

ON THE BATTLE LINE

The conquest of Serbia is practically complete; and there is a consequent lull in Balkan fighting.

In Mesopotamia the British have been compelled to retire and under present conditions it would seem that all hope of the capture of Baghdad must be for the present abandoned.

No material change has taken place in any front. The Italians are determined and at great cost relentlessly closing in on Gorizia. The Italian campaign is carried on under incredible difficulties but with steady even if very slow progress.

In the Balkans for some time there will be little actual fighting. The Franco-British army in Macedonia has no longer any reason for moving hastily, and Russia and Italy will not be in a position to join in a combined converging movement from south, east and west until February or March. The interval will be occupied in preparation and in strengthening out the difficulties that have arisen with Greece. Before the general advance begins the Franco-British base at Saloniki will be cleared of Greek troops, and the harbor will be absolutely under control of the allied fleet. Only under these conditions could an advance be made with confidence.

A Bucharest despatch to The Central News states that Lemberg has been evacuated by the Austrians because of an epidemic of scurvy. Two hundred fresh cases daily were reported before evacuation was ordered. The Russians are not close enough to make a dash for Lemberg, their nearest positions on the Stripa being some forty-five miles east of the Galician capital. An outbreak of scurvy in the Austrian army is not to be wondered at. The diet of all the Germanic people—in the cities at home as well as in the trenches on the battle line—must make them extremely susceptible to diseases like scurvy. Fresh meat is very scarce, and is bound to become scarcer. Much of the meat diet consists of salted pork, which has been accumulating in the national storehouses because of the killing of immense numbers of hogs for which no foodstuffs could be provided. The whole and seal flesh now being used in Germany and Austria must also be salted, for it could scarcely be brought from the Scandinavian coast across Norway, Sweden and the Baltic in a fresh condition. The food problem may be as important as that of munitions for the Germanic powers by the spring.

The reports from Rome and Vienna indicate that the Italians are once again resorting to artillery preparations before attempting a final assault on the positions in front of Gorizia. Vienna states that on Thursday Gorizia was again subjected to an especially vigorous bombardment, which caused considerable new damage. To the south it is claimed that attacks on Monte St. Michele and near San Martino were repulsed, the Italian detachments which approached San Martino with handbags being annihilated. The Italian report tells of the capture of a part of the Austrian trenches on Santa Maria Hill, on the Tolmino front. In the Trentino some Austrian positions in the valley of the Ledro have been occupied.—Globe, Dec. 4.

THE K. OF C. OATH

SECTARIAN PREJUDICES

As the publisher of The Mercury was one of the four investigators whose report on other pages of this issue will be read with some public interest, it is perhaps not necessary that this paper should make much comment on the report or make a matter that has risen to it, though they are of considerable local importance. It may not be out of the way, however, to express the hope that the facts set forth in the report may ease the feelings of resentment and remove some of the suspicions that have been in the minds of some people regarding their neighbors of different religious faith. The extracts from the alleged Knights of Columbus oath that appeared a year or so ago in some papers were of a kind to awaken resentment; and the whole oath as it has been circulated in leaflet form, while couched in terms so extravagant as to make most intelligent folk at once reject it as something impossible, yet is of that adder-like character which leaves a sting, a hazy suspicion in many minds that are intelligent, but yet in which the seed of prejudice has been sown, perhaps even inherited from forefathers who contended on both sides with the bitterness that dominated a period of less general intelligence. The man who could frame the phraseology of such an oath and falsely fasten it upon other people is a meaner and more contemptible individual than the one who could take the oath; and it is safe to say that whoever fathered it was not a Protestant, in any religious sense, but a man without faith in anything that was good. Possibly suspicion of neighbors who differ in their religious views will never depart from some people, but it may be hoped that the report now published will clear the atmosphere for a majority of the citizens of Renfrew.—The Republic Mercury, November 26th.

T. P. O'CONNOR'S LETTER

OPTIMISTIC FEELING IN ENGLAND

NO THOUGHT OF PEACE UNTIL OBJECT OF WAR IS ATTAINED

London, Dec. 4.—The war to-day is divided into a central performance and an important sideshow. The sideshow is in the Balkans and the central performance is on the two main fronts. These two spectacles constantly interrupt each other and change places almost daily in their interest to the public. On the whole however, the central piece retains its place as the chief attraction. This accounts for a curious fact. Although the people realize the vast importance and the tremendous difficulties of the Balkan situation they pay less attention to it, their minds being so concentrated on the two main fronts that they feel almost indifferent about the other.

