

17TH ANNOUNCEMENT.

SPRINGTIME.

The most trying part of the Newfoundland climate is the early spring. It is a time when delicate people, who can afford the expense, should go away to the sunny Islands of the South. It is a time to secure a passage on a "Royal Mail" steamer and hike away to Barbados, or any other of the numerous places at which these ships call.

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Fighting a Modern Battle.

HOW THE ALLIES CAPTURE THE TRENCHES BY SCIENTIFIC METHODS AND WITH A MINIMUM OF LOSS.

Formerly It Was an Axiom of War That the Offensive Cost More Than the Defensive and that Frontal Attacks on Entrenchments Were Impossible—This Article Shows How the Allies Have Upset all That.

It has been an axiom of modern warfare that the attack is more costly in men than the defence. It has been another axiom that frontal attacks on entrenched positions could not succeed even with greatly superior forces on the offensive. Upon these axioms has been based the prediction of many military experts that the war on the western front must end in a deadlock.

But the Allies have changed all that—at great cost, it is true, and through long experiment, but changed it so effectively that their gains are now almost invariably accomplished with less actual loss than that suffered by the defence.

How? By steadily developed superiority of artillery and observation in the first place; and secondly the development of the progressive artillery barrage, for which General Nivelle gets the major credit.

The original German advance toward Paris cost them, roughly, five men for every two defenders placed here or there. Their fierce attacks around Ypres in 1915 were almost equally costly though the Germans were better equipped with artillery, machine guns, bombs, gas and in fact in almost every way than their adversaries. Despite the initial success, as an experiment to find a practical offensive against trenches it was a failure. It cost too much in men and the Germans turned their attention to the east and made no further serious effort in the west until February, 1916.

In the meanwhile, however, the Allies made various efforts to discover a way of successfully attacking trenches defended by machine guns and supported by artillery. In May, 1915, the French drove the Germans off the hill of Notre Dame-de-Lorette, in the middle of June they followed this with another attack at Souchez, in the same neighborhood. These attacks improved the position of the French line but they did not show any practical method by which the French could drive the Germans out at a cost they could afford to pay. Neverthe-

less, in September the French gathered a great number of men and guns in the Champagne and prepared to try to break the German line. Their cavalry was ready to go through if the attempt succeeded. But like its predecessors it gained ground at too high a price. The attackers lost two or three to one of the defenders. The axiom still held good. The British in the meanwhile made several sanguinary and determined efforts to disprove the axiom. Like the Germans and the French, they proved completely that without some other aid pure courage would not do it.

By January 1, 1916, it looked as if the axiom would hold against both sides and that Joffre's nibbling policy and exhaustion were the only hopes for setting the fate of the war on the western front.

In February, however, the Germans tried an improved method at Verdun. Whether they decided that they could not afford to wait for exhaustion in the west as well as the Allies, and therefore they must try again, or whether they were sanguine enough of their new plan of attack to want to try it, makes no particular difference. They concentrated a hitherto unprecedented number of heavy guns—some 2,000—against the French lines north of Verdun. They began a bombardment which destroyed the trenches and practically cut them off from any reinforcements, and then they launched heavy masses of infantry at them. The first four days of the attack on Verdun showed good results. The Germans gained ground and accounted for more of the French than they lost themselves. But after that the gain in ground was very slow and the losses in attack were greater than those of the defenders. The longer it lasted the more costly it became to the attackers in proportion to the cost to the defenders. It became increasingly plain that the German effort did not disprove the axiom, and yet it was the best method worked out up to that time of attacking trench positions. The German losses were certainly not more than three Germans to two French, whereas in all the earlier attacks the losses by the attackers were from two to one to four or five to one greater than those of the defenders. The significant trouble with the German attack at Verdun was that its initial success could not be kept up. As the attack continued the proportion of the attackers' losses grew.

So up to July, 1916, neither side had found a system of offence that would be practical for a sustained effort against trenches.

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CHASE & SANBORN, MONTREAL.

On the 1st of July the battle of the Somme began. It has lasted into the winter, with lapses on account of the weather, and it will in all probability continue in the spring.

