SOME SIDELIGHTS ON THE MAIN PHASES OF THE GREAT WAR

Letters to Prisoners in France Tell of Germany's Sad Condition

is Temps Quotes Extracts from Correspondence Which Show the Tragic Impression Made on the German Populace by the Appalling Wastage of Men.

[Special Dispatch.]

PARIS,

Letters to German prisoners of war in France furnish irrefutable evidence of the sentiments prevailing at present in Germany. The correspondence invariably refers to the constant drain on the male population, owing to the extension of the conscription system and to the steadily aggravating conditions to which those at home are subjected. The Paris Temps quotes a few extracts from such letters. Here is one:—

"Gorgast, Oct. 26.—There are now few of us left in this village. Nearly everybody has gone to the war. Many have been killed or grievously wounded. Some have escaped with less damage. It is terrible. Those still left here will soon have to go too, and we have asked for some Russian prisoners of war to do the work for our families in our absence. I have had a letter from Gustav. He is in Berlin being trained for active service and he says that the daily drilling goes pretty hard on him. You know he is in his forty-sixth year."

Another prisoner received the following:—

"It is a pity to see what poor wretches they are sending off to war these days, old men upward of sixty and half grown boys of eighteen. Some are one eyed, others limping. It looks as if they tried to rake together all they can get hold of, only to throw them into the roaring furnace. This cannot possibly last more than a few months at the most. These latest conscripts will be killed, too, in their turn and we have no more to put in their places."

In Schleswig and Holstein several training camps have been organized where both minors and superannuated recruits are being instructed. Persons between forty-five and fifty years of age, who have not been called to the colors as yet, have been forbidden to leave the country and all boys over sixteen years have been informed to keep themselves in readiness, in anticipation of orders to report at some army depot for priliminary military instruction. According to a recent ordinance, the details of which were published shortly after its promulgation, the defectives who had once been exempted as unfit for active service have been re-examined. The number affected by this order amounted to about three million and of these over sixty per cent were passed by the surgeons. Measures of this kind show to what length the German government is determined to go and the common people naturally feel dismayed at the desperate state of things. Some envy the fortunate ones who are safely imprisoned in the enemy's country. One young girl writes to her fiancé in a French prison camp:—

"My little boy, you should not grumble, but rather feel satisfied, for you could be in a much more sad situation. I cannot explain now, but will tell you all about it some time. Heinz and August are worse off than you."

From Crefeld a wife addresses this lament to her imprisoned husband:—

"At home we are losing courage altogether. Mother is in despair and most miserable, and father has lost twenty-three pounds. One feels like tearing one's hair, but what good would that do? When I get the blues and am complaining the others chide me and tell me that I, at least, have nothing to worry about, since you are safe and can hope to return home once more."

FRENCH OFFICERS EXAMINING CAPTURED GERMAN GUNS.

FESTIVE SPREAD IN THE TRENCHES.
PHOTOS SUPPLIED WITH SANCTION FRENCH MINISTRY FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

WARNING TO GERMANY IN HISTORY OF NAPOLEON'S SYRIAN CAMPAIGN

French, After Untold Hardships, Reached Acre, Where, After Futile Siege and Great Loss in Unsuccessful Assaults, They Were Compelled to Begin Retirement Across Desert Wastes to Cairo—Suez Line as British Defence.

[Special Dispatch.]

LONDON.

The difficulties attending a German-Turkish advance from Syria on Egypt is emphasized by a reference to the French campaign in the same region in 1799. A study of Napoleon's experiences shows that the same physical obstacles of terrain may be expected to-day as in former years. The desert between El Arich and Gaza remains the same, and although Napoleon's force crossed this end stretch in forty-eight hours the French troops suffered untold hardships.

The French objective was St. Jean d'Arc on the Syrian coast. Napoleon captured every fortified post intervening between that place and El Arich, but the united strength of the British and Turks proved too much for the French and Napoleon after a sixty days' siege of St. Jean d'Arc was compelled to retrace his steps over the very route which the German-Turkish forces now propose to utilize in advancing on Egypt.

The present rendezvous of the German-Turkish army in Syria is north of Damascus. The headquarters of the German commander in chief, Field Marshal von der Goltz, is at Aleppo, 160 miles north by railway from Damascus. Aleppo was regarded by Napoleon as the key to India, but before Aleppo could be occupied it was necessary for the French to take St. Jean d'Arc, and in this latter undertaking they were unsuccessful.