This mood is increased by the fact that it is quite impossible to foresee how events will shape themselves in the Balkans. The interval will be occupied in preparation and in strengthening out the difficulties that have arisen with Greece. Before the general advance begins the Franco-British base at Saloniki will be cleared of Greek troops, and the harbor will be absolutely under control of the allied fleet. Only under these conditions could an advance be made with confidence.

A still more momentous fact here is that any idea of ending the war until German militarism is crushed is scouted with daily increasing resolution and even with fury. The triumphant return of Lord Kitchener from the near East has renewed, if possible, our determination to wage the war to the bitter end. A candidate for a great Welsh working class constituency has even threatened to break up all meetings venturing to mention peace. These are only a few of the many signs of the indelible and strengthening purpose behind all England. From France also come daily reports that the French people are equally determined to go on until Germany is ready to accept the peace terms she would now scout.

It is scarcely necessary to add that the performances of Henry Ford and his comrades are received here with laughter and resentment. Meanwhile all news dispatches from Germany mention food riots and the many inquiries of her popular newspapers as to when and where the war will end, together with discreet whisperings of peace from various capitals, all are interpreted here as demonstrating that Germany knows that she has reached her maximum and that she must soon begin to decline before the ever increasing forces of men, munitions and money arrayed against her. No one has protested more strongly against a premature peace than the late Lord Edmund and Lord Dillon. Ireland backs them by having already sent, according to an official statement issued by Lord Lieutenant Wimborne, one hundred thousand men? Within the last few weeks she has added six thousand to the foregoing number and is making further additions daily.

Lord Derby's successful campaign has demonstrated by the readiness with which recruiting has gone forward and the vast increase of recruits everywhere that England has finally determined she is going to win without concession.

So much has been written about Winston Churchill, especially in the last few weeks, that it is difficult to add anything about him. Yet there are certain aspects of his very complex and strong character that are not generally understood, except by those who have had an opportunity to study him from close at hand, so that I hope to add something to the many portraits drawn of him. And the first question that will occur to the reader is, how is it that a man of such extraordinary personality, of such boundless energy, of such daring and varied experience in military affairs, has been allowed to drop out of the supreme direction of the greatest of all wars at this one of its most critical moments. I need not give proof of his energy; he showed that to all the world when he was at the Admiralty. The reader gets almost dizzy as he reads of his work not from week to week but day by day. He was either down a submarine or up an aeroplane or visiting a dockyard or taking a cruise. And he did some at least of these things at considerable personal inconvenience. Like Nelson, Winston is nearly always dreadfully seasick. There is a good story of himself and Mr. Asquith when they were taking one of these cruises. Mr. Asquith's almost inhuman health makes him indifferent to the seasickness of the stormiest ocean, and he can sit on deck through a storm, placidly reading a book and taking his regular meals. Winston has not the gift of taciturnity; he is a very bad listener; while Mr. Asquith is a very good one. So Winston kept thundering away, his face growing steadily greener and greener, until at last he had to make a bolt to his cabin. "Just like Winston," was Mr. Asquith's comment, "perorating to the last." Similarly Mr. Churchill had to take his aerial flights in spite of remonstrances of his beautiful wife to whom alone his masterful temper is a slave; and when he had done it a certain number of times she struck, and he had to promise to abstain from such perilous flights for a

considerable time; indeed I have not heard of him in an aeroplane for a year or so.

But all the time he did work tremendously at the details of his great department. This slight boy with a pale, delicate face, with a slighter frame, with all the appearance of delicate health, has within him the consuming flame of activity. He is never able to rest apparently even for a second. He is not an ascetic; he can enjoy a boisterous and luxurious meal with the best. He smokes a lot—not cigarettes as his father did, but big cigars, and throughout every meal he talks incessantly; and not in the gentle, subdued, unimpassioned tone of the typical Englishman, but eagerly, feverishly, interruptedly, always with a vivaciousness of phrase and vivacity of opinion. But he can stand up for a lengthy meal, and sit down at his desk, and remain up to the small hours, and often rise again early in the morning, apparently as eager for feverish work as if the previous day has been one of somnolent Sabbath rest. In that respect he is quite unlike that other fiery particle who resembles him in so many respects and differs from him in so many more—Mr. Lloyd George; for though no man can work more fiercely and more feverishly than Lloyd George, no man can take rest with such abandon. If you visit him on Sunday at his little home on Walton Heath, especially in the afternoon, you will probably find him on two arm chairs sleeping soundly. I doubt if Winston was ever found sleeping soundly in the middle of the day in the whole course of his life. But that also is his temperament, which may be compared to radium in its power of giving out tremendous energy and yet retaining all its own. Thus it was that during Mr. Churchill's tenure of the Admiralty the Navy increased not merely in numbers, but in leaps and bounds, beyond anything ever heard of before. Do not suppose that he was able to carry out his programme without obstacles. There was scarcely a big change which he had not to carry out against innumerable obstacles and against opponents, powerful, organized, not very sympathetic to him personally, not very fearful of him, divided in the past by acute political differences before Winston had changed from a Tory to a Liberal. There are stories of a stormy Cabinet council, in which poor Winston, standing alone with his back to the wall, had to undergo severe cross-examination at the hands of some of the keenest minds of the country. His own schemes were much more grandiose than those he ultimately succeeded in getting adopted; and when the schemes when they got the backing of the Cabinet had to run the gauntlet in the House of Commons of that severe and straight school of Radical and pacifist economists who were, before the war, such vehement opponents of the growth of armaments.

