

dian fields. No airships drop death upon these children. No war graves cram the pleasant fields. And so many of the people in Quebec do not know much about the war that has made old France suffer more in 1914-17 than New France did in the old days on the St. Lawrence.

The people are diligent, happy and contented. They wish to remain so. The thrift and frugality now being taught to other people by governments and committees came to the people of Quebec in their cradles. It is one of the common instincts of life, not to waste. The farms are small. Every cranny must produce. The families are large. Nature says inexorably that wealth comes from labour applied to the land. The more people that labour on the land, the greater the diffusion of comfortable living. When the land laughs harvests and garden crops in response to the hard work of father and family, there is no need for the boys to hike away to the big city, or out to the prairie. They may go to the mines and the forests and the mills; but the mines, the forests and the mills they go to are most of them in Quebec. It is better that the money earned by the people there be earned in developing Quebec and spent there. This is a law of community preservation, and Quebec knows it along with its ABC.

So that the wisest of our political economy professors can go to Quebec and find a people working out their own economic salvation as well as any people ever did under the sun.

And this is all very beautiful, as any traveller knows. Nowhere in America can the traveller find such common comfort, contentment and hospitality as in Quebec. The cheerful, open-handed welcome of the habitant charms the visitor. He is one of the family, even without speaking French. He will never forget how warmly they welcomed him and how beautiful were the pictures he saw on every roadside, as though some great Nature-Artist were engaged in painting an immortal picture for all time to come.

All of which is possible perpetually only when all goes well with the world. Poor old France, beautiful and industrious, had just this sort of charmed life until the wild beasts of war came up from the Rhine. Not even Quebec had a greater desire for peace than had France. But France was between Germany and the western sea, and Germany, most aggressive of all modern nations, must find a way out, even by devastating France.

We know of no people who desire to despoil Quebec for the sake of getting out to the world. But Quebec is on the highway of the world. The great

river that carries the great lakes down and out to the sea, is not born in Quebec and does not end there. It sweeps on and on like one of the great forces of nature and the tide of traffic, of business, of mills and mines and railways goes with it. Quebec is fair on the path of this onswinging tide of modern business that never will stop so long as rivers run. No man, no government, no church, ever could keep Quebec isolated from this sea of change.

And as the world goes to-day, this peaceful, patriarchal Quebec is a highway of war. That war is as inevitable as the river, or the immigrant ship, or the wheat cargo. And the St. Lawrence, home of a peace-loving, happy people, much against the will of all Canada, is surely as much a part of the great upside-down world trying to get right side up again, as the prairies that no hostile army from Europe ever could reach without coming up the St. Lawrence or climbing the Rockies.

The world will never be right again till as much of it as possible is as happy and diligent and thrifty as Quebec. But Quebec will not be happy and diligent and thrifty for long unless the people realize that the beautiful dream of the St. Lawrence is possible only by struggling to keep it and recognizing that modern civilization as yet is a fiercer struggle than even that of the jungle.

HAIG'S NORTHERN HAMMER

IT is hardly correct to speak of the beginning of a British offensive. It is not the beginning but the continuation. The British offensive began early in the year, and as soon as the weather became favourable. It has been switched from point to point of the German defensive lines, and it has been as nearly continuous as the colossal nature of the operations would permit. The latest blow is the heaviest of all, but it is in no sense a new departure, nor is it another effort to succeed where earlier efforts have failed. The earlier efforts did not fail. It is true that they were not major successes. That is to say they did not result in expelling the Germans from France and Belgium, or in bringing the war to an end. But then they were not expected to do this. They were expected to win territory that would presently be of tactical value for observation and advance. They were expected to weaken the German morale and to extend the work of attrition. They were expected to dent the German lines, and so to extend their length, and to interfere with the German communications. To speak of them as failures is as absurd as to ascribe failure to the woodsman because the first blows of his axe do not fell the tree. Without those initial strokes the tree would never be felled at all. If they are continued the tree is certain to fall. A military critic has compared the British attacks with the successive cutting of the guy ropes that support a flag staff. No one can say with certainty when the staff will come to the ground, but the end is not at all in doubt if the cutting of the guy ropes continues.

