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 Thomas Coffey, L.L. D.

Associate Editors—Rev. F. J. O'Sullivan,
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CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY

The wisdom that comes from nine-
 teen centuries' experience of human
 nature manifests itself in nothing
 more striking than in the insistence
 by the Church that education and
 religion go hand in hand. Again, in
 making philosophy the crowning
 course in the system of Catholic edu-
 cation that wisdom is more and more
 manifest as outside the Church meta-
 physics has become such a confusion
 of thought that the queen of sciences
 no longer reigns in a chaotic educa-
 tional world.

Professor Case, in his review of
 metaphysics past and present, has
 this to say of Catholic philosophy:

"Aristotelian realism is the strong
 point of Roman Catholic philosophy.
 As interpreted by Thomas Aquinas,
 it is now in danger of becoming a
 dogma. In 1879 Pope Leo XIII. address-
 ed to the bishops the Encyclical,
 Aeterni Patris, which contained the
 words, 'Sancti Thomae sapientiam
 restituatis et quam latissime propage-
 tis.' From the Roman Catholic
 point of view this reaction to Thom-
 ism was a timely protest against
 modern metaphysics. It was founded
 upon a feeling of uneasiness at a
 growing tendency among Roman
 Catholic writers not only to treat
 theology freely, but to corrupt it by
 paradoxes. One cannot but feel
 regret at seeing the reformed
 churches blown about by every wind
 of doctrine, and catching at straws
 now from Kant, now from Hegel, and
 now from Lotze, or at home from
 Green, Caird, Martineau, Balfour
 and Ward in succession, without ever
 having considered the basis of their
 faith; while the Roman Catholics
 are making every effort to ground
 Universal Church on a sane system
 of metaphysics. However this may
 be, the power of the movement is
 visible enough from the spread of
 Thomism over the civilized world."

He does not, it is true, admit that
 Aristotle even as Christianized by
 St. Thomas is at all the final word
 in metaphysics; but his historical
 review of the moderns shows such a
 hopeless mass of contradictions, so
 many assumptions set forth dogmati-
 cally, that it is a bit amusing to
 read that "Aristotelian realism as
 interpreted by Thomas Aquinas is
 now in danger of becoming a
 dogma." Nor is he often tempted to
 characterize any of them as a "sane
 system of metaphysics."

It is perhaps worth recording here
 that Huxley enjoyed the "Summa"
 of St. Thomas and in his "Science
 and Morals," p. 142, left this apprecia-
 tion of the Angelic Doctor: "His
 marvellous grasp and subtlety of
 intellect seem to me to be almost
 without a parallel."

The same great Agnostic describes
 in "Lay Sermons" a visit to May-
 nooth:

"It was my fortune some time
 ago," he writes, "to pay a visit to
 one of the most important institu-
 tions in which the clergy of the
 Roman Catholic Church are trained
 in these islands, and it seemed to me
 that the difference between these
 men and the comfortable champions
 of Anglicanism and Dissent was com-
 parable to the difference between
 our gallant volunteers and the
 trained veterans of Napoleon's Old
 Guard."

"The Catholic priest is trained to
 know his business and do it effec-
 tually. The professors of the college
 in question—learned, zealous, and
 determined men—permitted me to
 speak frankly with them. We
 talked like outposts of opposed
 armies during a truce—as friendly
 enemies."

And after recording the confidence
 with which the professors prophesied
 that a Church which had survived
 so many storms would survive the
 existing infidel movement; and
 describing the systematic training
 given to divinity students with a
 view to refuting contemporary
 attacks on Christianity, he adds:

"I heartily respect an organization
 which meets its enemies in this way,
 and I wish that all ecclesiastical
 organizations were in as effective a
 condition. I think it would be better
 not only for them but for us. The
 army of liberal thought is at present
 in very loose order; and many a
 modern free-thinker makes use of
 his freedom unduly to vent nonsense.
 We should be the better for a vigor-
 ous and watchful enemy to hammer
 us into cohesion and discipline; and
 I for one lament that the bench of
 Bishops cannot show a man of the
 calibre of Bishop Butler of the
 'Analogy'; who, if he were alive,
 would make short work of the current
 a priori infidelity."

