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British Defeat Strong German Army

IN BIG BATTLE AT LA BASSEE.

Picardy, Jan. 26.—What will probably be recorded in military annals as the second battle of La Bassee, took place yesterday morning, and resulted in the defeat of a strong German army that had been marching for days behind this part of the line. Hundreds of Germans were killed and several remained in our hands as prisoners, including two officers of high rank.

The strategic advantage obtained by the Allies is considerable. Without being too exacting, one may be allowed to say that the conflict raged roughly along the triangle of Auchy-les-Bassee, Guinchy and Ginchy. Once again as at various points where the issue had to be decided by cold steel, did the British prove more than a match for the Germans in the use of the bayonet.

A railway line from Bethune to La Bassee, parallels the canal running but a few yards north of it. The Allies hold both towns and naturally these lines of communication are of the utmost importance to preserve intact.

It has been the ambition of the Germans to get astride the railway and cut our communications. Just before Christmas they made a big move and drove the Indian troops out of Ginchy, but were repulsed in their turn with heavy loss.

For more than a week past, word has been brought to the allied commanders of large movements of German troops to this important part of the line as the British were fully prepared, in a general sense, for any big move, though the soft condition of the ground still forbade expectation of anything like an attack en masse.

But it is the eve of the Kaiser's birthday. About ten minutes past seven o'clock yesterday morning a private, who now has his right arm in bandages, was just beginning to think about breakfast in his mud-bogging when to his astonishment a German soldier came tumbling over the top of the trench. He was a Hanoverian, and in a moment he was locking down the business end of the British soldier's rifle.

He soon discovered his errand by giving himself up as a prisoner and declaring that he was sick of the war and the trench-bored soldiers. He added, when another Tommy began to wield his bayonet threateningly, that a grand attack by the Germans had been planned for 7.30 o'clock.

The deserter was speaking the truth, and just as our men were starting breakfast in the fighting

trenches, only forty yards distant at the nearest point from the German line, a cloud of men were seen silhouetted on top of the advanced German trenches. As the fresh ranks of the enemy clambered over into the opening, the British sentinels' shots rang out and the battle was joined.

ADVANCES OVER SEA OF CORPSES.

In a moment the regiments holding the advanced posts were ready, and the dense mass of grey reeled under a withering rifle and machine gun fire. But the grey wave swept on over the sea of corpses, and those who first managed to get unscathed to within fifteen yards of the British trenches threw hand grenades which wrought death and destruction in the ranks.

The Grey flood swept into the advanced British line, winning through by sheer weight of numbers. Then followed a mortal combat at close quarters. The rattle of musketry gave place to the hoarse cries of grasping men, robbing and thrusting. Next these sinister sounds of battle were drowned by the thunderous shots of heavy guns.

At one or two points the German tide actually rushed on for four hundred yards before it broke like a spray on the rocks behind, represented by some of the most celebrated corps in the British army.

Meanwhile "Jack Johnsons" were reaped a far richer harvest, owing to the superior bursting power of their shells.

Still the enemy came on in dense grey masses, bent on piercing the Allied line at the very important point and maintaining the wedge at all costs. But the Hanoverian is no better than his Prussian and Prussian confederates in a man-to-man fight with a Briton wielding a rifle and bayonet, and finally the tide turned in favor of the British.

The British troops, reinforced, fell upon what remained of the German hosts, who broke and were crumpled up, many of them surrendering in groups.

When the battle ended, at about 11 a.m., the British had retaken their trenches, but whether they pressed the counter-attack further, and seized part of the German positions, is unable to ascertain.

A British armoured train, operating with the troops in this section of the battlefield, figured prominently in the battle and with its powerful naval guns silenced several of the German cannons.

Yesterday's battle, in which probably no fewer than 25,000 men were engaged, may be summed up as a severe reverse to the Germans.

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Russians Marching on Konigsberg

ARE MAKING HEADWAY TO THAT GOAL.

Petrograd, Jan. 27.—Development of a new Russian offensive aimed at Konigsberg, capital of East Prussia, on the Gulf of Dantzig, was announced in an official statement to-day. Russian forces operating on the East Prussia, northeast of Insterburg, attacked along a line extending from Matwischen to Isassehnen and were successful in pushing back the Germans.

The Russian outposts now are within fifty-five miles of Konigsberg, nearly half the distance between the great fortress and the Russian frontier.

The advance upon Konigsberg is being made along the route of the northern railway, instead of by the more direct route that lies through Insterburg. The Germans are offering a stubborn resistance, and are being reinforced.

The success of the great advance along the right bank of the Vistula requires that the Russians gain control of the Poland East Prussia border. The main body of the new army is strengthening its positions along the frontier before Thorn, with the approaches to Wloclawek, where the only bridge between Plock and the frontier is situated, in its possession.

In East Prussia the Russians are advancing along the two available routes through the lakes, on the Lyck-Loetzen line, and on the Ballia-Johannisburg line.

Along the line before Warsaw the Germans are on the defensive, and are being heavily pressed at two points. In Southern Poland the combined Austrian and German forces are endeavoring to make a demonstration of strength.

On the left bank of the Vistula and southeast of Skierniewice, German attacks were repulsed, the Russian fire silencing two German batteries.

The Austrians have increased their activity along the line of the Carpathian mountains, leading southeast from the Dukla Pass, particularly at Jaslika and Uszek, but have been repulsed with a loss of 300 prisoners.



