

The Weekly Ontario

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Thursday, December 31, 1914.

MASTERLY STRATEGY.

In Sir John French's last despatches, the full text of which is printed in the English papers, just received, a great deal of light is thrown upon the masterly strategy and brilliant operations of the Allied forces in the western theatre. The despatches of the British Commander-in-Chief describe the doings of the British Army for two months from the beginning of October, when the British troops were moved from the Aisne to meet the German danger in Southwest Belgium and Flanders. They are full of most interesting and valuable details, and show how the present position, where the opposing armies face each other on fronts that almost touch, without being able to make any decisive progress, developed, and what different results were hoped for when the British Army was moved north.

Sir Douglas Haig, commanding the forces near Ypres had, it seems, been ordered in late October to advance through Western Belgium towards Bruges. The attempt was never made, because the enemy was found to be in numbers far too great to permit of success. It now appears from Sir John French's report that the initiative in this movement from the Aisne to Flanders came from Sir John French. At first the enemy's resistance was not forbiddingly strong, and a considerable and continuous advance was made. After a while, however, German reinforcements arrived in great numbers. The advancing British were brought to a halt, and the enemy took up the attack. Heavy losses fell on both sides, those of the enemy being immense, but no decisive result was obtained. The British, though they lost some ground, on the whole, maintained their position against much more numerous forces.

The strategical idea of the transference of the British troops from the Aisne to Flanders and the establishment of the British line from the sea to La Bassee has, the Manchester Guardian says, a strong family likeness to some of Sir John French's most successful movements in the South African War. If it did not achieve an equally startling strategical success, the reason, the Guardian thinks, is not in the execution but in the unlooked for difficulties of the operations and in the promptness with which the Germans recognized the danger and the extreme vigor of their counter-measures.

"It is a great feat," says the Guardian, "with about 200,000 men to have acted as lightning-conductor to the whole offensive strength of the German army in the west. At one time Sir John French hoped that he might be able to swing his left—the glorious First Army Corps, under Sir Douglas Haig—round to Bruges and even Ghent. In that hope he was disappointed owing to the overwhelming concentration of the Germans, and there was even a time, before the French troops were able to arrive in force, as they did at the beginning of November, when our situation was one of extreme danger. It is impossible to read the account of the fighting on October 30, for example, without recognizing that the British Army passed on that day a crisis comparable with that of the memorable Wednesday after the Battle of Mons. And the crisis was far more prolonged, for it lasted the better part of a fortnight.

"Though we did not succeed in getting round the German flank, we succeeded in preventing the Germans from getting round ours, and in doing so we inflicted upon the Germans the most severe tactical defeats that they have met with in the war, not even excepting those in Poland. To withdraw our troops from before the strong positions of the enemy on the Aisne and transfer them to the other end of the line was a most difficult operation, and is most fascinatingly described in these new despatches. The enemy, apparently, was not taken by surprise, and the same idea of a march by the coast seems to have occurred to both sides almost simultaneously. But, whereas our project was only a hope, and just failed at the critical moment for lack of numbers to bring off what would have been a brilliant success comparable to, if not greater than, the victory on the Marne, the Germans put their whole weight into their turning movement. Calais became an obsession of their strategy. One has only to read the despatches carefully to see that our transference was only just in time. A few more days' delay and not all the heroism of the British Army could have

saved it. Sir John French praises its exploits in glowing terms, and it is just that we should recognize that the strategy of Sir John French had as great a part in the defeats inflicted on the German plans as the valor and endurance of the troops."

A detailed study of the operations will well repay itself in better knowledge of the tremendous struggle that the British army has had to fight. Two points, however, are noted by the Manchester Guardian's reviewer "as emerging clearly from even a first reading. One is the splendid comradeship that exists between the two armies—or rather three, for the Belgian army took a magnificent part in the defence of the Allies' line. The other—and it has not been understood generally—is that our assistance to Antwerp was not confined to the Naval Brigade. A strong force under General Rawlinson assisted in the retreat of the Belgian army from Antwerp, and this army was for a time not under the command of Sir John French but of Lord Kitchener, issuing instructions from home. Let no one, therefore, be heard again to say that the measures taken at Antwerp were a personal eccentricity of the First Lord of the Admiralty."

And the ladies never came, after all

Is Belleville's mayoralty contest to be quadrilateral, triangular or binocular?

There is not a word of truth in that rumor that some of the candidates for the B. O. E. were frightened on account of those suffragette threatenings.

