

## FRANCE FORTIFIED.

Descriptive Sketch of the Armed Barriers Which Germany Will Have To Climb in Order to Conquer.

By seizing the railway lines of the Duchy of Luxemburg at the very outset of hostilities between herself and France, Germany is doing only what military experts have always predicted she would do should war break out. Press despatches emphasize the fact that in so doing Germany is violating the neutrality of the Duchy; Luxemburg was declared neutral territory in 1867 and its integrity and independence jointly guaranteed by the Great Powers at that time. No one has ever supposed, however, that Germany would be bound by any such guarantee in the event of war.

To understand the significance of Germany's course of action it is necessary to know something about that vexed territory, the Franco-German border, running from the Swiss mountains on the south, to where the river Meuse enters Belgian territory, and even beyond that, where the Belgian fortresses of Namur and Liege guard the river, the real strategic boundary between the

two countries, although the political boundary, established by the Treaty of Frankfurt in 1871, runs some miles to the eastward.

### German Strategy

It is to be hoped at this point that Germany has no fortification on her side of the boundary. German military strategy has staked everything upon the chance of an early and immediate success after the outbreak of war. If they fail in that they have no defensive line upon which to fall back and the failure to achieve immediate success under such a policy means defeat.

France, on the other hand, has adopted no such policy. Following the establishment of the new boundary between the two countries, after her defeat in 1870-1, France at once set about the task of making the new boundary between herself and her conqueror "impregnable," or as nearly so as the science of fortification could make it.

### Means to Delay

Modern fortification is not intended to protect a weaker power from a stronger one permanently, it is meant only to delay an invading force until the nation which is acting on the defensive can bring up her troops to compel the invader to employ three men for every man employed by the defender, in a word to give the defensive force time in which to act. Wars within recent years, notably the Russo-Japanese and Balkan wars have demonstrated the soundness of this theory. Port Arthur and the Tschatalja lines showed the effectiveness of the modern fortress against even the strongest besieging forces.

With this object in mind France set about the creation of her great series of ring fortresses.

### Great Series of Forts

Beginning just above the Swiss Alps France built the first of this series of great forts at Belfort. North of Belfort comes a stretch of mountainous country, the Vosges so difficult of access and transit as to form a natural barricade needing little or no artificial strengthening.

Just behind the Vosges country lies the second ring fortress, Epinal. Then comes Toul, then Verdun in the Meuse river and just above Verdun the Meuse enters Belgian territory.

Were Germany in the habit of respecting treaties it would be unnecessary for France to consider fortification above this point, but no one has ever supposed that, in the event of war, Germany would respect any declaration of neutrality made by Belgium or for Belgium by any other power. Therefore the continued fortification of the Meuse in Belgium territory is of cardinal importance to France. This fortification is ensured by the existence of two great Belgium strongholds, one at Namur and the other at Liege.

### Germany's Plans

Now, the series of obstacles makes it altogether probable that Germany, instead of trying to pierce through the centre of the frontier as she did in 1870 will attempt to turn the flank, or get around the end, of the line of forts. Where will she do this?

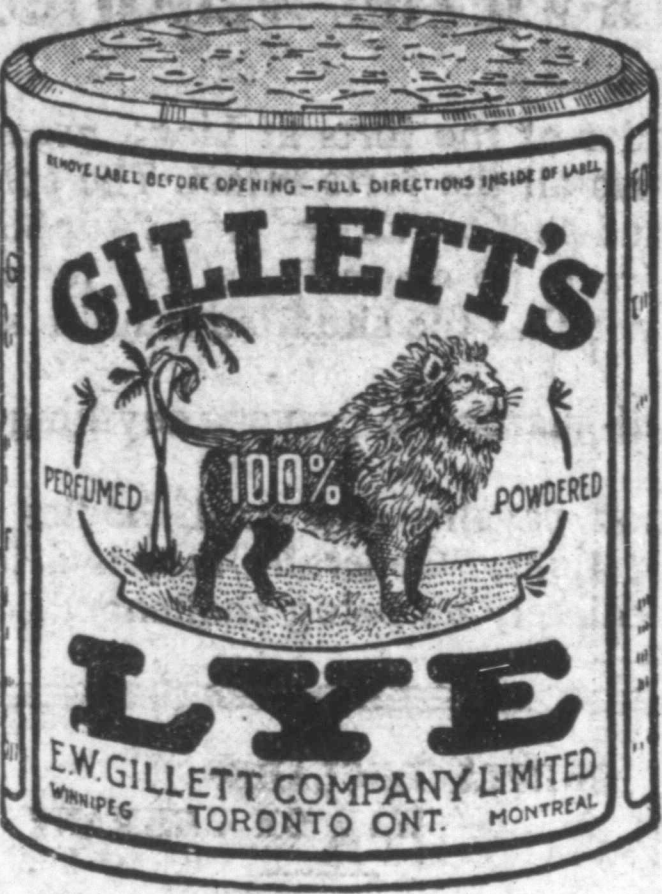
To attempt to turn the French line to the south would mean the marching of great bodies of troops through exceedingly difficult countries. Supposing even that Switzerland consented to the violation of her territory by Germany, the country to the south of the French line is a mass of mountains, intersected by few roads where a small force of defenders would have all the advantage and where the difficulties of debouching into open country after crossing the mountains would be very great in the face of an opposing army.