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Famous French Aviator

MAKES DARING RAID.

Paris, Jan. 27.—The heroism of French aviators will make a thrilling chapter of the adventurous. Do you people know the names of those men who fly over Paris in search of hostile aircraft, or of those who, along the whole line of the front, reconnoitre the enemy's position, and locate his batteries? The spell of secrecy may now, however, be broken in favor of Pegoud, the famous aviator, who was the first to loop the loop.

Pegoud has lost none of his accuracy since the beginning of the war, and has done many gallant and reckless things over the battlefields in France. One of his latest adventures was rewarded with great success. Provided with a new machine which he wished to try, he loaded it with a dozen bombs and set off for the enemy's lines. In previous reconnaissances, he had made note of the German ammunition stores assembled on a certain plot of ground. To this spot it was that he steered his way, flying very high and taking advantage of a mist, so that he should not be observed.

When he was about near his goal, he hovered above the place, and descending low, dropped nine of the bombs. The effect was prodigious. Explosion after explosion rent the air, so that his machine was shaken by the vibration waves.

Pegoud flew away, elated at his success. Still he had three bombs left, and, swooping down like a bird at play, he flung them over the heads of a company of German soldiers. They scattered in all directions, and Pegoud flew away through the darkened sky like a winged dove.

Pegoud's latest achievement was directed a few days ago against a captive airship from which the fire of German batteries was directed. Flying at a great height, and making a wide circuit, he dived at the airship, then flew straight at the sausage-shaped balloon. He was seen at once, and shots were fired at him wildly. He heard the shouts of the soldiers and hoarse commands. Little figures were running about like ants down there, and the balloon was hastily drawn earthward, but it was too late.

Pegoud swooped in one of the magnificent voilplanes, which used to thrill me when I saw them over English soil. When he was less than fifty yards above the airship, he fired his bomb. A fearful explosion followed, making a gale of air-currents in which the French aeroplane rocked like quivering flames. The ball of gas was rent, and the German airship collapsed to the earth.

Herr Ballin Says a New Base is Needed.

Herr Ballin, the head of the Hamburg-America Line, sends a very interesting reply to the request of the Frankfurter Zeitung for the expression of a "New Year's wish."

After remarking that the responsible men cannot desire to present a public discussion of their task, Herr Ballin says that there is one lesson which must already be learnt from the war. He proceeds:

"In my youth sailors used to give the names of 'the wet triangle' to the North Sea area, which extends between Heligoland and the river mouths of war in the North Sea causes us to recognize the incontrovertible fact that our ports behind this 'wet triangle' do not provide the conditions necessary for the activity of our battleships, and that for the future assurance of a happy peace it is necessary for us to get out—to the sea."

"The mischievous interference which is bringing our overseas trade almost to a standstill is possible for the English navy only because the North Sea area proved liable to easy blockade (leicht absperrbar) and the practical pressure which England is exercising to-day upon the neutral Scandinavian States and Holland would have been impossible if we had had for our Navy a base corresponding to the importance of the Navy and the fighting spirit of its brave officers and men."

"Therefore we must out and away beyond the North Sea area, and seek a naval base which in future, at any rate in this part of the world, will assure to us the same possibilities that England enjoys and ruthlessly exploits."

Herr Ballin's admissions are almost as interesting as his "wishes." He now tells us that the British Navy has brought German overseas trade almost to a standstill, that the blockade of the German coast area has proved to be not impossible, but easy, and that Germany's strategic position is inadequate for the activity of her fleet. When, on November 14, an article in "The Times" from a distinguished neutral citizen included Herr Ballin among leaders of German commerce and industry who were not "even remotely cheerful about the ultimate prospect," Herr Ballin repudiated all such views, and said, "England is already beaten to-day, for an England that hides her fleet in such a war and henceforth trusts herself no more on the sea, has ceased to be old England."

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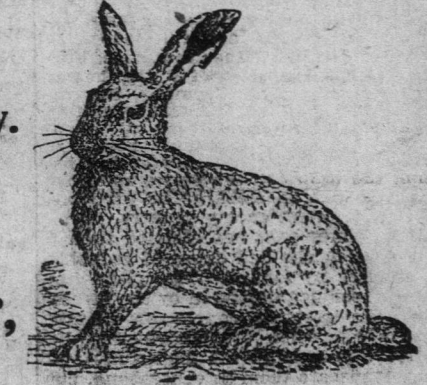
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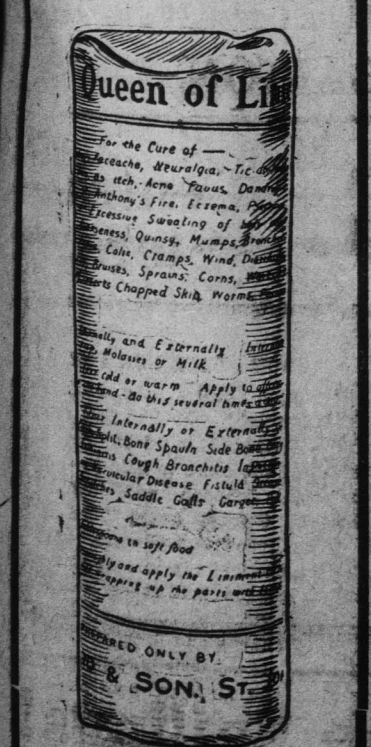
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