

## BRITISH AND GERMAN AIRSHIPS ENGAGE IN SHORT FIGHT OVER ENGLAND; ENEMY HIT BUT ESCAPES

### Fierce Fighting in Poland with Russians Claiming Successes — British and Belgians in Hand-to-Hand Warfare Against German Trenches in West Belgium — Revolution in Albania Against Turks and Italian Marines Occupy Avlona — Intervention May Bring Italy in to Fight With Turkey.

London, Dec. 25.—Christmas brought no rest to the embattled European armies. It found the Russians still fighting desperately in the snows of Poland against the fierce attacks of the German and Austrians; Prezemysl still in the grip of the invading army; the French making spasmodic thrusts against the long German lines of trenches in Northern and Northeastern France, and the British and Belgians engaged in almost hand-to-hand warfare against the German trenches in West Belgium.

"In Flanders yesterday things were generally quiet," says the German bulletin. The French report intermittent artillery fire there. The French claim several successes along the centre and eastern lines, while the Germans declare that they have taken the second British trenches in Belgium. Both sides assert that they have repulsed attacks at various points, which indicates that the feeling process is under way all along the lines.

"So close are the trenches of the Allies and the Germans at many points that almost the only weapons used are hand grenades, since it is impossible for the men to expose themselves even to so small a degree as would be necessary for the use of their rifles.

There have been informal truces between the British and the Germans for burial of the dead between the lines. According to a British eye-witness, for many weeks along miles of the battle line the dead have lain as they fell.

#### GRUESOME SCENES ON BATTLEFIELD.

There are gruesome accounts of bodies held erect by the barbed wires, and skulls crawling over them at night.

A violent revolution has broken out in Albania against Essad Pasha, whom Turkey established as ruler there when the Ottoman government broke into the European war. Essad Pasha's palace at Tirana has been pillaged and burned. Massacres are reported. The Italian government has landed sailors from the warships of the fleet at Avlona, the principal Albania port, to restore order and protect Europeans and the peaceful inhabitants.

Italian intervention may embroil Italy with her recent foe, Turkey, and holds possibilities of far-reaching results.

German aviators made another attempt to drop bombs on British ports today. Like the attempt against Dover, that of today, which was directed against Sheerness, was unsuccessful. An aeroplane crossed the channel, according to the official report, and sailing high flew over Sheerness. British aircraft went in pursuit, and, says one despatch, engaged the enemy for a quarter of an hour before thousands of spectators. The invader finally disappeared in the mist, having been hit several times.

## BY ACCLAMATION

(St. John Globe.)

Naturally the local government party regards the decision of the opposition not to oppose the election of the new Attorney General, Hon. Mr. Baxter, as an indication of public satisfaction with the government. Naturally the opposition, seeking for an excuse for failure to make a fight in this metropolitan constituency, finds it in the war. Had it been possible to secure a candidate willing to sacrifice himself to inevitable defeat, there would have been an election, war or no war. That no candidate was available at this time when the echoes of the Dural investigation still ring fresh in the ears, proves how complete is the disorganization of the opposition. The convention consoled itself for its inability to make headway in the present, by naming candidates for the next provincial general election. That event is so far away and so much may happen in the year or two that will intervene before the contest is called, that another convention much nearer the date will come as no surprise. The decision of the convention probably ensures the election by acclamation of Attorney General Baxter and saves the opposition from a crushing defeat that would have been more disastrous than is the admitted failure.

## FESTIVE SPIRIT WILL BE LACKING IN OBSERVANCE XMAS SEASON IN RUSSIA

Difference of Nearly Two Weeks in Russian Calendar—Religious Ceremonies About Only Feature Which will Mark the Celebration this Year.

Petrograd, Dec. 25, (via London).—While all the western world is celebrating Xmas, the Russian goes blandly about his business, still having seven days in which to do his Xmas shopping. This is due to the Julian calendar, which sets back Russian time nearly a fortnight behind the rest of Christendom. Probably in none other of the warring nations has the war brought such a marked change in the observance of the holiday season. Religious ceremonies, always the distinctive feature of the Russian Xmas, alone will be unchanged, and doubtless will be observed with more than usual fervor.

The Xmas feasting of former years, the animated street and cafe life, which customarily turned the holiday season into a carnival, lasting well on toward the new year, will be lacking. This is Petrograd's first Xmas without vodka. Families broken up by the fortunes of war are unable to re-unite on the one occasion which usually brought homeward the absent members. Among the few celebrations today was a noon-day dinner given to the Russian wounded at the new American hospital by Mrs. Geo. T. Marye, Jr., wife of the American Ambassador. Most of the patients are only

## THE MIKADO DISSOLVES PARLIAMENT

Hopeless Split Over 1915 Budget and Greater Army Expenditures.

