

GERMANY, LIKE WILD BEAST, LASHES OUT IN DEATH AGONY EACH BLOW WEAKER THAN LAST

Has Lost One-third of Her Fighting Forces; Her Fleet that Cost 300 Millions Unable to Make a Move to Help and She is Carrying on the Struggle by Simple Expedient of Mortgaging Private Property to the State.

By the Right Hon. C. F. G. Masterman, (In London Daily Chronicle.)

In prolonged wars there have always been periods when all seemed lost and the faint-hearted inclined to raise the cry "We are betrayed." It was so in the long struggle against Napoleon, when Pitt saw three of his Coalition smashed one after the other, and at one time this country was fighting the whole of Europe alone. It was so in the four years' struggle in America when it was only "Father Abraham" who never despaired of the Republic. There is some such faint-heartedness about today. Yet the war is pursuing its course far more successfully than anyone could have predicted two years ago; and it is obviously evident that in one year's time, or two, or perhaps a little later, the defeat and utter ruin of Germany is assured.

First, let it be granted, that in modern warfare no objective rarely matters, or really, that there is strictly speaking no objective but slaughter; the male population of the nations instead of small standing armies wandering about Europe to capture capitals or to be destroyed, we have nations rising up against nations intent only on the massacre of each other. We have not yet attained the Rhine or capture Frankfurt or Berlin, or occupy Germany. We have just to destroy by killing, maiming, capturing, or otherwise rendering inefficient, the adult, efficient male population of Germany. When more than a certain percentage of these have been annihilated for military purposes the game is over. And the point at which this resistance becomes impossible is dependent, upon the clearness with which the German people will face realities, and the moment when they recognize that they are faced, not only with defeat in battle, but with the destruction of the race.

German Losses Estimated

How far at present has the process gone? Here we are faced with masses of conjecture and various interpretations, often seemingly backed with logic yet often leading to results with divergence of millions. We have the estimates of the British War Office, and of the French War Office before us. We have the actual list by name of killed, slightly or severely wounded—not sick—in the published German casualty lists, which I believe to be accurate, although generally dilatory in record, and although they are now forbidden to give the totals of each class, I have no private information; but from the other evidence, and giving (as is right) the full benefit of the doubt in any case to Germany, I believe that I am, if anything, understating losses if I estimate as follows:—

The total number of German potential combatants between 18 and 45 at the commencement of the war was a little over 13½ millions.

From these deducting 25 per cent. for inefficients (a low estimate), we have something like 10 millions of potentially efficient combatants.

It is doubtful if Germany has ever armed more than 7½ millions of these, leaving 2½ millions (a moderate estimate) to work the railways, the coalfields, the great iron and steel works and all the machinery of supplies.

And of these 7½ millions I think one is quite safe in asserting that 2½ millions have been destroyed in this first year of war.

Of these some three quarters of a million—the flower of the manhood of Germany—the dead on alien soil. No King of Kings or Kaiser, blown as in the old legend when the Fatherland is in danger, can rouse them from their eternal sleep. They rest for ever in massed heaps of dead or solitary graves, between the Marne and the Vistula and beyond. Soon their very graves will be forgotten, and the world will be as though they had not been.

Some three quarters of a million are either maimed, prisoners, or so injured that they can never return to the scene of war. The bulk of them will remain as evidences, hobbling through city and village to the children of the coming generation, a burden on their profit and production; evidence of the infinite folly of those who delighted in war, and staked in one mad adventure all that Germany which had been built up for nearly 50 years—staked and tremendously lost.

And another million at least form a "constant" of those severely or slightly wounded, and all the sick. Some of these will die, some live on a crippled life, the bulk return to duty. But for each one returning from the giant hospital one new sufferer will be substituted; so that though the individuals change, the loss remains the same, and will remain the same until peace comes.

Before the Limit is Reached.

I have not counted Austria in these figures. First because, although we have no reliable figures for Austria, it seems certain that her actual loss has exceeded that of the Germans; second (and principally) because the resistance is a German resistance; and if the Germans contemplate the real possibility of the bulk not only

of their armies but of their male efficient population being destroyed, they will see for peace regardless of Austrian or Turkish opinion.

One-third of their fighting population, one quarter of their whole efficient male population, destroyed in one year of war—no nation has ever yet suffered such punishment—and there is today in Germany grief and misery and the counting of the cost of it discernible beneath the heavy hand of the military machine. I think by this time next year, if the war continues, that number should be more than doubled. More than half the manhood of Germany will be destroyed. And before the three years' limit which Lord Esher has given (according to Lord Esher's statement) he attained there should not be much left that could offer serious resistance between the Vistula and the Rhine.

