, a general assault, which it was hoped, if successful, cavalry could follow up, was made against the German positions on the Pietre road. The Rifle Brigade, in face of a devastating fusillade, won the trench in their front, though impeded by wire entanglements, for cutting which two non-commissioned officers, who rushed forward voluntarily, were awarded the Victoria Cross ; and other battalions worked their way, with serious losses, up to the houses about the Moulin de Pietre. Here the 6th Gordons lost their commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Maclean, to whom a subaltern, hastening up and finding him lying in the open still alive, brought morphia to ease his suffering. ' Thank you,' the dying man said ; ' and now, my boy, your place is not here. Go about your duty.' Some of the houses were stormed, and about fifty British armed with bombs rushed another trench

and took eighty prisoners. But all other efforts at progress were resolutely blocked. When Sir Philip Chetwode, with the 5th Cavalry Brigade, reached the Rue de Bacquerot at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, he was informed that the situation was not sufficiently favourable to make cavalry co-operation advisable. At night-fall it was decided, since the shattered buildings and flooded trenches won gave the British little advantage, to withdraw to the original position.

The long-drawn-out battle had slowly spent its force. The day had seen the maintenance of all the ground previously won, and the taking of a little more of the ground so tenaciously held by the enemy. The characteristics of interminable trench warfare had reasserted themselves: and with mingled feelings, no doubt, Sir John French, after surveying the position carefully that evening, ordered the suspension of further offensive operations.

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