ALL EFFORTS TOWARDS COMPROMISE FAIL.

Ministerial Declaration Says Dissolution of Diet in Accordance With Will of the People.

Tokio, Dec. 25.—The Imperial Diet was dissolved today.

The House of Representatives rejected the army expansion proposed by the government. This led to the dissolution of the House.

The closing session of the House was dramatic in the extreme. The debate extended all through the day and on into the night. The House was unable to compose its differences and there was no sign that the debate was approaching its end, when, shortly before ten o'clock, it was announced that Emperor Yoshihito had exercised his royal prerogative, dissolving the Diet.

Considerable opposition developed in the House of Representatives over the budget of 1915, which showed an estimated expenditure of 566,000,000 yen, (\$78,000,000), and a surplus in the revenues of \$40,500,000. Recent despatches from Tokio have stated that there was good reason to believe that unless the House adopted the budget it would be dissolved by the Emperor.

The Merchants Association and Baron Shibusawa, president of the American Japanese Association, and Buel Nakano, president of the Tokio Chamber of Commerce, took steps a few days ago to urge the Diet cabinet to reach a compromise, in the hope of preventing dissolution of the House, or the collapse of the ministry. They urged that a crisis in time of war would create an unfavorable cabinet, and that the opposition leaders declared that proposals for increases in the army would be rejected.

The Diet was convened on December 5. Baron Kata, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an address at that time, appealed to the Diet to lay aside political strife in view of the unsettled international situation. It was the Emperor's wish, that the session should not be marked by political wrangling.

There were indications, however, that the opposition could not be placated so long as the government insisted upon its programme, and it was evident that the struggle would centre around the question of increasing the army. The proposal to add two or more divisions to the army, a Korea caused the collapse of the last Saionji ministry, and it was felt that on this occasion the army question was likely to lead to either the collapse of the cabinet or the dissolution of the Diet.

A ministerial declaration expresses the conviction that the dissolution of the Diet was in accordance with the will of the people. It declared that the end of the great war is still distant, and that meanwhile national harmony, necessary at this grave moment, has become imperilled by party strife.

The Cabinet's program, it declares, embodies the views of the National Defence Council regarding the necessities of defence.

The Japanese press generally approves the action of the emperor in dissolving the Diet.

#### HALIFAX BANK CLEARINGS

Halifax, Dec. 25.—Halifax bank clearings for the week ended December 24 were \$1,919,896 and for the corresponding week last year, \$2,004,828.

#### Quebec Bank Clearings.

Quebec, Dec. 25.—Bank clearings for week ended December 24, were \$2,936,420; corresponding week last year, \$2,793,620.

slightly wounded, and consequently were able to gather at the tables.

The only official observance of the day was a staff dinner by the British Ambassador, Sir George Buchanan. There was a suggestion of Xmas in the air, which was keen and crisp. Dull gray clouds hung overhead, and the air was filled with whirling snow, but there was little evidence of the traditional Russian winter in the unfrozen river Neva and the comparatively mild weather.

The rather feeble Xmas spirit which did prevail was overshadowed by the spectre of war. In every large open space were gathered detachments of the new army levies. The recruits, clad in heavy fur caps and long overcoats, practiced war manoeuvres.

## GERMANS ROUTED ON THE PİLICA RIVER AND ENTIRE REGIMENT ANNIHILATED

Strong Forces of Enemy Which Crossed PİLICA River Hurlled Back By Russians and Terrible Losses Inflicted—Austrians Hurl Masses of Men Against Russian Line, But Fail to Break Through—Czar's Forces Take 5,000 Prisoners in 2 Days Fighting.

Petrograd, Dec. 24.—The following statement from the general staff of the Russian commander-in-chief, was issued here tonight:

"On the Bura River, near the station of Tuchow, five versts below the town, our troops the night of December 22 and 23, utterly routed the strong forces which had crossed to the right bank of the Bura. A German regiment was almost completely annihilated and, in addition, lost five machine guns. We captured five officers and 515 soldiers.

"All through the day of December 23, the Germans made fierce attacks in the region of Balmow, but were everywhere repulsed. Very stubborn fighting also prevailed that day in the region of the left bank of the Nida, where they are strongly entrenched. The combatants here are old enemies. Three months ago the same Austrian troops opposed the first Russian advance on Cracow.

"On the 22nd and 23rd, violent fighting took place all along the front on the Nida River. It was especially stubborn on the Lower Nida, between Wislica and Nowemiasto-Kerczyn. During these two days we captured to the north of Pinczow 57 officers and more than 3,000 soldiers.

