

The St. John Standard

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THE WAR SITUATION.

Another day passes without much result from the Battle of the Aisne, although the official communications from Paris state that the French troops have recaptured ground which they formerly were forced to yield to the Germans. Elsewhere along the line it has been a game of see-saw, but what advantage there is seems to be with the allies.

While the fact that the battle has now raged for twenty-four days with little advantage to either side, serves to illustrate what a stubborn fight the Germans are putting up, and seems to indicate that those who predicted an early ending to the war are not now likely to prove true prophets. It must not be forgotten that the Kaiser's men are now fighting to postpone the day when they will be forced back on their own territory. Apparently, when they started their spectacular march to Paris, they expected they might be driven back over the ground on which they are now fighting, for positions occupied by them, some of which have already been captured by the allies, were prepared for defensive purposes, and these preparations must have been made at least several weeks ago.

It is encouraging to reflect that the German campaign is not as far advanced now as it was a month ago, and that while Britain continues mistress of the seas there is no danger of the British people having their food supply interfered with. Also there is little likelihood that the allied lines of communication can be damaged by the Germans, while there is every possibility that the constant extension of the area of battle will so weaken the German lines that action may be expected in the way of cutting them.

The Germans, apparently, have suffered reverses on the sea. It is reported that two of their vessels have been put out of business by the allied British and Japanese squadrons in the Pacific and they have lost a submarine in European waters. Disquieting rumors as to possible air raids on England are in circulation, but it must be remembered that Great Britain has expected and anticipated such a stroke and all necessary preparations have been made to give aerial visitors a satisfactory reception. Despite the dropping of bombs into Antwerp, and even into Paris, the efficiency of the airship for purposes other than scouting and securing information has not yet been decisively established. There have been single combats in the air between German and French aviators and in these the Germans have not demonstrated their superiority at that branch of warfare. It is also reasonable to expect that, if Germany attempts an aerial attack upon England, the air fleets of the other nations, and in air craft as in sea craft, the allies have a numerical superiority over Germany, will be in a position to carry into effect measures of reprisal.

In the east the Russians continue to make progress and a significant item from the Berlin report of last night is to the effect that they have increased their offensive strength. This may be the German method of preparing their people for tidings of disastrous defeat on the Russian frontier. The forces of all the allied nations have been increased by timely reinforcements and the next few days may witness conflicts of decisive importance. It is hardly to be expected, however, that the Battle of the Aisne, no matter how it may result, will be of determining significance. The decisive fighting is expected to come much nearer to the German capital and it may not occur for some months. This is a fight to the finish and, as such, likely to be prolonged.

MORE MEN NEEDED

It does not require to be told that the great need of the British Empire today is men. The British army is fighting bravely in France, side by side with the gallant French and Belgians. Our soldiers are displaying the dauntless spirit and the will to do and dare that has made the name of Britain famed the world over, but spirit and will cannot always avail against superiority of numbers. We believe Great Britain will be victorious in the acid test of conflict, but if the unexpected should happen, and Germany prove victorious, what would be the future of the people of the Empire? What the future of Canadians? Is it not worth while to think of this possibility? The call has gone out for a second contingent from Canada. Would it have been issued if it was not needed? Every nerve is being strained in England to enlist fighting men to take the places of those who have fallen. Members of the British Cabinet are addressing meetings in various centres of Britain for the purpose of stimulating enthusiasm in recruiting. These measures would not be taken if the British Government did not deem them necessary, and the fact that they are

necessary, should cause every Canadian, of fighting age and qualifications for military service, who can possibly do so, to rally to the colors. The tidings from the battlefield of Europe have not been discouraging. There is no occasion for pessimism. Britain will win. But it must not be overlooked that the contest is likely to be a long and costly one. Germany is a nation of great resource, the German soldiers, brave and determined. They will not easily yield until they have been beaten to their knees and taught forever that Britain is the mistress and the British Empire must prevail.