To the military observer the remarkable marching powers of the French troops, backed up by the driving power of the staff such as Napoleon had collected about him, is disclosed in the fact that Napoleon moved a portion of his command from Cairo to El Arich, a distance of 137 miles, in five days. This entire command which moved out of Cairo left that city on February 10, 1799. This Cairo force included the divisions of Lannes and Bon and the cavalry, and the whole force was up with El Arich in seven days. Fully seventy-five miles of the 137 was traversed over a semi-desert country, and for twenty miles before El Arich was reached the country was desert in the extreme. The divisions of Reynier and Kleber had preceded Napoleon from the lower Nile, and as fast as the French troops came up they moved to the assault, one command arriving at and going into the fight at midnight. El Arich was occupied on February 20, and important magazines fell into the hands of the French.

From El Arich the French pushed on to Gaza, a distance of forty-three miles. Although the total force of the French did not exceed thirteen thousand men, still Napoleon was obliged to divide this force up and move along by isolated divisions over the desert which separated his army from Syria. It took the French forty-eight hours to reach Gaza, and this march of forty-three miles was the hardest marching experience met by the French in the entire Syrian campaign. The greatest trouble was the scarcity of water, and in separating the army into isolated divisions the idea was to conserve the wells, which were the only resource in that arid region.

The entire French army united near Gaza, which place was found evacuated in advance of the French arrival. Here the French fell into possession of additional supplies, which the enemy in his haste to retreat had left undestroyed.

On March 3 the French reached Jaffa, and on March 7 that place was carried by assault.

On March 18 St. Jean d'Acre was invested. A desperate resistance was met with. The guiding spirit in the early defence of the place was a French engineer and artillerist, General Phillipeaux. On March 28 the first assault took place. It failed. On April 15 Napoleon defeated a Turkish army of 30,000 men at Mount Tabor, which force was marching to the relief of St. Jean d'Acre. Five assaults on St. Jean d'Acre immediately followed the battle of Mount Tabor. All failed. On May 8 the sixth assault was made. This, too, failed. On May 10, with Kleber's fresh troops, brought in from Mount Tabor, the seventh and eighth assaults were made. All were unsuccessful, and on May 22 Napoleon was compelled to raise the siege and retrace steps to Egypt.

On the return march, made over the route which now lays before the German-Turkish armies, the French laid waste all the country, both to supply themselves with provisions for crossing the desert and to deprive the Turks of the means of following them to the frontiers of Egypt. Returning into Egypt, Napoleon marched to Cairo with the main body of his troops, and reached that place on June 14, 1799. Kleber's division retreated to Damietta.

From Damascus, where the German-Turkish armies are concentrated to-day, a railway runs to Haifa, on the Syrian coast. This railway line between Damascus and Haifa is ninety miles long. Haifa is fifteen miles south of St. Jean d'Acre. Field Marshall von der Goltz has it in his power to move his entire army to Haifa by rail, and by so doing place his command on the road which Napoleon used at a point distant 255 miles from Cairo.

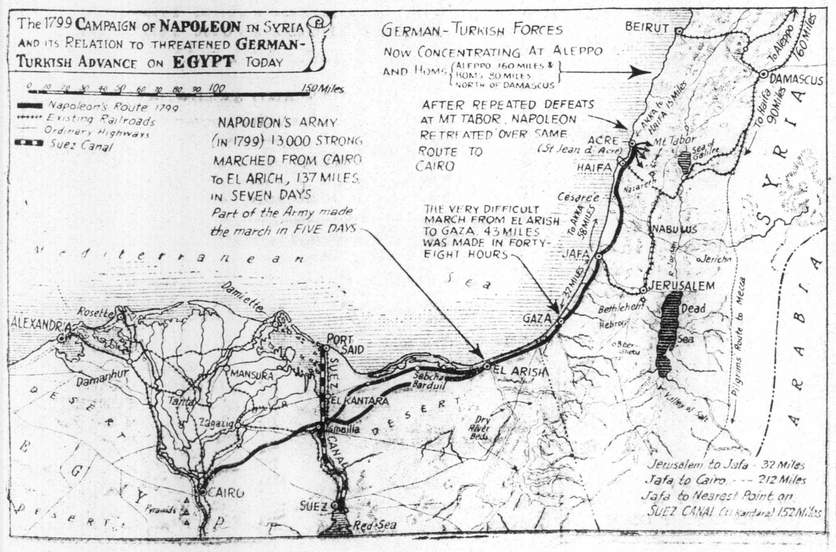
It is understood the Germans recently have united Nabulus and Jerusalem by rail. The distance between the two places is twenty-nine miles. The report is not confirmed, but if true it will mean that the German-Turkish forces can proceed from Damascus direct to Jaffa, covering the entire distance from Constantinople to Jaffa by railway.

From Jerusalem to Jaffa is thirty-two miles by rail and from Jaffa over the coast highway as used by Napoleon the distance to Cairo for marching troops is 212 miles.