"To the south of the Vistula we maintained our successes of the previous day. Here we took 1,500 prisoners.

"In East Prussia, near Preemysl, and in the Carpathians, no important changes have taken place."

Petrograd, Dec. 26, via London.—Russian successes are reported officially from the battlefield before Warsaw and from that around Cracow, but without materially changing the general situation in these regions.

Especially vicious attacks have been made by the Germans between Pinczow and Nowemiasto-Kerczyn, at the juncture of the Nida and Vistula Rivers.

Weight of Numbers of Enemy Failed To Affect Russian Line.

In this place the Austrians imitated the tactics of the Germans, and tried to force a passage by sheer weight of numbers. Time after time they advanced in solid formation against the Russian front, in the face of a heavy artillery fire. The net result after two days fighting, December 22 and 23, was the capture by the Russians of nearly five thousand prisoners, including half a hundred officers, and the retention by the Russians of the left bank of the Nida, where they are strongly entrenched. The combatants here are old enemies. Three months ago the same Austrian troops opposed the first Russian advance on Cracow.

To the north the Russians are holding their own, and are inflicting severe punishment on the Germans. A series of energetic attacks at Dolmow, just south of Sochaczow (thirty miles from Warsaw), are reported to have been repulsed on the night of the 23rd by vigorous Russian counter-attacks, while forty miles further south, at Anopolce, a successful German crossing of the PİLICA River was thwarted into a German reverse, through savage attacks by Siberian troops, who forced the invaders back again.

A lull in Russo-Turkish operations. The Russo-Turkish operations have been brought to a standstill by climatic conditions in Asia Minor. Here the Russian troops have been cut out, covering all the roads and quartering in the villages in an immense triangle whose sides converge for seventy miles, with the base on the Russo-Turkish frontier, and the apex pointing towards Erzerum.

Clad in every variety of garment to keep warm, including Turkish robes and wide flowing Kurdish coats, the Russians are huddling in every shelter hut and farm house of the Armenians, and packing cow sheds, stables and storehouses wherever possible the roofs have been cut out, so that bonfires may safely be built within. The sound of battle is rarely heard by the main body of troops, who are wintering back again, way to Erzerum. Virtually the only activity is on the part of the restless Cossacks who are forever on the move, engaging in brushes with the opposing cavalry.

## REVOLUTION IN ALBANIA AND ITALIAN SAILORS OCCUPY AVLONA

Rome, Dec. 25.—Italy today occupied Avlona, the Albanian seaport. It is semi-officially announced that this action implies no purpose on the part of Italy to occupy interior points, but is merely intended to prevent anarchy on the opposite coast of the Adriatic, which is but a few hours from Italian territory. Several districts of Albania are in a state of rebellion against any authority. Essad Pasha, the Turkish ruler, apparently having lost his hold on the people.

The semi-official announcement says that the only object of today's occupation is to cut short constant annoyances from open or concealed enemies, besides upholding Italian interests, namely, not to allow Avlona to fall into the hands of any naval power. It is understood that the Italian government intends to safeguard these political, commercial and ethnographical interests without arrogance but without weakness, and also without being distracted from the graver conflicts arising from the European contest.

For some time the situation in Albania has again been grave. Several districts have rebelled altogether against any authority, and have become prey to the worst form of anarchy. Conditions have been rendered more grave by famine. The scarcity of food has been brought about through the absolute isolation of Avlona, owing to the state of war

## Hostile Aircraft Flies Over Sheerness—Hit Several Times and Driven Off By British Aviators—Another of Enemy's Airships Seen Over Medway River and Herne Bay

South End-On-Sea, England, Dec. 25, via London, Dec. 25.—The spectacle of a fight in the air, witnessed on Christmas afternoon by thousands of spectators, was one which ten years ago would have been considered one of the wildest imaginings of fiction.

Three aeroplanes, one German and two British, were flying overhead at seventy miles an hour, almost a mile high in the air. The German Taube was moving more swiftly than the others, which swung above it. The British were spitting fire, while the German was unable to reply on account of the strategic position of her pursuers.

When the German first came in sight, the anti-aircraft guns fired several shots, but after the British aeroplanes took chase, it was impossible to fire without danger of hitting them.

The spectacle lasted only five minutes. The German dodged and twisted in an effort to escape, but the British were on both sides pouring in rapid volleys. The speed at which the aeroplanes were travelling made the aim uncertain, but one of the British machines swooped down close to the German and pumped in several shots at close range.

Now, the German returned the fire, but so far as the people on the waterfront could see no damage was done either side.

