

## CHECK GERMAN ADVANCE!

### WITHDRAWAL OF THE BRITISH FORCES ALONG BATTLE LINE IN FRANCE LONG PLANNED

The Associated Press Correspondent with British Describes Operation of Army as Masterly Withdrawal, Made Possible by the Gallant Shock Troops in Front Lines Who Checked Advance of Germans, While Artillery, Machine Gun and Rifle Fire Worked Appalling Slaughter Among Masses of German Infantry as They Were Sent Forward.

This Enabled British to Fall Back Deliberately and Without Confusion—This Army Has Been Conserved—Where British Stormed Germans' Newly Acquired Positions Huns Have Been Driven Back—Germans Occupy Chauny, Situated on Road to Compiègne, Gateway to Paris—Paris Bombarded by German Long Distance Guns.

The withdrawal of the British forces along the battle front in France was long ago planned, in the event of the Germans attacking in great force. This announcement comes from the British front through The Associated Press correspondent, who describes the operation of the British army as a masterly withdrawal, made possible by gallant shock troops in the front lines, who checked the advance of the Germans, while artillery, machine gun and rifle fire worked appalling slaughter among the masses of German infantry as they were sent forward, thus enabling the main body of the British to fall back deliberately and without confusion.

This army, it is declared, has been conserved, and up to the present very few counter-attacks have been made against the Germans. Where the British have stormed the Germans' newly acquired positions they have driven them back. But each mile of advance makes the bringing up of supplies to the German artillery and infantry more and more difficult and unquestionably the British strategy, as demonstrated since the beginning of the great attack, is to let the enemy, so far as he may, wear himself out against a powerful defense.

Both British and French forces, where their lines meet south of St. Quentin, are watching events with optimistic eyes.

The town of Chauny, southwest of St. Quentin, situated on the road to Compiègne, the gateway to Paris, has been occupied by the Germans and, according to the Berlin official communication, everywhere between the Somme and the Oise rivers the Germans are pressing their advantage.

Throughout Sunday, along the entire fifty mile battle front, the fighting never ceased for a moment, and where Field Marshal Haig's men were unable to withstand the terrific onslaughts delivered by greatly superior forces, ground was given, but always in orderly fashion.

It has now been definitely ascertained that considerably more than a million Germans have been brought to the western front in an endeavor to crush the British army holding the line from the region of Arras to the south of St. Quentin, but it daily becomes increasingly evident that the enemy in his drive, has met with opposition not counted upon and been unable to realize, to the full, his objectives.

In addition to Chauny, the Germans are claiming the capture of both Peronne and Ham, and to have increased the number of prisoners taken to more than 50,000, in addition to 600 guns and large stores of war materials.

#### Burning Villages?

It is claimed also by the Germans that American and French regiments which were brought up to reinforce the British have been defeated, but no further information than this mere statement has been vouchsafed.

In their retirement, according to Berlin, the British are burning towns and villages behind them. This statement, however, seemingly is capable of being received with reserve as the Germans themselves, in the famous "strategic" retirement, left little standing in the territory they evacuated, even denuding the country of trees.

One of the mysteries of the offensive, which now has been solved is that the shelling of Paris is being done by a long-range German gun. This statement is contained in the Berlin communication and a Paris despatch says that one of the guns has been located near Laon, about seventy-six miles from the center of Paris. Throughout Sunday morning and into the mid-afternoon shells were dropped in Paris at intervals of from twelve to twenty minutes.

Already the spirit of bonafidism

which pervades the German army in times of success is being strongly manifested. Field Marshal Von Hindenburg has complimented the German Emperor on the "initial success" and the latest German official communication is loud in its plaudits of the German troops, declaring that the attacking spirit of the infantry could not have been exceeded.

#### Other Battlefields.

On the other battlefronts the fighting activity continues comparatively slight, except for reciprocal bombardments and trench raiding operations. Along the Aisne front and in Champagne the artillery duels between the French and the Germans have been somewhat violent.

The Americans on their sectors, especially northwest of Toul, are daily keeping up their artillery practice, with visible good results, against the German positions in front of them and then carrying out successful raids. In the Italian theatre the snow on the ground and the freshets in the valleys continue to hinder the operations on a large scale, but from the preparatory morning between Croisilles and Perzner, an official despatch from Paris today announced. The Germans are using ninety-seven divisions of troops and their losses are heavy. The British resistance is declared to be efficient.

#### RAILWAY ACCIDENT IN P. E. I. ENDS FATALLY

#### St. Louis Man Falls Between Cars and Loses Leg at Thigh

Charlottetown, March 23.—A fatal railway accident occurred at Portage Station last night. John Belgers, passenger, was on his way to his home in St. Louis accompanied by his wife. In attempting to get on the train just as it was starting, he fell between two passenger cars and had his left leg severed at the thigh. He was hurried by the train to the nearest doctors but they decided his case was hopeless. He died this morning.

#### NEW HALIFAX HOSPITAL

Halifax, March 24.—It is understood that a hospital is to be built in Halifax for the American Red Cross or for sailors and soldiers of the United States who may become ill in this port or be brought to Halifax needing treatment. The site will be on the eastern side of the harbor adjoining the Nova Scotia hospital.

