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GEORGE NEAL

British Dug the Huns Out From Beneath Town

German Garrison at Thiepval Was Below in Long Series of Deep Tunnels And Vaults--The Wonder is That, Considering the Full Strength of the Place, Our Losses Were So Small.

WITH THE BRITISH ARMY IN THE FIELD, Oct. 1.—(Despatch to the London Chronicle)—The doom of Thiepval is fulfilled. That place upon the ridge with its thirty-four black tree stumps which has been harrowed, ploughed and cratered under incessant storms of high explosive fell into the British hands last evening, all but one corner to the northwest, which was taken to-day.

Weeks ago I said that the garrison there must know their doom was creeping nearer, and sooner or later they must surrender or die. I was longer reaching them than I expected. I watched the attack on the Hohenzollern Trench and the defences running up to the Wunderwerk. It seemed to me then, watching the rapid progress of the British, that in a few more days from the Wunderwerk and Mouquet Farm, on the east side of the British lines would close in and put a strange grip upon its place.

Amazingly Light Losses

It has taken longer than that, more storms of shells, more splendid lives to win the stronghold, and the wonder to me—now that I know the full strength of the place, the resistance of its underground fortifications and the fighting spirit of the troops holding it—that the British captured it yesterday and to-day with such little loss, for the loss was amazingly light considering the long stubborn fighting there and the machine gun fire which swept upon the British from many hidden places and the desperation of the garrison, who defended themselves with great gallantry. Let me give them honor in saying, for they were fine fighting men, in the defence the advantage was all with them, but for the power of the British gun and the way in which the British troops fight, meaning to win whatever the cost, they were in an impregnable position.

Cunning of Enemy Earthworks.

The taking of Mouquet Farm by the Australians and afterward by the Canadians was the worst menace to them, inclosing them on the right, but the astounding episode which happened yesterday will show more clearly the cunning of the British troops and the cunning of the German earthworks. It is many days since I saw its ruins from High Ridge. These bits of broken brick work were the remnants of a place more important than the ordinary French farmstead. It was a series of buildings such as one finds in France attached to a big chateau with barns and out-houses and stables. The last British line of trenches struck through the middle of the place, having two bits of the ruin to the north of the trench and one to the south behind the line.

The Germans seemed to be well away to the northward in the shell craters beyond the British parapet, and nobody suspected brother Boche was near at hand. It was with great surprise a few days ago that one of the English officers saw two Germans rise suddenly from a hole behind the British line near the southern ruin of bricks. One of them beckoned to him. **Officer Treacherously Shot.**

"Be careful sir," said a sentry, but the officer imagined that the two Germans had strayed into the British lines and wanted to be taken prisoners. He went forward slowly until quite close to them, then he fell dead, shot by the men who beckoned to him, who with his comrade disappeared immediately into some hole which could not be found.

A day or two later a working party digging in the neighborhood broke through a deep tunnel. Instead of searching it they filled it up again. The British found themselves being sniped at, from other holes in the ground. It came into the heads of the British officers that beneath the ground, even behind the lines, were nests of Germans who might turn upon them at any moment or blow them up by a charge of gunpowder. Orders were given to draw back a little from Mouquet Farm, and the guns were turned on it again, flinging high explosives and shrapnel over the place as in the old days. Then some soldiers were sent forward to clear the trenches if they could find them. They came back without success, so the place remained one of our "mystery corners" until yesterday.

Young Officer's Quick Action.

When the attack was to begin on

Thiepval from the trenches to the south and swinging to the left from Mouquet it was dangerous but it was decided to carry on the attack without worrying about the underground inhabitants. The attacks on Thiepval began and instantly the British troops on the right had advanced beyond the farm to the Hohenzollern Trench, par-ties of graycoats came out of the tunnels and began firing machine guns into the backs of the British soldiers. By good luck there was a young British officer not far away who kept his head and had a quick way of dealing with a situation of this kind. He was in charge of a working party, but he saw his chance of a scrap.

"Come on, boys," he shouted. "Never mind your shovels."

His men threw down their tools and followed him. I don't know how many there were of them, but only thirteen came back. They brought with them one German officer and fifty-five men as prisoners. And there were no living men left at six o'clock last night in the tunnels of Mouquet.

Subterranean Fighting.

It was only a small episode in the rear of the assault on Thiepval, but it was extraordinary and not without importance on the right wing of the advance, for men do not like to go forward with machine gun fire from behind. It shows the way in which the ground all about here has been used for subterranean fighting.