It has been said that Britain is fighting to keep her word. That is true, but there is far more than that at stake. She is fighting to keep her Empire and her freedom. If she should fail in the task of driving the Germans out of France, it might not be long before she would be forced to fight to keep them out of England, out of Canada. It is a time for serious thought and patriotic action. We are confident that the men of the Empire will answer the Empire's call in numbers sufficient to ensure victory. Those who do answer and who volunteer for foreign service, or for home defence, should remember that they fight for freedom, for the British which has given to Canada the liberty of which Canadians are so proud. And the liberty of Canadians leads the world. They fight for our institutions, for free speech and the right to vote, for representative government by and for the people, and all that it implies. They fight against militarism and of feudalism, against the tyranny and oppression which has characterized Germany wherever Germany has had opportunity to rule; they fight to show their disapproval of the slaying and torturing of innocent women and children, of the wanton blood lust which has stamped the German officers and authorities with the brand of Cain; they fight against the Prussian spirit, which would enslave the world, and which would count all loss as gain if the ultimate result of the war should be to conquer "England and the English."

Our young men, already on the seas, will demonstrate to the world the truth of that splendid boast, "Those who would reckon with England must reckon with England's sons." They freely and voluntarily offered their lives on the altar of Empire and, with smiling confidence, went forward to pay, if need be, the extreme price for the liberty of those of us left behind. Now, more Canadians are wanted to show the same spirit. They will not be dilatory in coming forward. Canada will send at least 50,000 men. She could send 100,000 if necessary. Young men of Canada, the Empire needs you; the call is to arms.

THE AUSTRALIAN NAVY.

Despite the contention of Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, that the present is no time for the discussion of political questions, Liberal newspapers, in some Canadian cities, are declaring that the work done by Australia has "proved the case for a colonial navy as advocated by Sir Wilfrid Laurier." We are willing to agree at once that what work the Australian ships have been called upon to do, they have done well, but that they, operating in the Pacific, have shown that the Borden proposal to add three dreadnoughts to the British line as Canada's gift, was not the correct solution of the defence question, is, as a writer of popular fiction puts it, "something else again."

The Australian navy is co-operating with the Japanese war fleet in protecting British shipping and interests in far eastern waters. There will be those who will say that Japan could have attended to the job alone, and we have no doubt they are correct. The point is that Australia is not operating in the North Sea and her ships, splendid and effective though they are, are not relieving the strain in that quarter.

Despatches of yesterday intimated that Germany was making ready for an attack upon England by Zeppelins and submarines, in conjunction with her navy, and, in preparation for this, the German ships were taking on new guns of a heavier and supposedly more destructive type. Already the German submarines have worried the fleet of Admiral Jellicoe to some extent, and the strain there is consequently severe. It will be admitted at once that the future of the Empire depends upon the ability of the British fleet to retain control of the seas, and that the test of that ability will come, not in the Pacific, where the Australian navy is stationed, but in the North Sea, where Canada's dreadnoughts would have operated. Those who claim that Australia has proved the case for the colonial navy might ask themselves how long would the colonial navy in the Pacific exist, if the British navy in the North Sea were defeated. In what manner

then would Australia prove the case for the colonial navy? But let us suppose that Australia had entered into the scheme of the British Admiralty for strengthening the Empire navy at the heart of the Empire, and that Canada, also, had contributed her three dreadnoughts to that navy. It would mean that the British strength in the waters, where it is likely to be most severely tested, would be increased by five or six of the finest ships "science could build, or money could buy;" ships like the other splendid vessels that have driven Germany to seek the protection of the fortifications of the Kiel Canal. Would not the Empire then be more strongly defended, and in even more secure position, than it is today? Would not the odds against Germany be increased to a greater extent than they are? Those Liberal newspapers which have raised the question can answer it.

Britannia!

A thousand years have seen them pass,
Thy heroes, not in vain,
And Right now bids them firmly tread
The roads to death and pain.

Thy fluttering standards carried high
Their serried ranks amid,
Kissed by the suns of many lands,
The battle smokes have hid.

The whistling shaft, the quarrel's hum,
The clash of sword on shield,
These things they heard, thy gallant lines
That bend but do not yield.

And now the dreadful, screaming shell,
The hidden, shattering mine,
These things they hear, thy gallant lines
That bend but do not yield.

A "scrap of paper" called them forth,
Thy brave, stout hearts and quivering flesh
Into the scales are thrown.