### Weak Spot

With these great difficulties in the way of a turning movement to the south it is safe to assume—an assumption borne out furthermore by the seizure of the Luxemburg railway—that Germany will turn her attention to the north end of the French line.

As we have seen, France and Bel-

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gum have not been under any illusions as to the likelihood of Germany's respecting Belgium neutrality, hence Namur and Liege. The German attack would have to be made along the line of the lower Meuse River. The Germans cannot cross the Meuse lower down than Liege and march through Belgium, neglecting Liege, because if they do so their line of communication, the breaking of which means defeat to any army, would run between Liege and Antwerp with strong garrisons and with a third fortress, Namur, a little further on the line of advance. Antwerp and Liege lie far apart but the former is indefinitely suppliable by sea and, so long as Germany does not control the sea, can be made the base for an ever increasing force. Similarly a German force cannot cross between Namur and Liege for the same reason, the necessity of protecting its line of communication. Nor is it likely that the Germans can attack Namur before Liege since Liege stands nearer the German frontier than does Namur. Between Namur and Verdun there is a long gap, but the frontier here, the Ardennes, as in the case of the Vosges, is mountainous, ill-provisioned, preceptuous and thickly-wooded. Military critics do not believe that the Ardennes march could be undertaken, till Liege, the most northerly stronghold in the French system, had been reduced. It is not so inaccurate as it sounds to speak of Liege as an integral part of the French fortification of her eastern frontier as is any other of the great ring fortresses. It, together with Namur is garrisoned by Belgian troops in times of peace, a source of weakness owing to scarcity of numbers and dissimilarity of training.

### What Will Follow?

Presuming, therefore that German troops cross the frontier with Liege as their objective point, for reasons which we have seen, what is likely to follow?

If one may judge by the war history of the past ten years, a long and bloody siege for Liege is one of the best examples in Europe of the ring fortress.

The ideal ring fortress would be a town capable of ample provisioning and lying within an exact circle of heights of an average of some 8000 yards distance, each height some 4000 yards from the next, each crowned with a self-contained closed work and each such work within support of at least two others. Skill and the natural conformation of the ground have combined to make almost these ideal conditions around Liege.

### Liege's Strength

The great strength of Liege is that it is on the main avenue of approach from Germany. On the north the whole half circle of fort around the city lie on crests overlooking gradually falling ground. There is not a yard of ground around any of the forts which cannot be swept by a supporting fire from one or more adjoining forts and there is a "key fort" the carrying of which would mean the domination of the whole situation.

To sum up: it seems inevitable that Liege and the lower Meuse will be the objective point of the earlier German attacks, that the idea of "rushing" Liege must be abandoned and that the stronghold must be reduced by a regular siege before a general German advance into Belgium is safe and that to bring about this reduction of the city a large force will have to be employed for some time. For Germany to attempt to invade France through the centre of her line of fortifications would mean a delay sufficient to enable France to concentrate her troops and, what is more would give Russia the time needful to throw an enormous mass of soldiers across Germany's western frontier.

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## TERRIBLE FACTS INVOLVED IN WAR

### Twenty Million Men Now Armed For the Fight—A Comparison of the Standing and Efficiency of the Various Armies

Boston, Aug. 3.—"With Russia coming to the aid of Serbia in the present war," said Lieut.-Gen. Nelson A. Miles, "it is difficult to see how the rest of the six powers must be drawn into the conflict, and no man can say what the result will be."

"If Russia stays out and Germany, as she now says she will do, backs Austria, it will simply amount to Austria's taking possession of Serbia and doing as she pleases with that country."

Gen. Miles was in Boston on his way to the opening of the Cape Cod Canal.

### Terrible Thing

"It is a terrible thing to contemplate," he continued, "for if Europe is involved it means that there will be nearly 20,000,000 men available for war. Russia alone can put 6,000,000 to 7,000,000 men in the field, and Austria would make a far different showing than she did in the war with Japan."

"Then she had to take her soldiers 5,000 miles over a single track railroad, which was in poorer condition than any one of our own six trans-continental lines. The Russian army is now in good condition and very powerful."

### Big Armies

"Germany can put 5,500,000 men in the field; Austria can show 2,500,000; France, 2,000,000, and Italy, 1,000,000. Just what Greece, Roumania and Bulgaria will do is problematical. You know that last summer Roumania took advantage of the situation when Serbia and Bulgaria were at war to mobilize 200,000 of her army of 400,000, threw troops right across the Danube and seize Bulgarian territory, which Roumania still holds. What she will do in the present crisis I cannot say."