She who bluffs and runs away
May live to run another day;
And she who is by ballots slain
Can work the bluff and run again.

And now the stupid men are doing their level best to study out whether that much heralded raid on the Belleville Board of Education was merely a bit of feminine bluff, or whether its failure to materialize was due to nervous breakdown. There are strong arguments being used to support both theories.

Several members of Belleville 1914 Council speaking at once—
You see that pavement smooth and fine,
All finished with a concrete kerb;
You see them lights that glow and shine,
And make our town a joy superb;
You see your street so well its gravelled,
With ne'er a rut or stone to mar it;—
Our fame it far abroad has travelled
And not a knocker dares to bar it.
Along our front new railways glide
The good C. N., the great C. P.,
A handsome dock at Quinte's side,
From whence ships journey to the sea.
Behold our schools that cap each hill!
The progress bee is in our bonnet—
I hate to praise myself, but still,
The truth must come at last,—I done it.

NEUTRAL.

When men are told in years ahead
How Fury forced the Belgian Door
And ravished maids, struck children dead,
And fired the houses of the poor,
Will none, if that nation lives,
Our sires with blood and sweat begat,
Ask with the pride your greatness gives,
"What said America to that?"

Your children, taught how Belgium stood
In flames that once were called Louvain,
And dashing from their eyes the blood,
Struck at her foe, and struck again—
Shall see their hearts within them burn
To know the righteous word you said,
God! when the silent truth they learn,
Surely your sons shall hang the head.

We ask not that of all your hosts
One man, one sword, be sacrificed;
Your cousins guard these ancient coasts,
Your kinsmen charge this Antichrist;
But we expect your mighty voice
With judgment through the world to run.
O' Land of Freedom, make your choice—
Are you for Belgium or the Hun?

We ask not that your shells should shriek
Above the flaming hill we climb,
But speak, O Sons of Lincoln, speak,
Silence in such an hour is crime.
Your children judge you if you stand
In hearing of the Belgian cry,
Not only with the folded hand,
But with the cold averted eye.

The soul has got its piercing steel,
The heart its fierce consuming fire—
O make your voice, like thunder-peal,
All nations of the earth inspire!
We know your heart for Belgium bleeds,
But speak your soul, declare your mind,
Speak till the sin-red Tyrant bleeds
The Voice of God and all mankind.

—Daily Chronicle, (London, England).

GERMAN DUNGLERS

Charles Francis Adams in the notable letter of his which was printed in the London Spectator a few weeks ago advised his Old Country friends to let American opinion form its own conclusions on the justice of Britain's case, adding that German spokesmen in the United States were doing that was required in putting Germany into disrepute with intelligent opinion in the United States.

The columns of the American press furnish daily evidence how shrewdly Mr. Adams has described the situation. A recent number of the New York Outlook contains two articles, giving the German point of view by present residents of the United States. Dr. Elvin Ancel, one of these contributors, in developing his theory that the United States should have given warm support to Germany, make this observation:

"I have kept myself from a discussion of the ethical questions involved in the stand taken by America. Germany did right or did wrong; it does not matter which. But however that may be, the very interests of the United States require a very victorious Germany and a humbled Japan and England. Therefore, the American policy is more unpardonable than crime."

The other German champion, Dr. Franz Junge, also throws moral considerations overboard. He remarks:

"Nor is it consistent with the rule of reason, which governs the destinies of the United States, to introduce moral considerations of abstract justice into the settling of international disputes, with which the waging of war has never had anything to do."

Dr. Junge makes virtual admission too that the war is due to Germany's belief that she is entitled, if she is strong enough, to take what she wants from the nations now in possession of that which she desires:

"To destroy the monopoly in restraint of trade which Great Britain has established on the highways of the seas, to secure the essentials of national supply which we need for the maintenance of our ever-growing people, we wage war—with no apology to cosmopolitanism!"

The reference to Great Britain's "monopoly in restraint of trade on the highways of the seas" is, of course, a mere verbal flourish without meaning. The seas in peace times are as open to German as to British shipping. Just at present it must be admitted Great Britain has, as contrasted with Germany, a decided monopoly in overseas trade.

And finally Dr. Junge lauds the German system of Government in the contrast with the republican self-government of United States. "Why," he wants to know, "should the German people abandon their political system, which has proved successful to the Commonwealth and adopt American institutions, which are notorious for the contrast or discrepancy between recognized political principles and actual political life?" "He contrasts the German freedom which is 'born of discipline' with the American 'liberty' which is born of chaos."