I am not an optimist (optimism today being alone in this country a quality held in derision). On the contrary, I have refused to accept optimistic estimates of many of my "expert" friends; though I profoundly hope they are true, my desire is to see things as they are, and their consequences as they will be, so not being deceived. But the observer who wishes the truth should keep his attention rather on casualties than on territories. Germany can be destroyed equally in the heart of Russia, beyond Belgrade, or within the boundaries of France. So long as the daily toll of death and wounds goes on, so long we are every day nearer the inevitable end. And of those things which make one believe that that toll will increase rather than diminish are these three: We assume that her losses will be greater in the coming year, and greater in proportion to those of the Allies, because (1) the steady increase in man power of the Allies. For this first year of the war the brunt of power and fighting force has been borne by two only of the Quadruple Alliance; and of those two France alone has put forth her full strength. Russia, having lost millions, can put millions of equally good soldiers in the field, directly equipment is ready for them; and our own inexhaustible German man power with an inexhaustible Russian. Italy has practically only begun her fighting; so has England. I should doubt indeed if there are in any line of temporary defeat—as, for example, if Germany and Turkey linked together over a ruined Serbia—the whole inexhaustible

Our Predominant Sea Power

And the third factor is the slow but steady and ruthless operation of sea power; a grip that has never failed at long last. It is as if a man was caught by the throat, struggling wildly as he feels the grip tightened—doing infinite damage—but suffocated at last. For the first year it is only felt as an inconvenience; in the second year it becomes intolerable; in the third year the end may come. The whole of the German Press (in so far as it is allowed utterance) is full of complaint today of the rise in prices, the absence of necessities, the protest that the population are feeling the life growing more and more impossible, since all German trade has been swept of the seas. It was the blockade and not defeat in arms which destroyed the Confederate States; it is the blockade, in addition to defeat in arms, which will throttle the German Empire.

For this is a world war and a world survey is necessary, if we are to obtain a true vision of Germany's present position. How does she stand today after a little more than a year of it? Her colonies, in which she took so much pride, have been snatched from her. Her international trade, which supported the bulk of her industrial population, has vanished like the baseless fabric of a vision. Her ships lie interned in ports of all the continents; her exports and all the profits which depended on her exports from Patagonia to Korea have ceased like the sudden shutting of a door. Her great floating palaces, which were her pride and the wonder of the world, each cost millions to build, are lying

ashes out, like some wild beast in death agony, now westward to Paris, and is foiled; now eastward to Petrograd and is foiled; now southward to Constantinople, where she should be weaker and the exhaustion more obvious. Each time the effort is fruitless round her; and every month presses closer the slow, irrevocable strangling influence of our sea blockade. Germany is beaten and most of her rulers know it, however determined to go down fighting to the end.

"The End Will Not Be Easy."

The end will not be easy. Germany in her death agony, may carry with her for a generation the prosperity of Europe, or, as in the Black Death, may create a revolution of all human society. She may fling in the young and the old, the inefficient, the covetous, wasting life and property as recklessly as she has taught her people to waste it in war, until, as a recent speaker has declared, "nothing will remain on the field of struggle, but grasses and graves." One million as one reads of the fear of "dumping" or renewed aggression or trade competition after this Titanic struggle is over; Germany, if she fights to the end, will have neither factories to build nor capital to erect them, or men to work them. This lunge into S.E. Europe may prolong the end and increase the losses involved; it cannot prevent that end being attained. Her hope can only rest in the violation of one or both of two elements, which alone might render this end uncertain; the one, unity here at home, amongst the two nations of the rich and poor, between the four nations of the British Isles; the other, the unity of the Alliance against her, whose joint declaration that none would make a separate peace really sealed the fate of the Central Powers. We may have enormous losses or temporary defeats, mistakes of strategy or tactics, moods of depression. We shall be compelled to put forth all our efforts, and all the efforts of the Empire behind us. Given this, the end is certain as to tomorrow's sunrise. Germany's certain as to tomorrow's sunrise. Germany, in the old theological language, is destined to drink to the dregs of the wine cup of the wrath of Almighty God.

useless in her own ports or rotting in the ports of America, or having been converted into armed cruisers, like the Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse, lie masses of twisted iron at the bottom of the Atlantic. She has a fighting fleet which cost three hundred millions to build, and for any use it is the money might as well have been thrown into the sea; for it cannot prevent every ship desired getting into the ports of the Allies, or ensure one small German ship getting into one small German haven. Grass is growing in the streets of Hamburg and Bremen, and will grow there till peace comes. In internal affairs her efforts have made her hopelessly bankrupt. She dare not raise a farthing by taxation. She is carrying on the war by the simple expedient of mortgaging private property to the State, giving payment for such mortgages, in paper money and then taking the paper money as a new "loan" to the Government. The result is that six months after the war is over Germany would be compelled to convert or repudiate her paper money, would be worthless outside Germany. In men, as I said, she has lost in the first year of war one-third of her fighting forces, permanently destroyed. Her opponents are ever piling up men and munitions against her, while she will be ever decreasing the proportion from this time forward. Germany is bleeding to death. She

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Train of Thought Inspired by a Letter About "Fruit-a-tives"



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