With the passage of the years, and
 the consequent experience of life,
 with some knowledge of the kaleido-
 scope views which pass under the
 name of modern philosophy, and
 serve as bases for the everchanging
 standards of morality and ethics, we
 feel ever more deeply grateful that
 our college course included two years
 of Catholic philosophy.

In spite of the fact that the basis
 of morality is undermined, and that
 the modern scholar asks with the
 sneering scepticism of Pilate: What
 is truth? there is a luciferian
 pride in modern progress and enlight-
 enment which future generations
 will take into account when correlat-
 ing the causes of the Great War with
 the conditions prevailing in the
 world of ideas.

In view of the fact that the spirit
 of the age more or less affects Catho-
 lics, we have thought it useful to
 reproduce the foregoing testimony of
 unfriendly witnesses to the great
 value of the course of philosophy in
 Catholic education.

THE PROSPECTS OF PEACE

Our readers in common with the
 rest of the world are just now deeply
 concerned over the prospects and
 possibilities of ending the War
 through negotiations leading to terms
 that will satisfy the belligerents, and
 especially that will satisfy the aims of
 the Entente Allies. The dominant
 note of our press is bellicose, so much
 so that any deliberate consideration
 of peace terms is contemptuously
 brushed aside as base surrender of
 principles to an enemy who is on the
 eve of certain and overwhelming
 defeat. The economic condition of
 Germany and her Allies is repre-
 sented as being so extremely precari-
 ous that collapse may come at any
 moment.

The trouble is that we have no
 assurance that this prophecy is more
 certain of fulfilment now than when
 confidently made a year, even two
 years ago. And if it be true, then
 satisfactory terms and conditions are
 all the more likely of attainment.
 Our guess is no better than another's.
 So we shall transcribe some opinions
 which have been given by men whose
 loyalty to the cause of liberty is not
 less sincere than that of the most
 unflinching supporter of the policy of
 war to the end.

A. G. Gardiner, editor of the Daily
 News, and one of the leading jour-
 nalist of England, in an article on
 the situation, says:

"If the capacity of Germany to
 sustain herself for over two years is
 a matter for astonishment, no less
 astonishing has been the capacity of
 this country to keep the fabric of the
 Allies in being by her money power.
 "It is important to remember that
 in this cardinal matter the case of
 the Allies is vitally different from
 that of the enemy. Finance can
 bring the Allies down. Finance can-
 not bring Germany down. She is
 bankrupt, it is true, but so long as
 she is economically self-sufficient she
 can continue the war. But bank-
 ruptcy would be ruin to the Allies.
 They are not self-sufficient. Har-
 vests of the world are necessary to
 feed them. Wool and hides of foreign
 lands are necessary to clothe and
 shoe them. Without the supplies of
 America and Japan, as well as of this
 country, Russian hosts would be
 helpless before the artillery of Ger-
 many."

"In a word, we are all plunging
 down a steep place together, but
 Germany is ahead and has a nearer
 vision of the abyss; hence, her
 urgent efforts for peace. She alone
 knows if she must have peace before
 the next harvest and before the next
 offensive has revealed her impover-
 ishment in men. Her reply to the
 Allies will give us a clue to this
 vital question, and, if the answer
 shows that a just peace can be
 reached without another year of car-
 nage on a scale more terrible than
 anything that has gone before, it
 would be a crime on the part of the
 Allies to delay such a peace for the
 sake of problematical military deci-
 sions on German soil. And it would
 not only be a crime, it would be a
 blunder, for there is no assurance
 that our position for dictating terms
 next New Year's Day will not be
 inferior to our position today."

"The new year will bring peace to
 the world if there is wisdom and
 statesmanship equal to the emer-
 gency, and if with stern justice there

is avoidance of a policy of mere
 revenge, an agreement that the war
 shall end and shall not be a prelude
 to a war of commercial exclusion,
 and if there is a determination to set
 the world on a new basis of rela-
 tionships, the purpose of which shall
 be the maintenance of common
 peace by a common moral and
 material policy.

The war correspondent, Ashmead
 Bartlett, regards the submarine situa-
 tion as paramount:

"There is only one real issue of
 vital importance to ourselves and to
 our Allies—can we starve out the
 enemy before the enemy destroys so
 many of our merchant vessels that
 we get below the percentage on which
 it is possible to run the domestic
 needs of the British Empire and the
 burden of the war as well? It is all
 very well for a Minister to get up in
 the House and announce that we
 have only lost 2% of vessels over
 1,000 tons in burden. That is not the
 issue. The real point is this: If we
 lose 5% we are in great difficulties,
 and if we lose 10% we cannot run the
 Empire and the war as well."