Dr. Junge should be encouraged to write some more articles in eulogy of the beloved Fatherland, its Kaiser, its Kultur, its absolutism and its devotion to the principles of international brigandage. There could be nothing more distasteful to the American sense of what is right and proper than these frank revelations of what passes for thinking these days in the German mind.

The Outlook, which publishes these deliveries, undoubtedly speaks for United States public opinion when it says:

"The Outlook believes that it does matter a great deal whether a country does right or does wrong, and that it is in accord with the rule of reason to introduce moral considerations into the settling of international disputes."

SHEER DESPERATION

In an article under the title of "A Topsy-Turvy War," the London Spectator for Nov. 21 brings together a number of things that have happened which are quite the opposite of what might have been expected. One of these, as the New York Post says, has had a great deal of fresh points added to it by the spectacular German raid on the English coast. What used to be said before the war, says the Spectator, was this:

The navy cannot be expected to watch all the trade routes thoroughly, and the injury to our commerce will, of course, be immense. But at all events, there will be no chance of an invasion at home. After the first naval fighting in the North Sea, that anxiety will be removed forever.

What has actually happened is that the damage to British shipping "has been so slight that the supply and price of necessities have hardly been affected," while on the other hand there is "belief that the Germans may seriously attempt a raid." This belief has now been strikingly verified; and it is inter-

esting therefore to note the ground which the Spectator assigned for it in advance of the event. The probability that the Germans would embark on such an adventure is due, it says, to a "fact that was hardly taken into consideration before the war" namely, "the failure of their grand strategic plan by land."

It is in "the desperate search for some new scheme" caused by that failure that the motive for the prospective raid on the English coast was to be found; and now that the thing has come about that explanation, the New York Post thinks, will doubtless be adhered to.

Let us have a clean election.

Who is your choice for Mayor?

Paint heart never won an election, fair ladies.

Today is a good time to start on the New Year's resolutions.

If the ladies had only come out and played the game then we would have had an election that would make that campaign in Poland look in comparison, like a contest in-throwing bean bags.

The Ontario would suggest that the rival candidates for mayor, instead of spending several hundred dollars each for the so-called "election expenses," should get together and form an agreement not to spend a cent. Then we would further suggest that each devote the probable total of such expenses to the Patriotic fund or to Belgian relief. This would insure a clean election, and, at the same time, give a strong impetus to a worthy cause.

Another amazing "omen of the great war" has come to light. This is attributed to a Portuguese priest, Dom Bosco, who died about ten years ago. The quotation is from the *Matin* of June, 1901, and is as follows:

"In 1913 or 1914 European war will break out. Germany will be completely torn to pieces, but not before the Germans have penetrated into the heart of France, whence they will be forced back to the further banks of the Rhine. An arrogant man will see his family tree cut in splinters and trampled upon by all the world. Great battles will take place on August 15 and September 15. At that time the Pope will die, and live again. Belgium will undergo fearful sufferings, but will rise again and become stronger than ever. Poland will get back her rights."

HYMN BEFORE ACTION.

The earth is full of anger,
The seas are dark with wrath,
The nations in their harness
Go up against our path;
Ere yet we lose the legions—
Ere yet we draw a blade,
Jehovah of the Thunders,
Lord God of Battles, aid!

High lust and forward bearing,
Proud hears rebellious brow—
Deaf ear and soul uncaring.
We seek thy mercy now!
The sinner that forswore Thee,
The fool that passed Thee by
Our times are known before Thee—
Lord, grant us strength to die!

From panic, pride and terror
Revenge that knows no rein,
Light haste and lawless error,
Protect us yet again,
Cloak Thou are undeserving,
Make firm the shuddering breath,
In silence and unswerving
To taste Thy lesser death!

E'en now their vanguard gathers
E'en now we face the fray—
As Thou didst help our fathers,
Help Thou our host to-day!
Fulfilled of signs and wonders
In life and death made clear—
Jehovah of the Thunders,
Lorc. God of Battles, hear!
—Rudyard Kipling.

The Belleville Board of Education will have to struggle along in their rough, inefficient blundering way for another twelve months without the presence of lovely woman at their meetings to mollify the asperities of debate, soothe the members in their hours of trouble, and teach them how to teach the teachers of the city how to teach the young spalpeens of Belleville how to learn how to shoot.

SALISBURY CHAPLAIN WEDS.

