

TOPICS OF THE DAY

THE BEGINNING OF THE END The long summer months have witnessed a complete change of position in the war, as between the Allies and the Central Powers. By midsummer the initiative had definitely passed to the former, and Germany—deprived of all effective aid from Austria as well as from Turkey—is now a beleaguered state. The lie with which she began the war, long prepared and deliberately provoked, has been converted into what is for her a stern reality: she is being attacked and hemmed in on every front. Let us salute, in the first place, the heroic defenders of Verdun, and the spirit of France by which their resistance was inspired. Never in all history has an attack so persistent and so intense been met by a defence so courageous and so devoted. Next, before speaking of ourselves, let us pay a well-deserved tribute to the generalship and the bravery of our Russian allies. Alike on the Eastern front and in Armenia they have been busy re-making that map from which the German Chancellor used to derive such comfort and consolation. The fall of Gorizia in August was a brilliant culmination of the efforts by which Italy had for long more than held the Austrians at bay. Her declaration against Germany, and Roumania's entrance into the war, have been most welcome features of the later record. As for Britain, the sea-fight off the coast of Jutland left her the undisputed and indisputable command of what we shall take leave to call the "North Sea or *British Ocean*"; while her unexampled efforts on land have not only been crowned with success, but have sealed with the life-blood of her sons and of her children from over seas her covenant of imperial unity. Whatever course the political development of the British Empire may follow in the future, no foreign power will ever again make the mistake of coldly calculating that the states of which it is composed would be incapable of joint action, even for the purpose of resisting unjust aggression.