So it was in Thiepval. Above ground there was nothing to see to-day and for a long time but the black and broken tree trunks with their lopped branches. No man could have remained alive above ground yesterday when the British guns hurled upon it a stream of heavy shells which burst all over the village with violent upheavals of earth and vast clouds of curly black smoke filled with death.

The German garrison kept below in a long series of vaults and tunnels which they had strengthened and

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linked up and dug deeper, in a way that would have surprised the old French farmers who used to keep their wine and stores down there centuries ago.

Defend It to the Death.

The men I met to-day had been at Thiepval only seven days without relief and had guessed it would be their turn to defend the place against the great English assault. They had pledged themselves to defend it to the death.

Before telling the narrative of the British attack and the adventures of the attackers, I think it interesting to give this glimpse of the defenders of their life underground. When I talked with them this morning they had just been captured. I was struck by the superior drilling and intelligence of them all. They certainly were the best type of Germans I had seen on this front. Wurtembergers all and handsome fellows who had kept their spirit; one of the last groups of men who had fought against the British in the early days and survivors of the first line troops of the German army, who have fallen like autumn leaves upon the battlefields of Europe in the endless massacre of this war.

British Were Astounded.

The attack began yesterday at half past twelve after a great bombardment which was continuous for twenty-four hours, arising to infernal heights of shell fire. The attacking troops leaped out of the trenches to the south of Wunderwerk and advanced in waves up to a trench by a row of apple trees. The right wing swung round, as I have said from Mouquet. It was on the left that the men had the hardest time. One battalion leading the assault had to advance directly upon the chateau and from the cellars beneath it came waves of savage machine gun fire. They were also raked by the enfilade fire of machine guns from the left top corner of ground where the village once stood. The British were astounded.

"I didn't believe it possible," said one of them, "that any living soul could be there after all that shell fire but as soon as it was switched off blessed if the Germans didn't come up like rabbits out of the bunny holes and fire most hellishly."

For a long time it was impossible to get near the Chateau or take the trench dug in front of it. It was a Chateau once belonging to a German. It is splendid to see the smiles come over the faces of the British every time they talk of the tanks. Whatever their sufferings have been they cheer up and laugh in a comical way for the tank is a wonderfully fine tonic to the spirits of the men and an outrageous comed.

Thrusting its blunt nose into the grim business of fighting, a tank had been coming along slowly in a lumbering way, crawling over an interminable succession of shell craters, lurching over and down, into and out of old German trenches, nosing heavily into the soft earth and grinding up again as though quite winded by this exercise, then waddling forward in the wake of the infantry. There it faced the ruins of the Chateau and stared at them very steadily for quite a long time as though wondering whether it should eat them or crush them.

Unfortunately, the great grasshopper got into trouble with some part of its mysterious anatomy and had to rest before crawling home to its lair, so that the rest of the fighting in Thiepval was without his powerful support and our infantry faced many other machine guns alone.

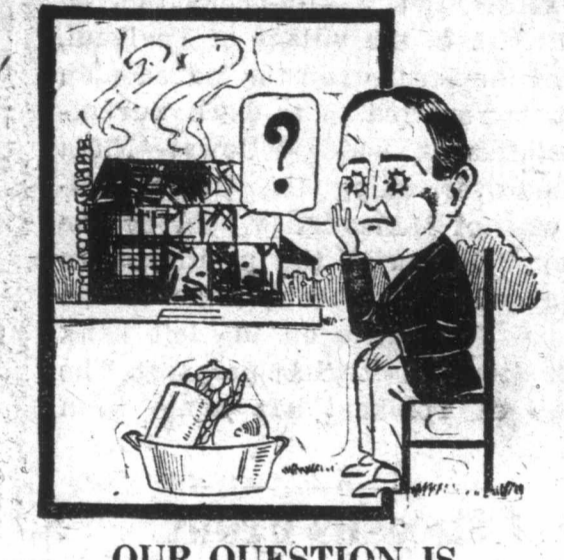
I suppose only drillers can rank with Thiepval for long and close fighting. The British had to tackle underground a foe who fired at them out of holes and crevices while they remained hidden. Many deep ditches were blown in at the entrances so that the men were forced to come up at the other side. The British smoked them out and dug holes to tease them out. It was like rat hunting, but they were dangerous rats, life size and often desperate. They surrendered in hundreds when the British got all around them and right down in their tunnels I cannot tell the number of the German garrison. Nine hundred and ninety-eight unwounded men and forty wounded were brought down safely as prisoners but others were killed on the way by their own barrage.