The war justified Winston; for the peril he had realized was seen to be no nightmare of a megalomaniac imagination, but a solid reality. It was he who Prince Battenberg who had been to have died immediately mobilized when the War broke out; and if it had not been that the declaration of war was postponed he might have smashed up a good part of the German fleet before it had succeeded in making good its flight into the Kiel Canal and under the shadow of the great coast fortifications of Germany. And the work the fleet has done so completely since, in driving the German shipping, both commercial and military, from all the seas, has justified his years of feverish preparations.

Finally, there was this tremendous advantage of having a man of his boundless energy and fiery courage in the supreme War Council at this critical moment, that alone of the prominent politicians of the hour, he has military knowledge and experience. Though his military career, counted by hours, has been short it has been varied, exciting, illuminating. He saw an immense deal of the Boer War; he saw campaigning on the Indian frontier; he was in the great charge at Omdurman. In addition he has read military science and history extensively, and has a phenomenally retentive memory. I have been told that when a military problem comes up, he is able to startle his colleagues by a bit of local knowledge—that there is a marsh here, a forest there, an inaccessible and difficult mountain there, and thus is able to prevent a military movement that might be disastrous.

Why then, recurs the difficult question, is such a man allowed to rob his country and his comrades of such tremendous gifts, and allowed to go off to expose his life to the hungry guns of the enemy that hate him so fiercely, like any Tommy? I can only guess at the reasons, for I have not like his colleagues lived with him day and night. But the chief reason, I should say, is that he is a difficult colleague, what the French call *un mauvais coucheur* fellow. He is so self-confident, so dominating, so self-centered, so impulsive at the same time and so grandiose, that his judgment cannot be relied on. Under control he might be the most useful of ministers, but he cannot be controlled. You can see that between the lines of the self-restrained speech in which he so triumphantly for the moment vindicated his ministerial career; for throughout all the dramatic scenes you see him tearing, raging, perspiring, still in the end, he bursts through all the wire entanglements raised by more frigid minds and

more inactive temperaments, and so committed the nation to enterprises, of which only the startling success could be the justification. His colleagues may have had the experience that men and women have in daily life, the exhaustion and the mad desire to escape that is produced by a companion whose ceaseless and feverish activity eat up the patience and the energy and the vitality of all companions.

SIDELIGHTS ON THE GREAT WAR

"THE CHILD'S FACE HAUNTS ME STILL"

"The question of compulsory service," said Lord Edmund Talbot, "ought not now to be the subject of public controversy. I believe that the great majority of the people will fall in with its adoption if the Government see fit to introduce it. When the war started there was one man who really knew what the war meant. That man was Lord Kitchener, who will tell us without fail, and lose no time in doing so, when a change in our present system becomes necessary. Lord Kitchener is not the man to shirk or delay a duty when he thinks the time has arrived when a change should be brought about." Lord Edmund went on to speak of the atrocities committed by German soldiers, and related an incident which showed how completely the German soldier is the slave of his officer.

When the Germans took Brussels (he said) a friend of mine was engaged there nursing the wounded and the sick. Under her care was a German soldier. He kept asking her, "Am I going to die? I can't die." He added, "I am not fit to die." When she had quietened him she asked him what was on his mind, and he said: "I've shot a woman—I've shot a child. The woman was bad enough, but the child's face haunts me still. I can't die. I face not to blame. My officer held a pistol to my head until I did it."