LONDON, Dec. 30.—The marriage was celebrated at Lancaster Gate to-day of Major Stacey of Ottawa, senior chaplain of the Canadian forces at Salisbury, to Elsie Mary, eldest daughter of the Hon. Digby Denham, Premier of Queensland. Captain Gordon, a brother chaplain of the bridegroom, was best man. The presents included a handsome gift from the Chaplain's Department.

NAVAL CASUALTIES

That the immense armies of today makes war more sanguinary than at any other authentically recorded era of the world's history in the consensus of military expert opinion. Whether the ratio of casualties to the numbers engaged is higher than in the period when the musket's range was 200 yards may be determined when this war is over and there is opportunity to study the official returns of the killed and wounded, but the loss of life may be safely put down as exceeding the world's past experience of war, tragic as that experience has been. Modern war, which requires armies of millions may be expected to slay its ten thousands where war as it was one hundred years ago was contented with its hundreds.

What is true of war on land applies to war at sea, although the hecatomb is not as conspicuous after a naval battle as after one fought on terra firma. The number of lives lost by the blowing up of the four cruisers—Aboukir, Cressy, Hogue and Hawke, 1804, exceeds by almost three hundred the total casualties sustained by Nelson's fleet at Trafalgar. Assuming that the German flagship *Scharnhorst* was sunk with all on board in the recent battle off the Falklands she carried down with her more than 800 officers and men, a number of victims almost equalling the killed and wounded of the victory of the battle of the Nile, respectively 218 and 678. To get the clearest idea of the contrast between present and old-time naval warfare it must be remembered that Nelson commanded twenty-seven fighting ships at Trafalgar and fifteen at the Nile. The losses of the vanquished in these two battles cannot be stated with precision but they would naturally be heavier than those of the victors, more especially as both the French and the Spaniards crowded their ships with men.

The similarity of contemporary land and naval warfare in the matter of casualties is due to similarity of cause, e.g. development of new engines of destruction and the immense extension of range and power in armament. Not until our Civil War was the torpedo recognized as "legitimate" and the Confederate submarines were the first to exemplify the capabilities of those assassinating craft. Sea fighters up to that time had been governed by the chivalrous traditions engendered in the era when warfare fought yard-arm to yard-arm. Position guns had in 1865 what we of today should consider ridiculously short range. Hence it was that Farragut's fleet was able to force the passage of Mobile Bay with a total loss of 165 killed, of whom 113 were victims of the Confederate torpedo that destroyed the monitor, *Tecumseh*. Today all is changed. The submarine has acquired a deadly efficiency to which the exploits of the Germans bear witness. The great range of guns which throw projectiles weighing hundreds of pounds each seven miles renders the slower and less powerful fleet powerless before it can bring its own batteries to bear. There is scarcely defence possible to the weaker fleet, whereas in old times the inferior force might cherish hope of carrying an opponent by boarding. This was not a wild hope of the Nelson era, for at Trafalgar battling ships literally rubbed against one another and one of the French vessels had to keep its lower deck ports closed because to open them meant to invite more slaughter.

The modern battle fought by fleets and vessels three or more miles apart offers more opportunity for heavier losses in the difficulty attendant on rescuing the crew of a sinking ship. It was easy enough for the victors in old times to get rescuing boats into the water, but now even with steam launches it may easily be too late to succor men desperately battling with the waves at a distance not to be passed without the consumption of considerable time. The causes we have enumerated, together with the greater efficiency of modern as compared with old-time gunnery account for the British navy having sustained in this war the loss of nearly 5000 lives. German returns are not so exact, but probably the total of the slain of the Kaiser's navy does not fall far below that of the British.—Boston Transcript.

T.A.S. HELD CARD PARTY

Under the auspices of the T.A.S. a successful card party was held in St. Michael's Academy last evening. Over three hundred people were in attendance, and eighty tables were in operation. During the evening, Miss K. Bowden and Miss Dorothy Grant sang solos. Mrs. Grant being accompanist. The prizes were won as follows:
Euchre—1st lady—Miss M. Milne;
2nd lady—Miss Dennis; 1st gentleman, 2nd gentleman—S. Flagler, J. V. C. Trusich.
The euchre consolation prizes were awarded to Mr. Mowbray and Miss Lena Meszger.
In bridge, Mrs. James Grant and Dr. Coughlin won the prizes. The trophy prizes were awarded to Miss Rita Hughes and Charles Fannell.
In the "five hundred," the prizes were won by Mr. D. J. Corrigan and Mrs. O'Hara.
A substantial sum was realized for the T. A. S. fund.