

A Look Before and After.

THERE IS ON ALL SIDES THE FEELING OF THE IMMINENCE OF FINAL THINGS.

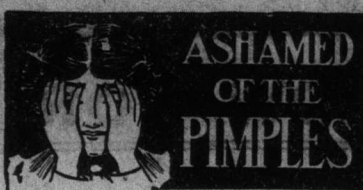
"I am told on good authority that a few days before the end which came upon him so swiftly and silently, Lord Kitchener said that he had revised his estimate of the duration of the war," writes "A.G.G." in the Daily News. "He had calculated that it would last three years. He now thought that estimate excessive and looked for an earlier close. And the enormous impetus of events during the past few days gives force to the prediction. There is on all sides, the feeling of the imminence of final things.

A Year Ago.

"It will help us to understand the position to-day if we look at it in the light of the position a year ago. In an article at the beginning of this year I said that the history of the war had been the history of two failures—the failure of Germany in 1914 and the failure of the Allies in 1915. A year ago we were in the midst of the second failure. It was for us the darkest hour of the struggle.

"The Germans were engaged in that stupendous movement against Russia for which they had prepared after the collapse of their original plan of campaign in the West. The armies of the Grand Duke were falling back from the Carpathians to the heart of Russia before an avalanche of shells to which they could make no reply, and day by day and week by week we awaited what seemed like an inevitable and final catastrophe to our Eastern ally. The great enterprise in the Dardanelles had ended in disaster and disappointment. The fall of Venizelos had created new perils for us in the Balkans and the clouds hung dark and menacing over South-Eastern Europe.

"On the Western front the offensives at Souchez and Neuve Chapelle had failed disastrously, and left us with the feeling of impotence before the strength of the German defences. Submarine frightfulness was at its height and the Zeppelin raids were



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creating a sense of unknown possibilities. At home, we were in the trough of internal disillusion and conflict. The Government had fallen, the air was thick with recriminations and alarms, we were realizing that this was a war of big guns, and that the Germans had got the guns and the Allies had not.

To-day.

"That was the position a year ago. It was the hour of Germany's high water mark in the war. Let us contrast that position with the salient facts of to-day. Not one of those immense potentialities which seemed in the grasp of the enemy has been realized. The Russian armies were not enveloped, the great drive through the Balkans that was to open the path to Egypt and India has ended in failure, the submarine has lost its terrors, and we have almost forgotten the Zeppelin.

"In the West the armies of Britain have grown to undreamed-of dimensions. In the East the Russian armies equipped at last, have emerged from the Caucasus into the plains of Mesopotamia and are crashing through the Austrian lines in Volhynia. The Allies need no longer fear the challenge of the big guns and every day the

mountain of munitions grows with overwhelming menace. And all the time the pressure of British sea power envelops Germany with the sense of doom.

Fighting to Escape Defeat.

"It is in the light of these things that we can read the meaning of the swift march of events to-day. What is the keynote of these events? It is the urgency of Germany to get a decision before the hour for bargaining on equal terms has gone by forever.

"The Kaiser is no longer fighting for victory; he is fighting to escape defeat. He is fighting for an instant settlement that will save his dynasty from the ruin that threatens it.

"This is the secret of that astonishing struggle before Verdun, which goes on after the original hope that inspired it has long been dead. It was to have been a blow, swift, final, shattering that would smash the centre of the Allied line and end the war in the West. Whatever happens to Verdun now—and it is not unlikely that the French, having exacted their price, will decide ultimately to yield up the shell of the town—the blow has failed.

"Why, then, does the sacrifice continue? Many explanations are offered, but the only one that explains is that the Kaiser has decided by the sheer destruction of the manhood of France to drive that nation out of the battle line. He must break one of the Allies and with it the Alliance or he is lost. But he does not understand France if he believes that any sacrifices will ever bring her to her knees.

Not to be Repeated.

"The same feverish anxiety to force a finish, to burst through some door of his prison before it is too late, in the reason for the adventure in the North Sea. It was apparent after the failure at Verdun that the only offensive stroke of capital value left to Germany was one at the British Navy—for the Austrian attack on Italy belongs to the secondary scale of things. The stroke had been kept in reserve. In the Kaiser's scheme of the war it was never more than a remote contingency, for the victory was to be won on land, and it was on land that the British Navy was to be dealt with. Among the many illusions of Germany there has never been any illusion about the supremacy of British sea power, and it was only in the last ditch, as it were, that a challenge to that power was contemplated. It has been made, and in the opinion of those best able to judge it is not likely to be made again, certainly not soon enough to influence the present phase of the war.

Panic Speech.

"And if the events of the war themselves indicate this feverish urgency, no less so do the political symptoms of Germany. What can be more significant than the concealment of the losses in the battle of Jutland, the audacious denial, the public rejoicings, the frantic 'Hoch, hoch, hoch' speech of the Kaiser, the truth creeping out bit by bit with shamefaced explanations about 'military reasons'?