### England's Position

"I cannot guess, either how many men England can put into the field. Her standing army is not so very remarkable, but if she calls in territorial troops from India, she can produce a vast army. I do not think so many would come from her other colonies. Neither Canada nor Australia is a thickly settled country, and the troops from there would be correspondingly few."

"Austria's army is in good condition. It has not been actually engag-

ed for a good many years and is well recruited and finely trained.

"I had some opportunity to accumulate information about the armies of Eastern Europe last summer when I visited my son. He is the military attache in the Balkan States—for we have one Minister who is accredited to Roumania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece jointly."

### Forces Engaged

"Yes, military attaches will be present at the war, if there is one, as observers for their governments. It is probable that they will be kept very much in the rear, more than in any previous war. But they will be given sufficient information after military movements to enable them to write accurately to their governments the dispositions that they have made."

"I agree entirely with those who predict that this will be one of the bloodiest wars of all history and that it may very probably be the last great war."

"As to the first proposition, you will remember that the fighting last summer was close enough to Belgrade so that we would hear the artillery fire plainly in the city."

"Few people appreciate the fact

that there were 750,000 men in that fighting—300,000 Bulgarians, 300,000 Serbs and 150,000 Greeks. There was a frightful loss of life. Bulgaria in the war against Turkey lost 86,000 men in killed and wounded. I do not know the other losses.

"The expense of keeping 20,000,000 men in the field, the fact that millions of men would be taken from industry, the cost of their equipment, which in these modern days is a very high expense, the cost of their maintenance, the cessation of commerce and transportation, makes a terrible total."

"The war debts simply cannot be borne by the people of the Continent at this rate for long, and I hope and expect that the day will come when we shall see established a congress of nations for arbitrations."

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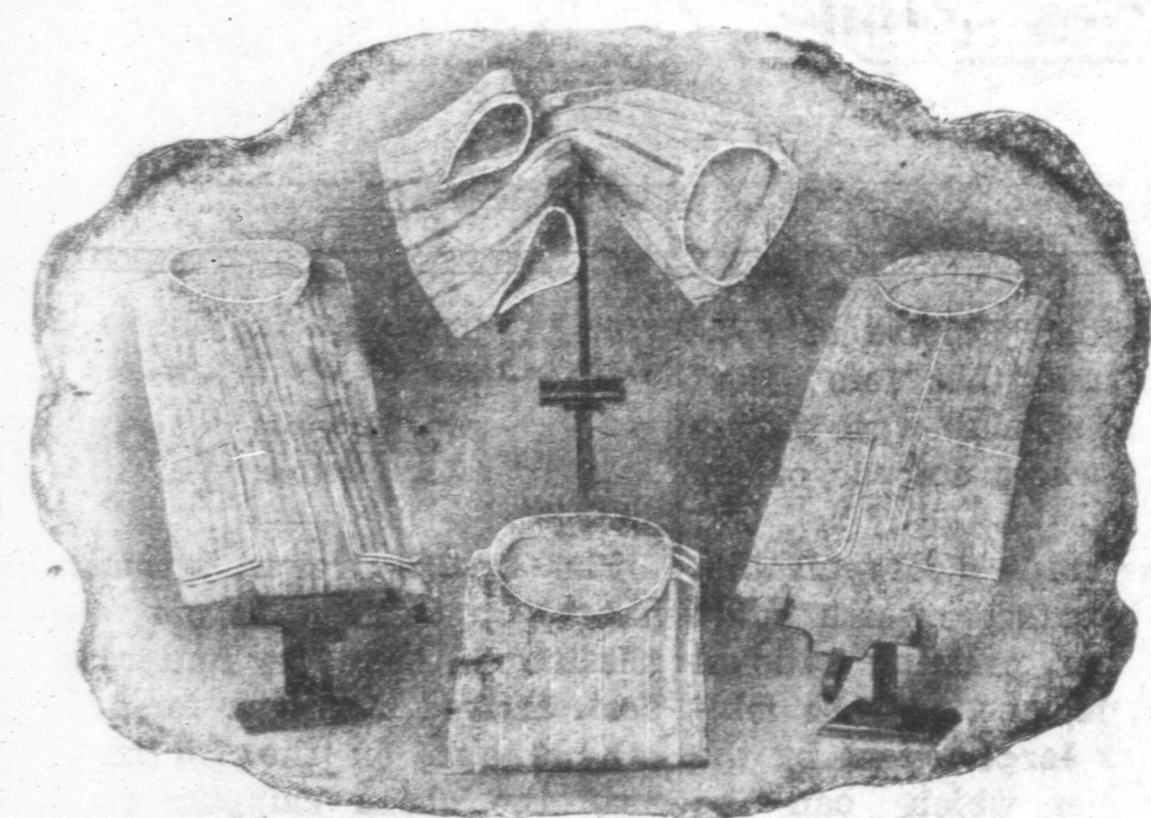
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