From Jaffa to the nearest point on the Suez Canal along the coast highway is 152 miles. This highway passes through Gaza, El Arich and Sebech. This same roadway crosses the Suez Canal at a point twenty-nine miles south of Port Said and fifteen miles north of Ismalia. From the crossing point, as indicated, the distance to Cairo is sixty-two miles and from the same crossing point to El Arich the distance is seventy-five miles.

When Napoleon launched his Syrian campaign the immediate occasion was on learning that the Turks were concentrated in force at Natalia for an advance into Egypt along the Syrian coast highway. Magazines were being collected by the Turks for this army at St. Jean d'Acre and Napoleon believed that it was of paramount importance to destroy these magazines before the Turkish army could put in an appearance before that place.

Viewing the French campaign as it effects the present day situation the impression is gained that the Allies are preparing to duplicate the St. Jean d'Acre resistance with a tremendous defence on the line of the Suez Canal. This defence, it is recognized, will have the added advantage that all supplies and munitions for the German-Turkish forces must be brought up from the eastward across the wastes of the Syrian desert. It is further recognized that the Germans are instituting a campaign which will mean a far extension of their lines. The line of communication from Damascus extends to Constantinople and thence through the Balkan Peninsula to Hungary, Austria and Germany. Midway of this line is the allied army of Salonica, constituting a force which, so long as it remains in existence, must mean a real menace on the flank of the long line of communications. In addition to the Salonica army the Germans also will have to reckon on the possibilities of the Italian-Serbian force in Albania being capable at some time not far distant of threatening trouble on the German communications still farther to the northward.



GERMAN TRENCH JOURNAL PICTURES FATHERLAND IN A GLOOMY LIGHT

Newspaper Found by British Engineer Relates Troubles of Campaign in Russia, Discusses Failure of Submarine Campaign and, Dealing Bitterly with Question of Food and Prices at Home, Declares Belgians Live More Cheaply Than Civilians in Rhine Country.

[Special Dispatch.]

LONDON,

Evidence that the German malcontents are not confining their efforts to protests in the Reichstag is forthcoming in the shape of a small four-page newspaper printed in Gothic characters, headed with the German eagle and the title Die Feldpost, which has fallen into the hands of a royal engineer near Ypres.

The contents of this production, evidently intended to circulate among the German troops, are not calculated to cheer them up.

A front page article is headed "The Coming Winter Campaign" ("Die Kommende Winterfeldzug"), and it gives a lurid outline of the troubles which lie ahead of the German armies in their winter warfare against the Russians.

"As a consequence of the skilful withdrawal of the Russians," it says, "the German troops will have to fight not only against the Russian generals, but also against the pitiless Field Commander Winter. * * * The warfare that was waged last winter in the flooded districts of the Yser gives only a faint picture of the battles which soon will develop in the swamps of Russia."

Another article deals in an equally discouraging style with the German submarine warfare, declaring that there is considerable disquietude in Germany because so many submarines fail to return to harbor.

"Their opponents know why," observes the writer, "and they also know that Germany possesses fewer submarines today that she did at the beginning of the war, in spite of the fact that in the meantime she has built a large number of them. * * * The English Admiralty has found excellent means of beating off the attacks of German submarines, but it prudently keeps the knowledge to itself. * * * The so-called 'blockade' of England has become more futile than ever. Germany may go on confidently with her submarines sinking unarmed merchant ships and passenger steamers, but she does thereby mere damage to herself than to her enemies. * * * She suffers a moral and material loss combined."

Under the heading "The Censor in Germany" a third article gives specific instances of the way in which, it alleges, the German authorities not only suppress unpalatable news but deliberately falsify articles in the press to give to the public an erroneous impression of the state of affairs. Headed "Die Lebensmittelnot infolge Tenerung und Wucher (usury) in Deutschland," another article discusses the alarming increase in the cost of living in Germany, giving extracts from German newspapers showing how two divergent explanations are offered by opposing journalistic schools of thought for this serious state of affairs.

One section of the press declares that the cost of food is due to actual shortage, against which any measures taken by the government are ineffectual, while other organs declare there is food enough for the empire, but that the dearness is artificially produced through the usurious profits exacted by the merchants, against whom the government neglects to take drastic action.

From the Kölner Tageblatt is quoted an instructive letter from a German soldier in Belgium, who complains bitterly:—"It is sad, very sad, when we see how the Belgians, in spite of our possession of their land, live much more cheaply than our dear wives and children at home, and many a father of a family thinks anxiously of his dear ones."

"The excessive prices," asserts this retailer of disagreeable truths, the Feldpost, "actually restrain the consumers from buying as much as they need in order to live properly, and consequently foodstuffs, in spite of their scarcity, are spoiling in the hands of the greedy merchants. This spoiling has assumed such dimensions that—as the Vorwärts openly declares—'there has now developed a trade in spoilt foodstuffs.'"