"All this suggests a disquietude, a nervous tension, a fear of consequences that is eloquent of much. Not less eloquent are the rather pitiable appeals of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg to the Allies to 'look at the map.' He apologizes to his people for us. He cannot understand our obstinate refusal to 'look at the map.' He raves and fumes at our failure to see that we are beaten. This is not the manner of those who know that they have the victory in their hands. It is the manner of panic concealing itself behind a mask of bluff.

"Storm Rising in Germany. "Nor is there any mystery as to the causes of this feverish anger. The storm is rising in Germany itself. The Chancellor's reply to the pamphlet literature is an evidence of the gravity of this secret circulation of anti-war literature not only among the people but also in the trenches. Meanwhile, from both sides the Government is being openly assailed, by the Conservatives for the failure of their foreign policy and by critics like Harden for their general ineptitude, for the absurdity of describing Sir Edward Grey as 'a firebrand' and of denying his desire for peace, for suggesting that the war was forced on Germany, a view which, as Harden says, 'has found belief almost nowhere in the world,' and for the childishness of Bethmann-Hollweg's plea to 'look at the war map.'

"The 'back door' to Berlin is yielding. It is the Central Confederation which is in peril while that of the Allies is more secure, more confident and better administered than at any period since the war began. I was asked the other day whether there had ever been a war so mismanaged as this had been by us. I answered that, seen as a whole, seen with reference to the overwhelming difficulties that had to be overcome between Allies so diverse, so separated, so lacking in common interests, and common forms of government, and common strategy, I doubted whether any war in history had been so well managed.—Public Opinion.

Killed in Action.

The Rev. W. E. R. Cracknell, Curate of St. Thomas's Church, received a letter yesterday from his father in England informing him of the death of his brother, Private Walter J. Cracknell, of the 3rd Battalion of the famous Coldstream Guards, who was killed in action "Somewhere in France," on June 18th. The young soldier met his death while attached to a fatigue party digging a communication trench. Enclosed in the letter was an account of his heroic death by the Rev. A. S. Crawley, Chaplain of the 1st Guards Brigade, who speaks of him as a good soldier and friend. The remains were tenderly laid to rest in a cemetery close to the firing line, reserved for the burial of the British dead. Private Cracknell was all through the battles of LeMons and the Aisne, being severely wounded in the latter engagement. After a quick recovery he was back in the trenches in February, 1915, and passing through several minor engagements he received the fatal blow on the date mentioned. To the sorrowing relatives in the Old Country and to his brother, Rev. Cracknell, general sympathy is expressed in which the Telegram joins.

The Supreme Sacrifice

His Excellency the Governor received a message from London a few days ago, informing him of the death of his nephew Lieut. Robert W. I. Davidson, of the Devonshire Regiment, and brother of Miss Davidson, of Government House. Lieut. Davidson was killed in action on July 1st at Gommecourt, France, not far from where "Durs" were fighting. Previous to the war the deceased hero was commercially interested in the Malay States but at the outbreak of hostilities he returned to England and joined the colors. To their Excellencies, Miss Davidson and the relatives in the mother land, deep sympathy is expressed.

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Soldiers' and Sailors' Club.

The Committee of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Club have made arrangements for a Smoking Concert to be held in the Club Room at the Seaman's Institute, on Monday evening next, as a "send off" for the men who are leaving for active service. An excellent programme has been prepared, and through the generosity of several friends, refreshments, etc., will be provided free. H. E. The Governor, who is President of the Club, has taken great interest in the movement and will be present. Gifts of cakes, etc., will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged by the Secretary and should be sent to the Institute on Monday next, before 4 p.m.

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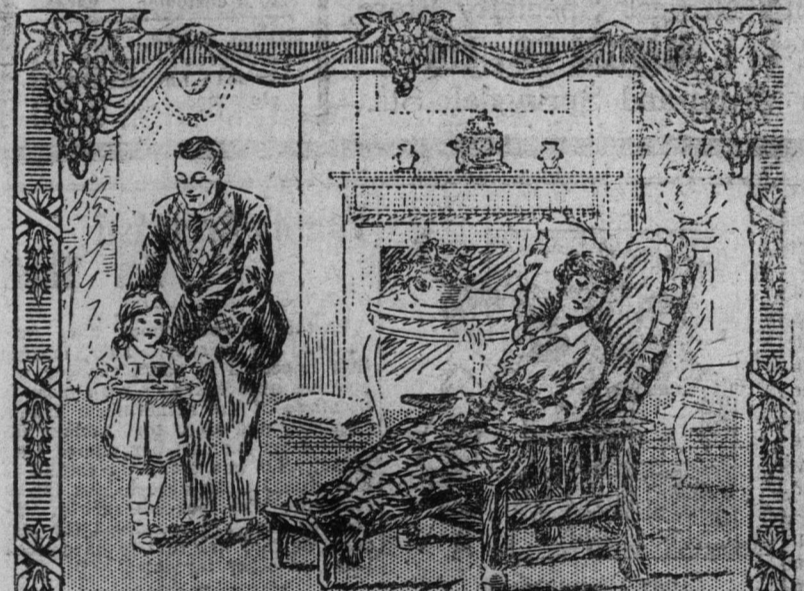
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