Not this alone, oh damning shame,
Wrecked Louvain, Vise and Rheims
Deep scarred by torch, their silent streets
Have rung to women's screams.

These Vandals now Attila's name
From its foul dread place have hurled
How cruel, as always in the past,
The judgment of the World!

Thy gallant sailors dauntless hold
Their serried ranks upon,
They fear not ships sailing high
Nor the cowards' floating mine.

Thy sons unchanged, their courage strong,
Dismayed not by Death's toll,
Answer, as always in the past,
Thy drums' loud stirring roll.

On History's page oft counted true
To free the cringing slave,
To cheer the helpless, raise the weak,
On land and on the wave.

What soil that has not drunk their blood?
What woman's line has stayed?
What heaving flood hides not their forms?
Speak, mother, wife and maid.

Hope of the World, thou Goddess fair,
Never thy tongue shall sink,
Never have my sons deserted me,
Or turned from Freedom's task?

—Hugh S. Pretty.

At Rheims.

I can recall an autumn day in Rheims
When the pervasive peace of the old town
Was as a benediction. All the air
Was peopled with the imminence of dreams.

Rapt visions of renown,
Of Clovis, and the faded robes
That from the immaterial realms
Above

The sacred vial bore
With power to consecrate the brows of kings;
Of Louis Debonair.

The searing crown of fire,
And from her sacrificial pyre
Passed to that rest beyond life's anguishings.

The twin cathedral towers
In the impending azure like great flowers,
Miraculously fashioned, seem to show
And the great window o'er the Virgin's portal

Was as a rose immortal,
Shaming the sunset glow.

And now another autumn day in Rheims,
But not of vision glory, not of dreams!
Rather of horror and descending doom,
War's hideous blight upon the perfect bloom.

Of art and beauty, sacrifice and shame,
And all through one invoking God's high name!
As the swift years recede,
All lovers the loveliest things of earth

That through the handwork of man
Have birth
Shall exorcise the deed!
—Clinton Scollard, in New York Sun.

How Europe's Armies Take the Field.

The idea underlying all modern continental armies is universal military service, that compulsory instruction of every able-bodied citizen which has resulted in the "Nation in Arms." In itself this idea is very old. It prevailed in the city-states of ancient Greece and in the city-states of ancient Rome. Throughout the middle ages it almost dropped out of sight, while the subsequent rise of despotic monarchies apparently gave it its death-blow. At the close of the eighteenth century European armies were invariably small, trained professional soldiers (largely foreign mercenaries), offered by noblemen in inspired by feudal loyalty to their royal overlords, the king. Such an army was pre-eminently the "King's Own." It was quite out of touch with the nation at large whose chief military

contribution in peace or war was the payment of taxes for the support of the king's army.
The French revolution gave this military system its death-blow and laid the foundation for the existing order of things. With the overthrow of the French crown the old "king's army" went to pieces, but since France was assailed by all Europe she was forced to improvise an army or die. The army was found through the new principle of the "levee en masse,"—the rising of the nation to resist the invader. The levee en masse produced enormous masses of men, entirely untrained, of course, but full of fanatical courage, and since their opponents were small armies of professional soldiers too valuable to be rashly risked by generals possessing no adequate reserve forces, the French succeeded in beating off their enemies, and when a campaign or two had turned these raw levies into veteran soldiers the vast French armies overran all Europe. True, the levee en masse had to be supplemented by the "conscription," the taking of a certain percentage of available men (by lot), yet even under the first empire the French armies were more "national" than the old "king's armies" had ever been.—From "How Europe's Armies Take the Field," by T. Lochrop Stoddard in the American Review of Reviews for September.

CAPT. FOWLE, OF R.C.R. DIES AT HALIFAX

Halifax, Oct. 7.—Captain Alex. Fowle, of the Royal Canadian Regiment, died here tonight after an illness of several weeks. He was 52 years of age. The body will be sent to Logisville, N. B., for interment.

Business as Usual.

It will be good news to the Maritime Province shareholders of Humphrey's Unshrinkable Underwear Ltd., that at a meeting of the directors of the company held on Monday evening it was decided to declare the usual dividend which will be paid shortly.

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