The same journal is quoted, in commenting on an advertisement of 500 cwt. of meat for sale as cattle food, as making the bitter statement:—"While at present huge quantities of meat are everywhere spoiling, which often hardly can be disposed of as cattle food, the people are no longer in a position, owing to the high prices, to be able in many cases to eat sufficient quantities of meat themselves."

The Feldpost writer closes an article with the prediction:—"An extreme shortage in the nourishment of the German people is only a question of time; it is as certain and unescapable as the financial distress."

MARTIAL SPIRIT OF GERMAN WOMEN

[Special Dispatch.]

AMSTERDAM,

The spirit that actuates the women of Germany is shown by this remarkable letter to a relative:—

"Since my last letter to you Franz has died of his wounds. Now I am left alone with two small children, but, thank God, I am not discouraged, and when I think of what other women have lost, I feel that I have no reason to complain.

"How long this war will last Heaven only knows. The streets here are crowded with soldiers, more so than in the beginning of the war, and we are more and more convinced that we will win. In fact we must win, and should it come to the time when every soldier is killed, wounded or taken prisoner we will still fight, for then the women will go to the front. The strength of the weaker sex here would surprise you if you could see it. There are thousands of women like myself who have sacrificed everything they had dear, and now they stand ready to sacrifice their lives."

HOSPITAL IN FRANCE IS RUN BY WOMEN

[Special Dispatch.]

PARIS,

"In the Abbey of Royaumont-sur-Oise," says the Paris Figaro, "a section of the British Red Cross Society established in November, 1914, the Scottish Women's Hospital, which has been in continuous operation since then. The entire personnel of the institution consists of women. The directress is Miss Evens, a Liverpool surgeon, who is assisted by seven women physicians and sixty graduate nurses. There are beds for over two hundred patients in the hospital. Many very difficult operations have been successfully performed by these British women, and the wounded have received excellent care, resulting in speedy convalescence.

"In charge of the hospital's ambulance is Miss Helga Gill, a young girl from Bergen, Norway. Dressed in a military cape and with a chauffeur's cap perched jaunty on her tresses, she runs her ambulance with the rear of the thing ready to pick up the wounded as they are being brought out of the trenches."

BRITAIN'S USE OF SEA POWER IS A TOPIC OF DEBATE

[Special Dispatch.]

LONDON,

It is recorded that Thomas Jefferson once said in regard to the action of the British government of his time that the only way to prophesy what they would do was to ascertain what they ought to do and infer the contrary. There are persons in Great Britain in the present day who assert that this rule still holds good.

The explanations which Mr. Churchill and others in authority have given of the inception of the enterprises which could have been undertaken only with the use of the sea power exerted by the Allies has given rise to considerable criticism among professional men. No more interesting study, indeed, for sea officers, and especially those of the United States Navy, could be afforded than that which concerns the employment of the naval superiority which Great Britain mainly has, been able to assert. It is natural that students of naval warfare should compare the incidents and examples of the present conflict at sea with those which occurred when Barham and St. Vincent exercised command, and also with the precepts expounded later by Colomb and Mahan.

From the first day of the war, owing to the relative superiority of the British battle fleet, the Allies obtained the practical control of the sea communications everywhere outside the Baltic. This is demonstrated in the first place by the freedom of action which has been exercised by the war ships of the allied navies, constantly and continually in spite of submarine and mine, and in the second place there has been little hindrance of the streams of mercantile traffic or the transport of millions of troops and munitions of war in the outer seas. It is a striking fact in this connection that Lord Inchcape, the chairman of the P. and O. Company, was able to state last week that the steamships of this line running to the Antipodes and the East have continued during sixteen months of war their regular voyages, with their usual complement of passengers, just as in times of peace, and have been free from loss by enemy action.

With the command of the seas and the control of communications in its hands, the British government had won the first return for the money invested in the fleet. It also had obtained an essential element for the carrying out of expeditions or the exercise of naval power overseaas. In two cases it is seen how this power can be exercised to advantage. One is the action of Lord Fisher in using Vice Admiral Sturdee's battle cruisers for the destruction of Admiral von Spee's covering squadron to the commerce raiders. The second occasion was when Admiral Fisher's pupil and colleague, Admiral Jellicoe, used Vice Admiral Beatty's battle cruisers to turn the scale in the affair in the Bight on August 28, 1914.

Apart from the use of a supremacy of naval power to account for the enemy's war ships, there is its employment in connection with amphibious operations. The examples of this form of exercise fall into two categories, those which were carried out with the object of depriving the enemy of his oversea possessions and those which have been undertaken oversea in Europe and the Near East with the purpose of distressing him or weakening his strength by obliging him to dissipate his forces. The former were uniformly successful. The latter have not been so far fruitful of similarly satisfactory results. It is worth while to examine the cause.