The present attack of which we have just received the first reports was carried out immediately to the north of the Messines Ridge that was so finely captured a few weeks ago. It may be regarded as a continuation of that action. The most southerly point assailed was Hollebeke, and the battle extended from there some twenty miles to the north in the vicinity of Dixmude, which is about thirteen miles from the North Sea. The first day's fighting resulted in an advance along the whole line. Some six or eight villages were taken, including La Basseville, Steenstraete, Bixshoote, Saint Julien, Hooge, Westhoek and Hollebeke. The Germans counter attacked with great energy and won back some small portions of the ground lost, but these were again taken from them on the following day.

At the moment of writing, three days after the first assault, the British are holding their gains firmly, but have been prevented by heavy rain and low visibility from continuing their operations. The advance over the twenty miles of front seems to have been about three miles, although on this point there is no definite information. The difficulty of ad-

GETTING the Germans out of France and Belgium is not a case of rolling them back. By that method the war would last many years. The Hindenburg line is tremendously fortified. It was selected long ago. To push back that line is a glacial process. The advantage is all on the defensive and the Germans have it. When they retire it is to a selected strategic line. The Allies must bring up their war machine over absolute chaos. This gives the enemy time—which he needs. The German lines must be broken. And Mr. Coryn predicts that they will be.

By SIDNEY CORYN
Written Especially for the Canadian Courier

vancing the artillery over ground softened with rain would sufficiently account for the delay, but in addition to this difficulty there seems to have been a mist that made artillery observation impossible. The delay is, of course, somewhat favourable to the Germans, who are thus enabled to bring reinforcements to the threatened area, although this advantage is somewhat lessened by the fact that they cannot have many men available for such a purpose so long as the French to the south are alert and aggressive. A notable feature of this battle in the north is the presence of French troops to the left of the British army, that is to say, between the British and the North Sea. This is the first notification of French troops on this part of the line.

THE object of this attack is the same as the object of the battles that have preceded it, with the additional aim of threat against Zeebrugge and Bruges, about thirty miles to the east. Zeebrugge is usually described as the chief submarine base, but probably Bruges also is used for submarine purposes, seeing that a canal connects the two places, and Bruges would be safe from attacks by war ships. But thirty miles is a long way for an army advancing in the face of fierce opposition, and unless there should be an extensive falling back of the German lines—by no means an impossibility—we can hardly consider that the submarine war will be seriously affected in this respect for some time to come.

So far as this and all preceding battles are concerned it may be well to say a word regarding the insidious theories that are now being put forward by furtive sympathizers with Germany, theories that may have a certain plausibility for minds unused to

military considerations.

Of what value, we are asked, is the capture of a few trench lines so long as innumerable busy spades in the rear are making new ones? How shall it be possible within any measurable time to drive the Germans back to their own frontier by laborious and costly attacks brought at long intervals and resulting in an advance of a few hundred yards? The formula used by the exponents of this method of reasoning is always the same, and at least it has the merit of mathematical simplicity. If the Germans lose so many yards in so many weeks, how long will it take them to lose the distance between their present lines and the German frontier? The answer, of course, runs into scores of years, even into centuries, and we are then triumphantly advised to recognize the hopelessness of it all and to find some other solution than the military one.

The object of the various battles on the western front is not, of course, to gain a little territory or to push back the Germans another half-mile or so toward the Rhine. It may be true that these results are attained, but they are quite subsidiary to the main strategical objective, which is so to weaken the German lines that it shall presently be possible to find a point of penetration. The capture of the Messines Ridge, for example, was not undertaken because it promised a gain of territory, although as a matter of fact it did promise a gain of territory. The Messines Ridge was taken because it was a valuable observation and artillery position, and its possession was not only a protection to the British lines, but the possible preliminary to another assault that should break a gap in the German defences. So far from striving to drive the German lines back, it would be more to the advantage of the Allied commanders that the German lines should stand so stiffly as to permit their penetration. As a matter of fact the German lines are not pushed back at all. They fall back in order to avoid being pierced. Their elasticity is their protection, on the same principle that makes it easier to penetrate a piece of wood than a piece of rubber. The Allied successes are not measured by the extent to which the Germans have fallen back. They are measured by the fact that the danger of penetration was so great as to compel them to fall back. But there is a limit to these retirements.

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OUT at the front two regiments, returning to the trenches, chanced to meet. There was the usual exchange of wit. "When's the gloomin' war goin' to end?" asked one north-country lad. "Dunno," replied one of the southshires. "We've planted some daffydils in front of our trench." "Bloomin' optimists!" snorted the man from the north. "We've planted acorns."