London, Dec. 25 (10.16 p.m.)—The war office issued the following tonight:

"A hostile aeroplane was sighted today at 12.55. It was flying very high from east to west over Sheerness. British aircraft went up in pursuit and engaged the enemy, after being hit three or four times, was driven off seaward."

Sheerness, Dec. 25.—A German aeroplane was sighted off South End today.

The weather was misty, and the machine was flying at a great height at high speed. Several rounds were fired from anti-aircraft guns, apparently without hitting the German, but naval aeroplanes soon chased the intruder, who disappeared here that a German aeroplane, flying at a great height, passed over the Medway river and Herne Bay today. Aeroplanes and seaplanes were out on scouting duty for many hours.

#### DOVER CASTLE OBJECT OF ATTACK

London, Dec. 24.—The German raid from the air on the City of Dover is the first news of an authentic character of any hostile aircraft visiting Great Britain. The machine today came from the direction of Deal and was flying very high. It was not sighted from Dover until it suddenly emerged from the clouds. Apparently Dover Castle was the objective of the raid, for the bomb thrown from the aeroplane fell in the garden in the rear of St. James' rectory, which is located in front of the castle. The windows in the rectory and some of the houses immediately surrounding the rectory, were broken.

Fog made easy the escape of the hostile airship. Immediately he had dropped his bomb the pilot started straight across the Channel. Two British aeroplanes went up in an endeavor to catch the raider, but the hostile ship had too much of a start and could not be overtaken. Dover, Dec. 25.—It is reported here that a German aeroplane, flying at a great height, passed over the Medway river and Herne Bay today. Aeroplanes and seaplanes were out on scouting duty for many hours.

## STRIKING SCENE IN A BELGIAN CHURCH

Soldiers bivouacked in one section of edifice, while Xmas Mass goes on at altars—Strange mixture of War and Religion.

Furnes, West Flanders, Thursday, Dec. 24.—While waiting for an automobile to take him to the battlefield, a correspondent of the Associated Press entered, at dawn today, the church of Saint Nicholas, the great clock in the belfry of which towered above the historic square in Furnes. Instead of the small group of villagers that he expected to find listening to the Christmas Mass, he saw 1,000 Belgian soldier cyclists bivouacked on the floor.

Around the dimly-lighted altar in the apse a pathetic family group was gathered about the coffin of a small child. While the clergy intoned the funeral mass at the side of the church a special mass for soldiers was being celebrated, with rows of mud-covered men from the trenches kneeling before the altar.

Down the centre of the church, bicycles were stacked, some of the owners of which busied themselves in repairing their battered machines. Most of the men in the church, however, slept, huddled for warmth on a thin layer of straw, covering the stone flagging of the floor, apparently undisturbed by the sonorous notes of the great organ which now pealed through the church. A few soldiers had procured their morning rations and they ate their breakfasts of black bread oblivious of their surroundings.

Priests came and went, townspeople hurried to early mass and then away to their work, while the exhausted soldiers slept on. Now and then a non-commissioned officer would arouse a few men and they would slip quietly away, with their bicycles on one of those expeditions which, for daring, has made the cyclists the most famous section of the Belgian army.

As the rising sun drove the deep shadows from the church the rows of German guns, beginning an attack on Neuport, awoke the sleepers, and the great church became an animated scene of military activity. The religious services, however, went on as before.

## SLAV PRISONERS WANT TO FIGHT AGAINST TURKS

London, Dec. 25.—According to a Petrograd despatch to Reuters' Telegram Company, the number of German prisoners registered is 1,140 officers and 131,700 men; the number of Austrians registered is 5,166 officers and 221,400 men.

The Slav prisoners have asked for Russian naturalization, so that they may be sent against the Turks.

Valparaiso, Dec. 25.—A wireless message from the Chilean torpedo gunboat Toms reports the British cruiser Newcastle cannonading fifteen miles from Valparaiso. It is supposed that she has engaged the German cruiser Dresden and converted cruiser Prinz Eitel Friedrich.

A British squadron and Japanese warships are known to be cruising not far from this port.

## PREMIER BORDEN LEAVES FOR WINNIPEG

Accompanied by Lady Borden—Addresses Canadian Club There on Monday.

Special to The Standard.

Ottawa, Dec. 25.—Sir Robert and Lady Borden, after spending Christmas quietly at their home in Ottawa, left on the midnight train for Winnipeg, where the Premier will address the Canadian Club on Monday afternoon. Sir Wilfrid and Lady Laurier also spent the day in Ottawa.

Nearly all of the cabinet ministers are at their homes, the only two who remain in the capital being Sir George Foster and Hon. C. J. Doherty.