MR. GROSCHE'S WAR CATECHISM

In the War Catechism compiled by Mr. Grosche occur the following question and answer:

The Question is: "Why not wait for conscription and let the burden fall equally upon all?" The answer is: "Because tens of thousands of all classes have gone to defend their country without conscription. Your forefathers did not wait for conscription when their honour and the honour of their country were at stake." The catechism has been very valuable in obtaining recruits for the 1st Battalion (21st Middlesex).

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND VIEW

A correspondent of The Church Times says:

The temper of the French clergy at this critical time is one of the finest things in history. For years they had been treated with contempt by the Government of their country, and the country had tolerated this usage; within the last ten years they have been despised even of their own people; the Bishop of Meaux himself had been driven from the historic mansion of the great Bossuet—now in process of conversion into a drapery museum—to find a humble abode in a by street of the city. Have they sulked? Have they watched with malignant satisfaction the troubles which have befallen the nation guided by their enemies? Have they refused to work with the disturbers of their peace? Nothing of the kind. They have not only done so, but they have loyally what the laws made by their predecessors demanded of them, even to the last sacrifice of all, but in a hundred ways they have rendered help neither enforced nor expected, they have supported the *de facto* government of France as if it were a government of their own choice, they have thrown themselves into every breach left open by the constituted authorities, and without receiving or expecting a word of thanks have cheerfully filled every place thus occupied to the returning authority which could claim it as of right.

A WONDERFUL CROWD

A private whose letter from the Dardanelles is published in the Daily News, writes:

It was fine to see our boys under fire. You would have thought they had been in battle every day for years by their coolness. I tell you that the officers were fine. There was never anything like them. They joked and kidded the men, and looking along my own platoon at one of the most trying minutes of the day I saw nothing by a line of grinning faces. We were through the barbed wire and over their parapet before you could say knife.

And now let me tell you something which is astounding. Of my platoon (and I believe it is the case of the company and of the whole battalion with few exceptions) not one had ever been a soldier. In my platoon we have a London solicitor, half a dozen workmen, several railwaymen, two commercial travellers (friends), the boots of a London hotel, a policeman, a bookbinder, two shop assistants, a barman, a taxi cab driver, an Oxford undergraduate. What a crowd! But they fought like devils, and a Turkish officer who was taken prisoner said it was the worst fight he had been in, though he had helped defend and retake the Haricot three times.

It takes a quiet observer to realize the emptiness of earthly things.

Special to the Record

"VENGEANCE IS MINE"

Marshal your mailed battalions; muster your swords and guns; Call to the feast of Moloch the cream of the nations' sons; Sweep like a plague of locusts over the fertile land; Wade through the reek of slaughter up to the throne you planned.

Crimson the earth with murder; people the deep with ghosts; Flaunt in the face of Judgment the serried lines of your hosts; Crazed with the devil blood lust, march to your ruthless goal, Reaping the gory harvest of War's relentless toll.

What though the sheaves of corpses cumver the smiling plain? What though the tears of women fall thick as the winter's rain? What though ten thousand orphans are homeless in the night? Who dares reject true Culture must feel the War Lord's might.

Is there a God of Justice? Why doth He stay His Hand? Are there no graves in Flanders? no dead in the fair French land? How long shall outraged Honor call Vengeance from on high? Must mothers weep for ever, and helpless infants die?

Fashion a fleeting Empire, strong in your vaunted might, With muskets and mailed battalions—but God protects the Right. Alike must victor and victim bend before His sway, Judgment waits on your infamies, and it is to day.

—REV. D. A. CASEY

"BILLY" SUNDAY'S SERMONS

To the Editor of The Daily News:

Since reading your article on Mr. Sunday's speech, I have seen no comment opposed to such a man being allowed to appear in public. I do feel it my duty to write you, as I am a member of a family just old enough to gain much knowledge in reading the daily papers. If such expressions of indecency and blasphemy of God's holy name were actually heard in public, that man has done more harm than good to a large community, and has even aroused our little home to the height of indignation.

What are the censors doing to allow such a man to appear on a platform in Toronto? I have read in your paper of their refusal to allow fight films to appear in public, from which the proceeds were to go to the comforts of our brave soldiers, and their particular reason was the moral effect on the public mind. These same people allowed a man with the notorious reputation of having the vilest, lowest, repulsive flow of indecent language—who has shocked the United States into rebuke—these men allowed such a man to appear in public and corrupt the minds of your fair Toronto. The temperance cause has surely been given a setback, because if such scandalous methods must be used to arouse public sentiment on temperance, the cure is worse than the disease as we all well know there is no evil worse than the vile tongue, and the hotel, under a license and under such strict regulations, is not half as destructive as the sermon of "Billy" Sunday.