Got Short Shift.

In one case a party of sixteen prisoners behaved treacherously. They turned on the escort of two English soldiers taking them down, wounded them and tried to go back to fight. They had no mercy from other English soldiers who came up at this moment. All through the night until early this morning the last remnant of the garrison held out in the north-west corner of Thiepval until they were swept into a net by separate and gallant assaults of south country troops.

All the British soldiers are fighting with a spirit beyond the normal laws of human nature. They are fighting for a quick finish, if that may be had by courage, to this most infamous and vile war.

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A POST-BELLUM TARIFF SCHEME

The London Chamber of Commerce has formulated a complete programme for British post-bellum trade policy. If it, or any policy approaching it in comprehensiveness, were adopted, the nations of the earth would find themselves divided and subdivided, so far as trade preferences go, according to their attitude in this war. The chamber suggests that the United Kingdom put into effect a minimum tariff for other parts of the Empire and its Allies. Friendly neutrals, which give Great Britain most-favored-nation treatment, would face a tariff twice the minimum. Other neutrals, giving preferences to other powers, including those that might be swung into the Teutonic commercial system, would pay a surtax, and enemy countries would pay the maximum duties, up to about 30 per cent. If France and Russia and Italy, which have trade treaties giving to outside States most-favored-nation treatment, were to abrogate these, and adopt a similar tariff policy of grading and sifting, the economic alliance that would thus be formed would speedily charity trade affiliations, and either bring about economic disaster upon the Teutonic group, or force that group and its satellites to stand apart. The Entente group would be much more powerful commercially, and most neutrals would wish to swing along with them.

The programme would, of course, involve entire abandonment of free trade as a general policy. Free trade must go, anyway. For interest on the war debt alone, about \$600,000,000 a year will be required. So far, heavy taxes on industry, enormous taxes on incomes and special Customs imposts have been placed to meet that item. But some of these taxes can scarcely be permanent. The tax on excess profits, for instance, is purely for war revenue. Such a tariff arrangement as the London Chamber of Commerce recommends would yield annually a net sum of about \$375,000,000. Foodstuffs would not necessarily have to be included in the tariff on the preferential basis. At any rate, the supplying power of the Dominions and Allies, such as Russia, would give assurance of stability. As an auxiliary arrangement the Chamber would have the giving of a preference to British shipping in Allied ports, as against German or Austrian shipping. Inasmuch as the British would have to rely chiefly on their own shipping to serve both themselves and their Allies, the building up of trade by it, at the expense of the Teutonic shippers, would serve the general cause. In the year to July 1, 1915, 70 per cent. of British imports were carried in British ships and 30 per cent. in neutral. Since then the large requisitionings for Admiralty service have reduced the free supply of British ships, but after the war the recovery to normal conditions would enable British ships in conjunction with the discriminatory tariff, to build up a most powerful economic alliance among the present Allies. As Britain is now lending billions to these Allies, and would have to take goods as interest payments after the war, such an economic alliance would help both borrowers and lenders, and enable them to overcome largely the narcotic effect of revision to peace.

If such a plan were about to be adopted it would be very necessary to be careful about forcing neutrals into the arms of the Teutons. The United States is bound to trade to the British cause. For the first seven months of the year the United States exported and imported \$4,300,000,000 worth of goods, of which \$1,950,000,000, or about 45 per cent, was to or from the British Empire alone. Trade with all of the Allies would be 75 per cent. of the total. But it would be important to keep Holland, Norway, Denmark and other such countries from allying themselves economically with the enemy.—Ex.

SOMETHING DOING CRIS PARROT AS ZEP DESTROYS HOUSE

London, Sept. 30.—Among the stories of Sunday's air raid told to The Gazette correspondent was one of a suburban resident who kept a parrot. Awakened by the crash of a bomb, which hit a part of his house, the owner went into the parlor, which he found almost reduced to ruins, and he found the parrot in his cage unhurt. The parrot's greeting was: "What ho! here's something doing here." In the neighboring house several rooms were badly damaged, but a servant was found sleeping soundly, although the doors and window frames had been blown away.

A Matter of Necessity.

"Got a chauffeur, eh? I thought you were averse to having one." "I was, but you see our cook got married and we had to give her husband a job to hold her."