

Back to the Mining-Camp Stage

By THE MONOCLE MAN

THE heaviest blow which this war will strike at human happiness is very likely to be the tragic lessening of the trust of peoples in each other which will flow from it. Did it ever occur to you how wholly law and order rest upon our trust in each other? Convince a man that society is deliberately unjust to him, and you produce an active rebel against society and all its works. The average man, however, believes that, roughly, his fellow-men intend to treat him fairly. Individuals may go as far as they can to over-reach him, swindle him, treat him unfairly. But the community, taken as a whole, intends to deal squarely with him. That is his opinion, and upon that opinion rests his willingness to accept the law laid down by the community.

INTERNATIONAL law—if we ever get such a thing—must rest upon a similar trust between peoples. Peoples must trust each other exactly as people do. That is, each nation must feel, when it gets into a dispute with another nation, that it can refer the matter to a court of all the nations with perfect confidence that that court will be thinking only of doing both parties justice. The international court must be wholly disinterested; and all possible litigants must believe that this is true. To get a proper focus on this point, let us imagine that individuals had to submit their differences to injuries in whose impartiality they did not believe. Let us imagine that they thought the members of the jury hoped to profit personally by giving a verdict against them and in favour of their rival. Then we will have a parallel to the case of a nation which should believe that the international court was composed of members which were combined in a desire to rob it and so profit themselves.

IN civil life, we demand that a judge—highly as we respect our judges—who may be thought to have the most remote interest in a case, abstain from sitting in judgment on it. That is only a natural and wise precaution against the weaknesses of human nature. We must trust our judges absolutely before we will refer our vital interests to their adjudication. And so must nations. We were making the beginnings of an approach to this position, in some respects, before the present war came, dividing the fighting world into two great camps. It was generally believed during the Balkan crisis, a couple of years ago, that Britain was disinterestedly eager to save the peace of Europe. The United States was believed earlier to be disinterested as between Russia and Japan. But now what nations will trust their vital interests to the decision of other nations?

THIS is a condition antecedent—if anything—to the provision of power to enforce the rulings of an international court. Yet that power must be provided if the court is to have any authority. Imagine civil courts in a peaceful community which had no power to compel obedience to their judgments. How far would they get? The losing party—when he believed himself wrong, as he would ninety-nine cases out of a hundred—would simply decline to act on the pious opinion of the impotent court. He would say that the court was mistaken—that the clever lawyer for the other side had pulled the wool over its august eyes—that the judgment did him a grave injustice—and he would proceed to do himself justice by doing nothing. So will nations, if the international tribunal before which they come has no power to put its decisions into effect. But power will only be furnished such a court by the united nations of the world when they trust each other sufficiently to put their national lives into the hands of the said court.

WELL, how much international trust is there going to be after this war is over? Such trust as was being built up—fragile and fragmentary as it was—depended largely upon the optimistic belief of very many good people that the covetous and belligerent intentions, which were imputed by the rest of us to certain nations, were only the jaundiced outcome of our yellow jingoism. When we said that Germany was preparing to paralyze Russia and France and then dismember the British Empire, these benevolent and pacifist people wagged a rebuking finger at us and chanted—"Naughty! Naughty!" The Germans were described as a peaceful, phlegmatic, philosophical, musical, beer-drinking folk who had no intention of going to war at all with anybody. True, they were cursed with their native jingoes—as were certain other nations whom these dreamers were by no means too polite to mention. But the great mass of the friendly German nation was all for amity and good-will, and living in commercial concord with their neighbours.

THIS source of international confidence will not be available for some considerable time now. It is now all too apparent that we "jingo" were all too right. The Germans were preparing for

war so universally and so deliberately and with such deadly intention that we are now, at the end of over a year of slaughter and rapine, very far from dispelling this menace to civilization, though we have rallied to our help all the more progressive and intelligent nations. How long will it take us to trust Germany again? Yet how will it be possible to establish and secure respect for an international court to which we will not admit either Germany nor Austria—to say nothing of Turkey.

WE may as well put by our dreams for a while. During the life of this generation, the safety of every nation will depend—not on any system of world police or justice—but on its own strong right arm. Those who would survive the half-century of bandit-rule and international outlawry that is plainly coming, must be prepared to defend their own lives with their own skill and strength. The world—

after its distant vision of a reign of order—has become a mining-camp once more, in which quickness in the draw and superior gun-play will be more desirable than any academic defensibility of one's cause. It will be a fighters' world—not a lawyers'.