The Germans say that the English have lost 550,000 and that the French have lost 250,000, or 800,000 altogether. The French estimate of the German losses is 600,000. Or, if we accept these mutually hostile estimates, roughly speaking, the attackers have lost eight men to the defenders seven. But there is a significant difference between the attackers' losses on the Somme and the losses of the German attacks at Verdun. At Verdun the German proportion of loss was lower in the early part of the attack and grew larger and larger. In the battle of the Somme the attackers' losses were heavier in the earlier stages and grew proportionally less. Probably during the entire Somme battle the French had done more than swap man for man. In the beginning the English probably suffered more than this, but as they have become more skilled their proportion of losses has gone steadily down. For example, the British attacked a certain part of the German line in the early days of the Somme battle, took part of it, and lost it again. The attempt cost 40,000 casualties. The German defenders did not pay anything like this price. About four months later the British took the same positions and 8,000 prisoners with a casualty list of about 12,000. The total German losses, including killed, wounded, and prisoners, could hardly have been less than twice the British 12,000.

But on the whole, since the first few weeks on the Somme the Allies have carried on their offensive, at most swapping man for man with the Germans.

Then came General Nivelle's two attacks on October 24th and December 16th last at Verdun. The French losses in the two attacks were about 25,000 men. The German prisoners alone amounted to 17,000 men. The method which General Nivelle used at Verdun was a system of attack against trenches in which the attackers lost one man to the defenders' two. This disproves the axiom. The Allied offensive on the Somme was a great improvement on the German offensive at Verdun and Nivelle's offensive at Verdun is an improvement on the Allied method on the Somme.

How this has been accomplished, plus the artillery and aeroplane superiority, is explained by the following description of an attack in the new fashion written for the London Graphic by an officer of wide experience.

7.35 a.m.—The 10th Battalion Rutlandshire Regiment will cross No Man's Land, and will seize the first, second and third German lines from P 24 A 3 to Q 17 B 1—Operation Order.

A cold, clear night in mid-winter. Tightly packed in the trenches, the infantry are waiting for that fateful 7.35 a.m. An occasional shell from our artillery goes whistling on its mission of death to the German lines. "Very" lights hiss upwards continuously, to flare into a palpitating blue radiance and drift slowly earthward. Now and again the terrific "whoomph" of a trench mortar bomb sets up a far-reaching echo amongst the surrounding ridges; more rarely still the foe gives proof of his vigilance by returning a huge "Minnie," a slow-moving football-like projectile, which bursts with a crash like the crack of doom. Still, for all that, a quiet night, one which, but for the men assembled in the trenches would end even more quietly.

At dawn will commence one of those unwieldy struggles called a modern battle, a fight for a few battered holes called trenches. The 10th Battalion Rutlandshire Regiment had safely assembled in the front line, occupying ground equal to the cryptical P 24 A 3—Q 17 B 1, opposite which on the morrow they were to seize. A difficult job had this assembling been; the regiment had come from a village three miles back, along shell-broken roads, jostled by artillery limbers, through battered villages packed tight with troops bound on a similar errand, along slippery, interminable trenches, where whole platoons lost themselves, and from there the final, silent move into the front line. The C. O. and his adjutant, temporarily established in a dug-out, breathed audible sighs of relief as one after another the four company commanders reported their men "all in." The night wore slowly on; the stoically minded slept, the highly strung talked together in jerky, disconnected sentences. In little groups the officers gathered, some getting final instructions; others their first time in action, perhaps, whispering wishes in the event of their going under.

Away from the front line, preparations for the coming clash progressed feverishly. Limber after limber clattered to the huge number of batteries of artillery concentrated for the battle, emptied their loads of shell with the help of the gunners, and clattered off again into the darkness

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If you are afflicted with skin disease, the kind that seems to battle medical treatment, and leaves you wild with it, do not fail to investigate a prescription that is now recommended by many of the best skin specialists, even in preference to their own prescriptions. This is the simple, soothing, liquid external remedy, D. D. D. Prescription. This liquid stops the itch instantly and effects a cure that is permanent. In fact, it took thousands of cures, case after case, before the best doctors were convinced of the absolute merit of this remedy.

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back to the ammunition dump for another supply. Inside the battery dug out the officers carefully compared their watches, for to an artilleryman—and the infantryman—the synchronization of time means the difference between life and death. At 7 a.m. in the morning the whole of the 1,500 guns hidden around this neighborhood are to open a half-hour's intense bombardment of the whole German line. Some of the guns have been detailed for counter-battery work, engaging the German batteries whose positions our aerial reconnaissances have discovered during the week.