Dr. E. J. Dillon states that even
 Russia has reached the stage where
 she must husband her man-power.
 The two despatches which follow
 seem to show that the enemy nations
 are rapidly approaching a basis on
 which peace terms may be discus-
 sed.

Amsterdam, Jan. 5.—Great signifi-
 cance was attached to passage by
 Austro-German censors to-day of a
 quotation from the Vienna newspaper
 Arbeiter Zeitung, asking the Govern-
 ment to "discover if the entente
 would be ready to negotiate peace
 after an evacuation by Teutonic
 troops in the west; and, if so, that
 the evacuation be made immediately."

London, Jan. 5.—The Nation, in
 discussing after the war problems,
 the Balkan settlement and the fate
 of Turkey, advocates the internation-
 alization of Constantinople and the
 straits, and contends that it would
 be of no service to Russia to prolong
 the war, sacrifice thousands of lives
 and incur a mountain of debt merely
 to bring about absolute annihilation.

In addition to the fact that the
 Entente Allies have not summarily
 rejected the Teutonic proposal to
 consider peace terms, the Rt. Hon.
 Arthur Henderson has just restated
 the aim of the Allies. The fact that
 Mr. Henderson is a member of the
 small British War Cabinet gives to
 his statement at this time exceptional
 weight and significance. He care-
 fully distinguishes between militar-
 ism and Prussian militarism. With
 militarism governed by the right
 spirit he has no quarrel.

"What the Allies contend in regard
 to Germany is that its great military
 powers are not subject to proper
 moral constraint; that they have not
 been used in accordance with such
 restraint; and that, despite what has
 gone on for nearly two and a half
 years, there has so far been no
 change in this respect, and no prospect
 of a change, so far as Germany
 itself is concerned."

"In the first place, all force and
 power to exercise force must be gov-
 erned by the right spirit—and
 regarding that, the most important
 thing is the recognition that, so far
 as possible, other methods should be
 substituted for an appeal to force;
 that progress alike in international
 matters, and within a single com-
 munity consists in the substitution
 of moral for physical force, or at
 least in the use of force to support
 impartial judgments, rather than in
 an ex parte appeal to arms. A
 nation only holds its military power
 in the right spirit if it is prepared to
 cooperate in every sound attempt
 toward such a development."

Hence he concludes that peace on
 the status quo ante bellum is
 impossible as Germany has conquered
 her Allies and made Middle Europe
 a political reality; and, dominated by
 the spirit of Prussian militarism, a
 formidable menace to the peace of
 the world.

Here we have a pretty clear indi-
 cation of the terms, or rather of one
 of the essential conditions, which will
 dominate the consideration of the
 peace proposal.

Should that condition be met by
 Germany, then if the deliberate pro-
 nouncement of the British Cabinet
 Minister means anything it means
 that there is a basis on which repre-
 sentatives of the belligerent nations
 may come together to discuss terms
 of peace.

There may be many ways of secur-
 ing this condition essential to the
 future peace of Europe and the world.
 One suggests itself. Universal mili-
 tary training is held to justify itself
 even by peace-loving nations. But
 universal military training is a
 standing menace to the peace of
 Europe and debasing to the military
 nation itself if such tremendous
 power be left in the hands of an
 autocratic sovereign or a govern-
 ment responsible only to him. Con-
 scription and freedom can coexist
 only under democratic control. This
 perhaps is one of the ways in which
 German militarism may be de-Prus-
 sianized.

A proposal of this kind would have
 powerful if not overwhelming sup-
 port amongst the German people
 themselves. While it is extremely
 probable that Austria-Hungary would
 heartily welcome the prospect of
 being liberated from the grip of
 militaristic Germany.

All things considered we are of the
 opinion that the beginning of the
 end is in sight.

AN EXCELLENT IDEA

At the closing exercises of St.
 Francis Xavier's College, Antigonish,
 N. S., on the 29th ultimo, Hon. Mr.
 Justice Chisholm, of Halifax, in his
 address to the graduates announced
 that he would offer a prize for the
 best history of Antigonish County,
 to be followed by prizes for histories of
 other counties in eastern Nova Scotia
 at later dates.