### LOSSES OF THE GERMANS ARE VERY HEAVY

British Resistance Declared to Be Efficient by Paris—Violent Fighting Between Croisilles and Perzner.

Washington, Mar. 24.—Violent fighting between the British and Germans was continuing at 2.30 o'clock this morning between Croisilles and Perzner, an official despatch from Paris today announced. The Germans are using ninety-seven divisions of troops and their losses are heavy. The British resistance is declared to be efficient.

The despatch says: "March 24, 2.30 a.m.—The German offensive is continuing between Croisilles and Terzner with violent fighting, in which the Germans are said to have used ninety-seven divisions. The English resistance is very efficient in everything, and the German losses are very heavy. The fighting line is brought back to about six or seven kilometers behind the third line. Confidence remains complete."

Paris, Mar. 24.—The war office communication issued today says: "German troops, after a violent bombardment, undertook a surprise attack to the south of Juvincourt, but were repulsed with success. "There has been fairly spirited artillery fighting in the region of La Prete Wood; in the Vosges not far from La Fontenelle and at Hartmannsweilerkopf."

A later war office communication says: "There was intermittent artillery activity north of the Chemins-Dames. Artillery engagements, sometimes violent, occurred in Champagne, in the region of the Monte, on the right bank of the Meuse, between Carriere Wood and Besoncourt, and at Hartmannsweilerkopf."

### MANY ASSAULTS BY THE GERMAN ARMY REPELLED

Large Bodies of Hun Infantry North of Peronne Sustain Frighful Losses

### HEAVIER FIGHTING TO COME, IS PREDICTED

British Troops Fall Back, Germans Crossing the Somme South of Peronne

### FRENCH AND BRITISH ARE MORE OPTIMISTIC

British Holding Strongly to Front to Which They Withdrew

London, Mar. 24.—"Fresh hostile attacks developed this morning in great strength on the whole battle front," said Field Marshal Haig's report from headquarters, "and they have continued throughout the day. "South of Peronne they succeeded, after heavy fighting, in crossing the River Somme at certain points. These are being dealt with."

#### Attacks Repelled.

"North of Peronne," says the official statement tonight from British headquarters in France, "enemy attacks were directed with the greatest violence against the line of the River Toulle (a tributary of the Somme). Our troops on this portion of the battle front have been withdrawn and are fighting on new positions. "Further north repeated assaults by large bodies of infantry have been repulsed with heavy loss to the infantry. In this fighting the seventh and tenth divisions greatly distinguished themselves, beating off many hostile attacks."

#### Allies More Optimistic.

With the British Army in France, Mar. 24.—(By The Associated Press)—The British and French who co-operate at the junction of the two armies, were viewing the trend of the German offensive with optimistic eyes this morning. Hard fighting was in progress, but the latest reports showed little or no change in the situation in favor of the enemy since yesterday, while on the other hand, the defenders had pushed the attacking forces back after a bitter struggle and were holding strongly along the whole new front to which they had withdrawn.

Fighting of a most desperate nature has been continuous since the initial attack, but so far the British have used few troops other than those which were holding the front lines.

#### Gallant Defense.

These shock troops have been making as gallant a defense as was ever recorded in the annals of the British army, and as a result they have enabled the main body of the forces to fall back deliberately and without confusion and occupy positions which had been prepared long before the German offensive began.

The Germans, on the other hand, operating under the eyes of the Emperor and the Crown Prince, have been hurled vast hordes into the fray with utter disregard for life and followed into abandoned positions, getting farther and farther away from their supplies and finding their communications in increasingly difficult.

#### Frightful Masses.

More than fifty German divisions have already been identified by actual contact, and many of these men were simply given two days' rations and sent over the top into the frightful maelstrom made by the allied artillery, machine guns and rifles. The slaughter of the enemy infantry as it advanced in close formation over the open has been appalling.

The British losses have been within the bounds expected, due to the tactics of the commanders. The Allies have lost a considerable number of men in prisoners and a certain number of guns. But very few pieces of artillery have been taken by the Germans since the first day. In fact, the whole withdrawal has been executed in a masterly fashion, showing how thoroughly the British had planned for the very events which have occurred. (Continued on page 2)

### THE RIVAL ARMIES BATTLING OVER THE BLOODY TERRAIN OF THE STRUGGLE OF 1916

Germans Occupying Ground Which They Left Under Pressure Just One Year Ago Have Won Tactical Success, But Are Considerable Distance Yet from Strategical Victory—British Army Makes Deep Withdrawal Measuring Fifteen Miles at One Point, But They Are Still Intact, Lines Stretching with Elasticity of Rubber Band and Are Not Broken.

French Co-operating with British at Junction of Their Lines West of St. Quentin—Apparently Germans Planned Turning Movement With Ham as Its Pivot, Paris Being Ultimate Objective—Immediate Objective is Rolling Up of British Army—Several Violent Hun Attacks Repulsed.

