

"EYE-WITNESS"

Tells of Entrenching Work and Gunnery—Col. Swinton's Latest Despatch.

(Recital of operations at the front, up to December 17, by Colonel Swinton, attached to General French's Headquarters Staff) British Field Headquarters in France, Dec. 17.—The opposition now being encountered, resembles to some extent that met with by us in the beginning of October, when we first reached the Franco-Belgian frontier, and before the Germans brought up their full force and assumed the offensive. It has one great difference, however, and that is that the enemy is in much greater force and his positions are much stronger and better organized than they were two months ago.

"At that time an advance on the eastern end of the line implied a movement across a very difficult country, as it does still, and for us it meant an attack on skillfully but hastily fortified strong points or villages, held to a large extent by cavalry and Jaegers. With the large proportion of machine guns, that we have in front of us to-day, it is no longer a succession of isolated points. There are still such points and some are the same, but they are stronger and form part of a practically continuous defence zone, consisting in some places of several lines of cunningly sited and carefully constructed works.

MAZE OF TRENCHES.

"This zone really amounts to a maze of trenches and obstacles. Every known form of obstacle is used. Entanglements, to select the most common form—vary from loose coils of wire to securely staked network of from 18 inches to nearly six feet in height and of different widths.

"These measures of defence are only such as are to be expected from troops which are well trained and have ample resources and time; and there are, of course, ways in which they can be overcome. But where these methods are applied, the rate of advance is necessarily slow. When it is reported in laconic terms that ground has been gained at a certain point, topographically the gain may amount to only a few yards. Tactically, on the other hand, the progress implied by even such a small step forward may be important, for a trench, a cluster of trenches, the edge of a wood, a building, a village, or a knoll may have been reached, possession of which will facilitate further operations.

"Siege approaches such as saps, help the attackers to advance under cover, and so to minimize the losses, but they do not, and cannot, obviate the liability to a surprise reception of the nature indicated when once the enemy's works are gained. The only certain method of preventing this is by a prolonged bombardment with high explosive shells until trenches, mines and machine guns are reduced to scrap heaps, or to mine under them and blow them into the air."

HIT GERMAN HEADQUARTERS

The report of the actual fighting is a repetition of what has appeared in the daily French official statements telling of the capture of German trenches, of sapping and mining operations and heavy artillery duels. Concerning the latter, the observer says that the British artillery on December 17 obtained several hits on what appeared to be the German headquarters. The narrative continues:

"From a prisoner captured on Dec. 14, it has been ascertained that both the 23rd Regiment and the Jaegers suffered enormous losses on November 4. The same man described the 6th of November as a terrible day, saying that he had never before seen such mud as that in which the Germans were operating, and that the troops were suffering very much from the presence of water in the trenches. The shelling that he went through on the 14th of this month states exceeded anything which he had previously experienced.

"We have reason to believe from the evidence obtained from prisoners that many of the Landwehr are heartily sick of the war, and resent the harsh treatment of their officers. They have been persuaded that the British ill-treat prisoners, and but for this some would be willing to surrender.

"The Germans appear to be discarding their helmets, the picket-hauben, with which they have for fifty years been associated in the eyes of the world. Many variations in their uniforms are now to be seen. Some of the troops are wearing their peace clothing, which is of brighter color than the grey service dress. There is evidence that certain of the units facing us are much under strength."

Concerning the offensive movement of the allies, the observer says:

"In conjunction with the French, who also are pressing forward, a movement has been started, which has resulted in a small gain of ground."

The narrative then records gains made by British and Indian troops near Ppres, and south of Lys, which already have been reported.

BIG WAR ORDERS.

CHICAGO, Dec. 19.—Forty-eight thousand pairs of trousers, costing \$72,000, were ordered here to-day by buyers for the French Government. The contract is a rush order. The trousers are of the ordinary working-man's type for use of the sappers and miners of the French army. The British Government is preparing estimates for 6,500 motor trucks, according to information received by Chicago manufacturers. This order, it was estimated, would amount to \$10,000,000, as the trucks probably would average about \$1,500 each.

"Germans drive their soldiers like a lot of sheep," says a paper, which inspires us to add that the Kaiser may be the man who put the Mutt in Mutton.

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Now, take them all in all, which is to be your "star" Christmas present? Only be sure that the instrument you select is a Columbia, for otherwise you will not be able to enjoy that very different and superior tone. Prove it by hearing, for in this case "hearing is believing."

Be sure to hear the two new Columbia Double Disc Records, entitled "Tangled Tunes." Over 100 selections on the two records. Price 85c each. Will play on any disc instrument. Makes a splendid Christmas gift. On sale at all Columbia dealers.

AT \$20, the "Comet"—a Columbia, like all the others, and that means its tone is natural, its motor is reliable, its appearance is faultless. For the man who has never owned a modern "talking machine" and hardly realizes what a continuous pleasure such an instrument becomes; and for you, if you have nothing in mind but an instrument for as little money as possible, that will play any record, and play it absolutely evenly, and that can be carried around anywhere, the "Comet" is truly the ideal gift. You can add four double-disc records to the \$20, and for just \$23.40 be sure of one present that is a present.

There Are Thousands of Records for you to choose from in the Columbia catalog—mostly double-disc, at 85 cents each. The Columbia dealer has carefully selected lists of Christmas music, and lists of every other class of music—from solos, duets and choruses by the greatest stars of opera to the songs of the nation at war and the hymns of the peoples at peace—lists of the old ballads, lists of popular "hits" and lists of the most beautifully recorded dance records you ever heard. Every month, on the 25th, a new Columbia supplemental list of records goes on sale all over the country. (Incidentally, all these Columbia records will play on any standard make of machine.)

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Lieut. H. Lancelot Tells, from one of the hospitals in the neighborhood of Rouen to his partner F. G. Grapel, of Thornton Surrey, makes an appeal for matches. "Tommy," he says, "intense dislike to French in which he has christened 'bits.'" Lieutenant Tells adds: "This huge battle in the north drags on without any definite but all agree that the German are appalling. Of one thing sure, and that is that the Graples up their dead, cover the earth and use their dead bodies for protection from our fire. We have had a few cases of..."

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