Mr. Justice Chisholm said:

"I have always taken some interest
 in historical enquiry. For some
 years past I have been hoping that
 some alumnus of St. Francis Xavier's
 College, or somebody else, would
 write the history of these eastern
 counties from which this university
 draws most of its students. The
 memorials of the early settlers
 should not be lost. Many of these
 were the men, poor in the world's
 goods, few in numbers, but high in
 courage and in purpose, who helped
 Bishop Mackinnon to found this
 university. They built churches and
 schools before they thought of build-
 ing comfortable habitations for them-
 selves. Goldwin Smith has said that
 the Canadian pioneers were the
 country's greatest heroes. We shall
 never know all the hardships they
 endured in establishing the com-
 munities of which we are so proud
 today. The story should be written
 before all those who can speak with
 knowledge have passed away. The
 history will not be a sensational one;
 it will not be a story of blood shed or
 cruelty of any kind inflicted upon
 their fellows of the race of man.
 Their lives were quiet and useful for
 they followed the simple path of duty."

To give the matter a start, I have
 decided with the approval of the
 authorities to offer a prize of \$100
 for the best history of Antigonish, my
 native county. I at first thought it
 would be well to arrange to have the
 prize awarded at your closing in 1917.
 But on further consideration I have
 changed my opinion on that point.
 History written in a hurry is seldom
 either complete in outline or
 accurate in detail. I think it
 would be better to have two years
 devoted to the work. The conditions
 of the competitions will be settled
 later and announced, I hope, in the
 calendar for this year. It is my
 purpose, if I live long enough, to
 continue the competition in order
 that the history of each of the com-
 munities may be written."

This an excellent idea. The early
 local history of Canada is becoming
 more and more difficult to write with
 the passing of the pioneers whose
 living memory was the only record
 of many events and conditions of
 permanent interest. Realizing this
 the clerical conferences of the
 Diocese of London have decided that
 each year a paper will be read on the
 history of a particular parish. Such
 documents if intelligently and pain-
 takingly written will become in
 time valuable sources of history.
 Mr. Justice Chisholm's admonition
 should be heeded: "History written
 in a hurry is seldom either complete
 in outline or accurate in detail."
 Sometimes it is mere sloppy senti-
 mentalism lacking either outline or
 detail.

**A REAL MEDAL THAT SAVED
 A REAL LIFE**

All of us have read stories, in some
 religious paper or magazine, in which
 the plot hinged upon a medal, a
 rosary, or a scapular which was
 instrumental either in saving an
 individual's life or in bringing about
 his conversion. While the power of
 prayer and the efficacy of blessed
 articles of devotion are thus empha-
 sized, there are many readers upon
 whom little impression is made,
 because they realize that the major-
 ity of these stories are merely crea-
 tions of the writer's brain. Here,
 however, is an incident that we can
 vouch for, and which no doubt is one
 of many that has happened along the
 far-flung battle line.

Some years ago, there came out to
 this country free Glasgow a young
 Irishman with a Scotch burr and
 very little siller in his pocket. For
 several months he was engaged as
 sexton of a Catholic church; but the
 wanderlust soon seized upon him
 and he made his way to the city.
 Before leaving, the housekeeper,
 who was a very charitable and devout
 person, presented him with a rosary
 and a large medal of the Sacred
 Heart. She had taken a special
 interest in the young man, because,
 being an orphan, he had never known
 a mother's care or a father's protect-

ing hand. Years passed, and he was
 almost forgotten by everyone in the
 parish, save by the pious lady who
 had befriended him and who had
 never ceased to pray for him, know-
 ing full well the dangers to which
 his morals and his not-too-enlight-
 ened faith would be exposed in his
 new surroundings.

Some months ago, the priest's mail
 contained a censored letter with a
 foreign postmark on it. What was
 his surprise upon opening it to find
 that it was from his sometime sex-
 ton who was in the trenches "Some-
 where in France!" Among other
 items of interest he mentioned the
 fact that he had heard Mass when-
 ever possible and that he had
 attended to his religious duties. The
 priest replied to the letter, giving
 him some news of the parish and
 acquainting him of the joy that his
 message had brought to the good
 housekeeper who promised to
 redouble her prayers on his behalf.