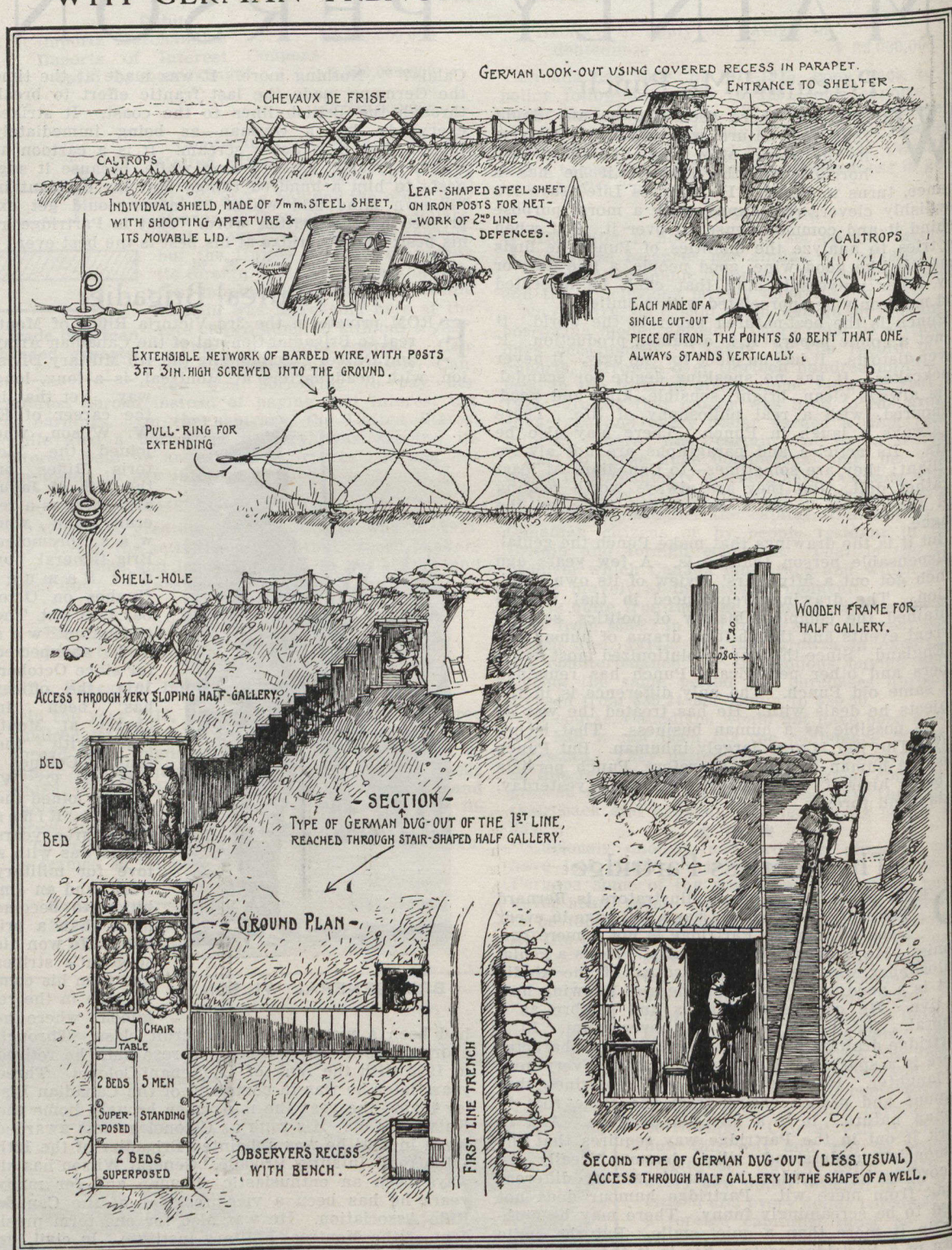
THE MONOCLE MAN.

Fighting—and Talking—Machines

THOMAS EDISON has fractured another silence. The chairman of the Inventions Board—or whatever it is called—of the United States, alleges that in his opinion the world is in for a long series of wars. The next great war, however, he says is to be of machinery more than of men; somewhat of a bloodless war. He urges the United States to go into the business of manufacturing munitions on a huge scale.

We are left to imagine that this war of mechanism will be operated by just touching buttons not far from the Edison switchboard, while the workers of the world go on ploughing and reaping and working in factories. As long as the machinery lasts, so long will the war last. When it is over, what few of the machines are left will motor themselves to Washington and hold a machinery convention with an Edison talking-machine in the chair.

WHY GERMAN TRENCHES ARE HARD "TO TAKE"



Much has been written as to the solid and elaborate construction of German entrenchments. These drawings show two types of German underground shelters, one reached by a flight of steps, down a sloping gallery, the other (and less common) kind by a ladder down a vertical shaft. These dug-outs are as much as 25 to 30 feet beneath the surface. Not less striking are the various accessory defences outside the trench-parapet. These obstacles include "chevaux-de-frise," furnished with barbed wire or sheets of iron cut into a kind of leaf-shaped pattern resembling the edges of a giant saw. Wire-cutters are practically useless against this. Then there are the caltrops—four-sided sheets of iron with the points so bent that, whichever way they fall when thrown on the ground, one point sticks up vertically. The Germans also use extensible barbed wire and steel shields for individual soldiers, with a loop-hole for rifle-fire which has a movable lid. When no action is going on, the Germans leave only look-out men in the trench.—London Illustrated News.