A MOTHER
North Bay, Ont., Nov. 25, 1915.

A MATTER OF TASTE IN READING

(Continued.)
"The pen is mightier than the sword"—an old and true saying. As the sword is mighty for good or evil, so it is with the pen. The good or evil which the former can do is so obvious that words are not needed to point it out. The good or bad deeds wrought by the pen are not so evident. The harm it can do is tremendous, yet so subtly does this harm work that we are to a great extent unconscious of its effects; hence our open and unguarded attitude toward it. It is my purpose here to say a few words about that great curse arising from a deadly abuse of the pen—The Yellow Journal.

When a written article is out and out dirty it is, like the mixture that is labelled poison, a warning in itself. But the stuff in the yellow journal is not marked in this fashion. The dirt is there all right, but the label is missing. In order to hide its rotteness it is so doctored up with all kinds of appetizing spices that its hungry readers, blinded and goaded on by their gluttony, soon fall helpless victims to their own cravings.

Many of these same readers would boast about their spirit of democracy. They would be loud in their scorn for those who would bow the knee to any potentate, local or foreign. Yet, poor, misguided creatures that they are, are unknown to themselves they are the abject slaves of an unscrupulous master. His Majesty, The Yellow Journal, who, like a hypnotist, leads them about and does with them what he will.

The yellow paper is not in demand until it creates a demand. To do this it strives to outdo its competitors in the quality of the matter it contains. To add to the number of its readers it endeavors to be just a little more sensational, sentimental and suggestive than its yellow contemporaries. If it succeeds in this, and can hide a maximum of dirt in a minimum of cleanliness, financial

Your Savings

The War has already brought great changes. National leaders in all countries are urging the practice of Thrift. The Prime Minister of Great Britain said recently: "There remains only one course . . . to diminish our expenditure and increase our savings."

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success is assured, and that is the one thing its owners are after. But the demand presupposes the formation of a taste, and that is just where the yellow paper gets a hold on its readers. It entices them with its allurements and they soon become its victims.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." The time to prevent, of course, is at the beginning. It therefore rests mainly with parents to see to it that a taste for bad literature is not formed in the minds of their children. The one way to forestall an evil taste is to create a good taste by keeping bad literature away from them and supplying them with good, interesting literature suitable to their years.

The Catholic Truth Society is doing a great good in its campaign for spreading cheap-priced literature. What an immense amount of good might be done by a society which would undertake a similar campaign in the cause of good literature for children. Reading cheap in price like this is needed to offset the influence of the trashy 5 cent story book and the dime novel. At least some of the Catholic weeklies retain in them a corner for children, which is an excellent idea. Might it not be an improvement to make such a corner even a little more attractive by having over it some kind of a large artistic heading that would at once catch the eyes of the children. By having the matter below printed in larger type might also prove attractive for them.

If some of the things which I suggested in this article would be carried out I believe that in the future there would be a smaller number of Catholic grown-ups among the readers of the yellow newspapers and yellow magazines.

ENGLISH BIGOTS SHOULD GO SLOW

Ultra-Protestants in England were very wroth when the British government sent a cordial letter of thanks by her ambassador in Rome to the Holy Father in regard to his intervention on the subject of prisoners. The Sovereign Pontiff was very gracious to Sir Henry Howard, and expressed his intention of continuing to do all in his power to ameliorate the miseries inflicted by the war.

The bigots object to this exchange of amenities with Rome. They had better turn their eyes nearer home, however, for on the feast of the Assumption, in a prominent Anglican church in London, the vicar urged the congregation not to array themselves on the side of what was worst in eastern Christianity.

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FATHER FRASER'S CHINESE MISSION

Taichowfu, March 22, 1915.

Dear Readers of CATHOLIC RECORD: Yesterday (Passion Sunday) I laid the corner-stone of the church in Taichowfu. The former church was too small for the crowds who are being converted in the city and neighboring towns. Even with the new addition of forty-eight feet and a gallery it will be too small on the big feasts. May God be praised Who designs to open months to His praises in the Far East to replace those stilled in death in Europe. And may He shower down His choicest blessings on my benefactors of the CATHOLIC RECORD, who are enabling me to hire catechists, open up new places to the Faith, and to build and enlarge churches and schools. Rest assured, dear Readers, that every cent that comes my way will be immediately put into circulation for the Glory of God.

Your gratefully in Jesus and Mary, J. M. FRASER.

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