On the eve of Christmas another
 letter came, this time from an hospi-
 tal in the south of England. It con-
 tained the information that he had
 passed uninjured through two fierce
 battles, but that in the third one, on
 the Somme front, in a charge on a
 German trench, he was struck an
 inch below the heart by a shrapnel
 bullet, which smashed to pieces his
 rosary and medal of the Sacred Heart
 that were in his vest pocket, and
 which so deflected the course of the
 missile that it did not cause a mortal
 wound. "Some one must be praying
 for me," he added, "for that rosary
 and medal saved my life."

Now, there may be those who will
 say that, in these days of big events,
 such an incident is not worthy of
 editorial comment. We do not agree
 with them. It is little things like
 this that point the way to the solu-
 tion of the great problem which
 today confronts the world—the
 restoration of peace. If the prayers
 of one pious woman have saved the
 life of a soldier at the front, may we
 not hope that the united prayers of
 God's children, especially of his little
 ones, will save the life of nations?

We are apt to grow lukewarm in
 uniting in the prayer for peace.
 There seem to be so many obstacles,
 humanly speaking, in the way, that
 we lose confidence in the efficacy of
 our poor efforts of intercession.
 After all, God alone can bring about
 the desired consummation. Nations,
 as human instruments, are power-
 less; for the neutrals are too weak
 to say "Hold, enough!" and the
 belligerents, mad with the taste of
 blood, refuse to see things in their
 right perspective. With God, how-
 ever, it is as easy to stay the wild
 torrent that threatens to engulf the
 world, as it is for Him to change the
 course of a single bullet; and He
 will do so when the world recognizes
 its dependence upon Him and raises
 its hands to Him in humble, confi-
 ding, persevering prayer.

Another thing that this incident
 suggests is the increase of reverence
 for and confidence in outward
 symbols of devotion among all
 classes. The Catholic young man
 who at home gave little thought to
 these accessories to piety and who,
 perhaps, neglected to wear his scap-
 ulars, prizes as he stands in the
 trenches no souvenir so much as the
 crucifix, the medal, or the beads that
 his mother, sister, wife, or sweet-
 heart gave him on his departure for
 the front. His faith had taught
 him the value of these things upon
 which the Church bestows its
 special blessing; but it was not till
 the ordeal confronted him in hourly
 facing death that he realized how
 dear they were to him. Daily
 familiarity, too, with the wayside
 shrine or crucifix, the sight of the
 miraculously preserved statues of
 the Blessed Virgin or other Saints in
 the ruined churches, and the devo-
 tion manifested by their Catholic
 comrades to the symbol of their
 Redemption, or the emblem of their
 love for their Heavenly Mother has
 awakened a longing desire in the
 heart of many a poor creddless
 Tommy to possess these things, that
 they might make his life a little
 more endurable, and bring into his
 soul some ray of hope and heavenly
 brightness amid the mud and the fog
 and the desolation of the world's
 shambles. Perhaps it was this
 thought that was in the mind of
 Ralph Connor when he announced
 that he was going to put a cross on
 his church when he returned to his
 home.

THE GLEANER.

When we have contracted the
 habit of venial sin, we are like a
 worm-eaten beam which looks sound
 outside, but breaks as soon as weight
 is laid on it.—Father Aquaviva, S. J.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

WE CONCLUDED our comments last
 week with an allusion to the lack
 of railway facilities about Verdun
 which practically isolated it as a
 part of the great French system of
 defence, and which seemed for the
 moment, to the uninitiated at least,
 to render its capture by the Germans
 extremely probable. Its weakness
 in this respect was, as we have
 seen, fully realized by "Papa" Joffre
 himself, and, if we are to believe
 the newspapers, he was quite pre-
 pared to make the sacrifice if the
 Germans on their part were willing
 to pay the price. A high price they
 did indeed pay, for such advance as
 they were able to make, but, as the
 event proved, they as little reckoned
 as did the wise acres on what the
 French Commander-in-Chief had
 stowed away for their reception.