(By Arthur S. Draper)

(By Special Cable to the New York Tribune and St. John Standard.)

London, March 24.—In hundreds of thousands of British homes in all parts of the Empire Palm Sunday was one of keenest anxiety, while the whole world focussed its attention on the colossal struggle on the devastated plains of Picardy, watching hopefully and confidently Haig's gallantly heroic effort to stem the tide of German hordes, and British women praying not only for the success of their army but also for the safety of their men.

The fate of Britain and the allied cause swing in the balance, but the faith and courage match the tenacity and obstinacy of those Englishmen, Scotsmen, Welshmen and Irishmen, upholding all the fine traits characteristic of the best British traditions.

Haig's frank admission of reverses and Ludendorff's claims of tactical successes are impressing the people with the gravity of the hour. The battle of Picardy has become almost a war movement along a sixty mile front, German cavalry being engaged in the west for the first time since 1914. In three days the tables have turned and now the rival armies are battling over the bloody terrain of 1916 with Bapaume and Peronne again appearing in the communiques.

The straight line drawn from Arras southeast to Ham approximates the enemy position of Sunday morning, which means that the Germans are back on the ground they left under pressure just a year ago. The enemy has won a big tactical success, but is a considerable distance yet from a strategical victory.

The British armies have suffered heavily, being forced to make a deep withdrawal, measuring fifteen miles at one point, but they are still intact. The lines stretched with the elasticity of a rubber band but are never broken. The French are co-operating with the British at the junction of their lines west of St. Quentin. Apparently the Germans planned a turning movement with Ham as its pivot, Paris being the ultimate objective. The immediate objective is the rolling up of the British army.

The terrain east and south of Peronne is crossed by little streams and canals, and is hardly better than a marsh, therefore offering a fairly good defensive system. Haig's Sunday morning report indicates that he has already repulsed several violent attacks at this point. Should the enemy succeed in penetrating these positions, that city, Amiens, Soissons and Rheims would be embarrassed. By their rapid retirement, costly as it may prove in the loss of men and guns, the British have succeeded in putting the enemy at a disadvantage, for he has outmarched his railways and his ammunition supplies. There is a consequent pause now. It is a question whether the Germans will open the onslaught elsewhere or persist in the present sector.

#### Counter Drive Possible.

A counter drive by either or both British and French troops in another sector seems possible. The enemy has used fifty divisions, he has had huge losses, and unless the second phase of the battle brings him further success, he must find poor compensation in his haul of prisoners, guns and recaptured territory.

#### Textbook Tactics.

To date the Germans have followed textbook tactics, introducing no new engine of war, unless the sensational shelling of Paris be considered a part of the present operation. In Picardy the big features of the thrust were the intensity and range of the bombardment and the lavish expenditure of gas shells.

Whether the Germans have duplicated the Paris gas on the Picardy front, or merely used it, it is impossible to state, but certainly in no period of the war have such distant points of the British back been shelled as in the last four days. Towns and villages ordinarily immune from everything except aerial attacks have suffered from shell fire.

The Paris gas probably was used at this moment in the hope of demoralizing the Parisians and deceiving them into believing the German army close upon Paris. In the popular mind it shares the interest in the course of the battle because it opens an entirely new field. A battery of these guns in Flanders might shell the whole south-east coast of England.

Some weeks back I told of a new German gas which was tried at Ypres

### MAGNIFICENT DEFENCE BY THE BRITISH

London, Mar. 24.—(Via Reuter's Ottawa Agency)—Reuter's correspondent at the British headquarters in France, in a message today, states:

"The enemy is now throwing his last ounce of weight and resources into the struggle. Upon the course of the immediate future hangs the issue of the war. A captured armen stated: 'This offensive is the result of desperation. We must have peace quickly now.'"

"Our troops throughout the 23rd and 24th were very hard pressed by the endless enrolling legions through and Lens in great quantities. These shells were used in the present offensive, their fire being directed largely against the British batteries, the guns of which were forced to work for many hours in their masks,

whose weary ranks fresh divisions were being continually poured.

"The magnificent defence which the slowly retiring British line has made thus far may assuredly constitute one of the greatest epics in history.

"I find at the headquarters today unbroken serenity, confidence and satisfaction with the general change in position during Saturday afternoon. In the region of Ham things temporarily looked ugly when the enemy outflanked us and his cavalry poured out in order to extend an enveloping movement. But vigorous counter-attacks drove the enemy back and restored our position.

#### Vast Battlefront.

"When reading German claims, remember the extent of the battle front, the enemy's unforgettable concentration of guns, which is the greatest ever collected—a vast hecatomb marking the wake of his advance. The French troops on our right, after the lengthy rest, are at the top of their dashing morale. Yesterday there was heroic fighting in the center of the battlefront, where our machine gunners a number of times had to cease killing through sheer exhaustion. Never have the British armies so superbly met such an overwhelming test. Included are the South African contingents and the Newfoundland battalion, both of which have been fighting magnificently.

"The fourth day of the offensive has failed to bring any surprise, although the long range guns are doing their utmost day and night."