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**THE GERMAN LONG-RANGE
GUN THAT BOMBARDED
PARIS.**

Since the 23rd March, 1918, the first day of the bombardment of Paris at intervals, from a distance of more than 115 km. the French journals have now been able to give a first summary idea of the materials used by the Germans and to obtain their object. Especially valuable are the articles that appeared on this subject in the *Genie Civil*, the *Illustration*, in *Nature* (H. Volta) and in the *Revue des deux Mondes* (C. Nordman). We have attached importance to these sources, excluding some of the first notices and deductions which in the light of later information appear to be less reliable. From the precedents of the present War we may notice an increased progression of gun range culminating in a bombardment from a distance at least triple to that obtained previously. As is known, one of the characteristics of artillery action since the commencement of the War which assured to the Germans important successes was the use of numerous mortars of large calibre with curved fire and a greatest range of from 12 to 14 km. For those conversant in military matters, this was no surprise as there were examples in previous campaigns, in the Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War. Especially in the last the Japanese in the battles of Mukden made use of several shells of Italian model up to 280 mm. The great development systematically made by the Germans in the employment of numerous batteries of 210, 240, 280, 305, and 420 mm., in the first months of the War caused surprise to the Entente. But after the experience of the first year of War a new tendency was shown; to the large calibres and curved fire used by the land batteries were added those of the guns of marine and coast batteries. Bombardments from the great distance of 30 km. were made from Compiègne and Dunkerque (1915), and from Nancy (1916) by pieces of 380 mm., and probably of 50 calibres in length. From this date, the employment on land of naval guns of large calibre became general in all the armies; all the reserve guns for ships of the line were taken from the arsenals, and several older ships were disarmed and

their guns mounted on special carriages for use in the field. So, in all the great offensives of the past year the trenches were subject to furious bombardments from greater distances. For instance in March last the English Press reported bombardments by a certain number of German guns from a distance of 42 km. from the English lines. In addition to these artillery actions from long ranges the Germans attempted the bombardment of Paris by guns installed at a distance of about 120 km. (75 miles). This action was doubtless taken with a political view. It was announced thus by the Germans: "We will bombard the piazza-forte of Paris with a long-range cannon." The first shell fell on Paris on the 23rd March, at 7.30 a.m.; others followed at irregular intervals of about 20 minutes until 4.30 p.m. This continued almost daily to the 23rd April; from that date there was intermittent fire for a month to the 23rd May; the fire was then renewed with a certain regularity at each of the new German offensives. The heaviest loss was on Good Friday when a shell struck a church which was full of worshippers, causing the partial destruction of an arch. About 90 were killed and very many injured.

Suppositions and hypotheses that were made by the public and by the dilettante in improvised ballistics during the first days in France and elsewhere were false and useless. These fantastic notions contributed not a little to strengthen the enemy's game, surrounding this war-like creation of the Germans with an aureole of untruth. But at the end of the first days the French experts concluded that the artillery projectiles were projected with a very high velocity from a cannon of perhaps 100 or more calibres in length and that this would easily explain the exceptional range. We may now turn to the localities from whence the enemy's guns were fired, and to the projectile, given certain facts from which it is sought to deduce the data not yet known regarding the gun, the carriage, the charge of projection and the bursting charge.

L'illustration thus describes the position of the guns?—"Photographs taken by aviators have shown precise indication of the positions of the guns that fired on Paris, which perfectly agree with the statements of prisoners. At first the Germans had in battery

three of these pieces about 1,500 m. N.W. of Créssy en Laonnois behind Mount Joie which is 190 m. in height with a profile in the form of a horse-shoe with the concave part towards Créssy. The guns are installed in the interior of this concavity in a triangle with sides of about 800 m., on the margin of a forest. The guns were transported by a specially constructed road from a point on the Laon-La Fère railway distant about 8 km. from the Laon station, and were mounted on platforms fixed in cement, and well concealed by branches of trees. The enemy multiplied his precautions, to prevent the positions from being identified, placing around several anti-aerial batteries, and making clouds of smoke before the firing of the guns, and at the same time firing several pieces of large and small calibre so as to disturb the sound waves, and to render it more difficult to identify by the sound. From the commencement they abstained from firing at night so as not to reveal the position of the guns from the flashes. The position indicated above is about 115 km. from the centre of Paris. Not yet having been aware of these indications the French artillery commenced lively actions with guns of large calibre from counter batteries, and even succeeded in placing one of the pieces out of action; notices from neutral countries also stated that another of the pieces had burst during the firing and the third was stated to have been seen on its way to the arsenals for the necessary repairs. That would explain the interruption to the fire between the 23rd April and the 27th May."

Projectiles.—From examination of the fragments of the first artillery projectiles found in Paris (not aerial bombs) it appears that the thickness of the metal of the shells was from 3 to 7 cm. about.

Exact reconstruction of the projectiles is not easy owing to the fact that of so many shots fired not one failed to burst thus limiting the examination of the fragments. The comparatively small calibre first indicated was 240 mm., then 220 mm., and finally 210 mm. The

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