TO EPITOMIZE the circumstances
 leading up to the assault on Verdun.
 It will be remembered that when the
 Germans captured St. Mihiel in the
 second month of the War, their first
 act was to cut the main railroad
 supplying Verdun—the Paris-Nancy
 line. This was essential to the plan
 on which the capture of Paris and
 the subjugation of France was to be
 accomplished, and when that bubble
 burst at the Marne, they were still
 able by means of their long-range
 guns at Varennes and Montfaucon
 to render the railway useless to France.
 In consequence, the French were
 at first compelled to use the single-
 track, narrow-gauge line running
 north through Bar-le-Duc, which,
 however, was entirely inadequate to
 supply the needs of the defending
 forces at that portion of the defen-
 sive line, and hence left Verdun
 practically isolated.

SO LONG AS this powerful fortress
 was defended by a relatively small
 force the problem of supplying it
 with food and ammunition was not
 serious, but when, at the beginning
 of the attack of which the world has
 heard so much, the Germans massed
 a quarter of a million men and more
 than two thousand guns along this
 narrow front the problem became
 one of the greatest gravity. In fact,
 we are told, it was such a tremen-
 dous task that, as it is now semi-
 officially stated, General Joffre had
 really determined on the evacuation
 of the fortress because of the great
 sacrifice its defence would entail.
 It is, in fact, reported that the
 capture of Douaumont by the Ger-
 mans was accomplished after Joffre
 had issued the order to retreat.
 That Verdun itself was not aban-
 doned is attributed to the political
 pressure brought to bear upon the
 military authorities. The fall or
 evacuation of Verdun would have
 had a bad effect upon France as a
 whole.

IT WAS IN this crisis that the
 motor transport performed what
 seemed the miracle of bringing up
 a quarter of a million men, and of
 supplying this great force with food
 and ammunition, and of transporting
 the wounded to a place of safety. It
 was the first time in the history of
 war that such a task was achieved by
 these means. We are reminded that
 the amount of ammunition expended
 by the French in the defence of
 Verdun was greater far than had
 been used in any battle in the
 world's history up to that time—
 greater even than in the great French
 offensive of 1915 in the Champagne.
 It has been exceeded, possibly, in the
 British operations on the Somme, but
 these had not then begun. The
 miracle at Verdun lies in the trans-
 port of this great mass of material,
 not to speak of the army itself, solely
 by means of the motor truck.

THE MIRACLE of which we write
 was not performed in a day. In
 fact, had the whole scheme not been
 mapped out months in advance it
 could not have been carried out at
 all. The preparations consisted of
 the building of an entire new road to
 the fortress and the working out of
 an intricate system to handle the
 thousands and thousands of motor
 cars of every description which were
 called upon to bring forward every-
 thing which the defenders required.
 It was this most efficient organization
 of the transport that made the
 defence of Verdun possible, and to
 the master mind that achieved it the
 obedience of France, and of the
 whole world for that matter, will be
 paid in full measure when in due
 time its every detail is revealed.

MANY MONTHS in advance of the
 great assault, General Herr, then in
 command at Verdun, foresaw the

necessity of providing for such a
 contingency. The highway running
 south through Bar-le-Duc and St.
 Dizier, was, like other average roads
 in France, built on a good founda-
 tion, but narrow, and liable to con-
 gestion under extraordinary circum-
 stances. General Herr saw that in
 the event of a siege on a large scale
 it would not be equal to the demands
 which would be made upon it. Any
 congestion under such circumstances
 might be fatal to the cause of the
 defender. To obviate such possibili-
 ty, he at once began an entire recon-
 struction of this road, doubling it in
 width in some places, and trebling it
 in others. Army engineers laid a
 new foundation; turnouts were pro-
 vided at certain specified intervals,
 on which disabled trucks could be
 side tracked and the blocking of the
 way thus prevented; in every village
 along the route depots of supplies
 and repair shops were provided, com-
 plete in every detail, so that such
 disabled trucks could be put into
 working order again in the minimum
 of time; those depots were manned
 by experts, and supplied with every-
 thing in the way of tools and machin-
 ery necessary to the expeditious
 execution of their tasks; between
 the villages and along the road
 myriads of signs reading "To Ver-
 dun" were erected, and, in addition,
 natives of the country by the score,
 familiar with its every feature, were
 stationed at every village to direct
 the truck drivers and maintain the
 traffic without congestion; and away
 back in the interior of France, thou-
 sands and thousands of motor trucks
 were held in readiness to move at
 a moment's notice, all with their
 special tasks allotted—some to carry
 rations, others ammunition and
 others fitted for the transport of guns
 of light or heavy calibre. These