Five miles further back is an aerodrome. The planes are to be used in the coming battle. One is to fly over the German front line signalling the progress of the fight. Another is to fly over the second and third German line, acquainting headquarters how far our men have got. Back to the trenches again. The engineers are in position, waiting their time to go over and blow up the German machine gun emplacements. The hard-working pioneers have had a look at the spot where they have to dig a communication trench across No Man's Land to join up the German line and our own. The R.A.M.C.—strangers to the trenches except in a battle—have, after many trials and tribulations, got their stretchers around the innumerable tortuous traverses and established themselves at the aid posts. The machine gunners wait quietly around their emplacements, the trench mortar people, also to take part in the preliminary bombardment, consult watches and speculate on the number of Germans occupying the front line, while around them all the Signal Service goes through the trenches, linking up every unit with Brigade Headquarters. This is a very important item, for more battles are won and lost by imperfect communication than is ever imagined.

Time has gone slowly to the assembled infantry. A Co. officers had explained the whole scheme to their men—they were to seize the German front line; B and C Companies, with the more difficult task of getting to the second and third lines respectively, were still engaged in passing quietly through the trenches, giving their men the most minute and final instructions; whilst D Co., which was to carry up supplies, picks, shovels, bombs, water, etc., occupied itself in these necessities to the men. With an encouraging word to all, the colonel passed from company to company.

Half-past six! Time to issue the rum. And the men wait it, too; the long wait through the night has made them cold and slinky. A petrol tin for each platoon. Armed with an cammelled mug the youthful officer goes up and down, his sergeant carrying the rum. No refusals, teetotalers and all. Half a mugful, raw spirit, it nearly chokes them. But it stops the shivering. Not much time left now; only ten minutes. A final round of the men to see they have their ears stopped up with cotton

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Your Boys and Girls.

It is not possible to measure the harm which follows from young people having no right provision for their amusement. The dance halls are no fit place for boys and girls. The men who hunt these places may have money, but they always have low standards and a cheap attitude toward life, and needless to say, these standards are not often on lines of pure and innocent amusement.

Right through life the wise mother recognizes her child's desire to play with others of both sexes. Especially when adolescence is reached do boys and girls like to be together, and, if they cannot get that companionship in a legitimate way they will get it in a furtive and illegitimate way. When they have been accustomed in associating in play right through childhood, the age of adolescence is much less difficult and dangerous, for it is only natural for them to continue to be together when they are older.

MILNARD'S LINIMENT CURES DIPHTHERIA.

wool to deaden the crash of the exploding shells, a whispered order to fix bayonets quietly, and the officer's work is done for the time being. Once the bombardment starts there will be no opportunity of giving orders. "Bank! Bang! Bang!" With an earth-rending crash 1,500 guns leapt into action simultaneously. From one end to another the German lines flamed into balls of fire, shells bursting blue, green, red, orange. "Bang! Bang! Bang!" From the German line suddenly flamed out two green and one red rocket. It was their "S.O.S." a call for artillery to repel the attack they know is imminent. Through the mist the rockets gleamed dully, hung apparently suspended for a couple of minutes, and then spluttered slowly to earth. And still the infernal crashing went on.

It had been arranged that at half-past seven all the British field batteries were to concentrate on the German front line with a five minutes' shrapnel barrage, the bigger guns meanwhile continuing to bombard the German lines in the rear. High above the din of the shells shrilled the whistle of a Company Commander. The four whistles of the platoon officers answered, and then over the top scrambled the men into a rough line, rifles carried with the bayonet in the air, and at a steady walk the 10th Battalion Rutlandshire Regiment started on its mission of seizing the German line from P 24 A 3 to Q 17 B 1. Right up to the barrage spluttering death to the venture some German underneath, and then, whoop, a terrific yell from a youthful officer, when, as if by magic, the hail of shrapnel jumped away from them—where they did not care. Into the battered German trench they went, over the dead and wounded, stabbing and clubbing at the few Germans who showed fight, and showering smoke bombs down the almost unrecognizable dug-outs, and the German front line from P 24 A 3 to Q 17 B 1 was in the hands of the British.

Hard on the heels of A. Co. had followed B. Their objective was 120 yards further on. Over the trenches jumping shell holes, and suffering rather severely from machine gun fire from the German third line, the second wave followed the barrage, jumped into the trench, and were bombing the dug-outs before the enemy had dared to show himself. Down the communication trenches went the bombers until they had established connection with the battalions attacking on their right and left. With a hoarse, unrecognizable yell over passed C Company, eager spirits jumping into the German third line even before the barrage had lifted, bayonetting the machine gunners, and rushing round the traverses looking for the resistance they did not meet.

Victory! Not yet final, for the positions had not yet been consolidated, but this was being remedied. At the double came the carrying company, with their pick sand shovels and bombs. Two hours' solid work, a little disturbed by enemy shell-fire, and by eleven o'clock the newly won trenches had been consolidated, and another day of glory had been added to the fame of our imperishable amateur army.—Montreal Daily Star.

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