



Through A Monocle

The Obvious in War

THE strategy of the two great armies which have been confronting each other from Belfort to Belgium, has been, remarkably enough, exactly what military writers have long predicted. Each of the belligerent forces have taken the obvious and expected course. There have been no dramatic surprises—no Napoleonic disregard of traditional tactics—no bold strokes cutting across the anticipated plans of campaign. It has been always understood that the Germans, in case of war with France and Russia, would first endeavour to crush France, and then turn about to face the slower Russian advance; and that is exactly what they have done. It has been further understood that they would avoid a frontal attack upon the impregnable fortifications of the French along their frontier from the Ardennes to Belfort, but would execute a great turning movement through Belgium and fall upon the comparatively unfortified Franco-Belgian frontier; and that, again, is exactly what they have done.

ON the other hand, it has been understood that the cardinal principle of the French defence, after making sure of their line from Verdun to the Swiss boundary, would be to avoid at all hazards the fatal blunder of permitting themselves to be trapped in another Metz or Sedan; and that is exactly what they have done. Arm-chair critics have been inclined to grumble because the Allied lines fell back so repeatedly and with so little reported fighting. Why didn't they stick?—we asked. A few Boer riflemen in South Africa would get on a ridge and hold back an army. Why didn't our armies, with their matchless artillery and numberless machine guns, hold their elaborate fortifications? But the answer to this question is simple. The Germans persisted by grace of their numerical superiority, in trying to get around behind them; and they fell back to avoid a trap. They could have stayed and won more glory. But they were not trying to win glory—they were trying to win the war. So they fell back and kept their armies intact. They no more sacrificed themselves and their chances to glory than has the German navy.

THE German successes have been won in the good old fashion by getting the most men at the point of contact. They have been able to do this by reason of two things—first, the more rapid mobilization of their whole forces has given them a much larger numerical superiority on the field than they have ever shown on paper; and, secondly, their railway system is a military system, and can be employed to mass their troops just where they need them. I have been surprised that the scouting of the aeroplanes of the Allies has not been better—that is, that it has not kept us better informed as to where the Germans were concentrating their men. Possibly it has done better than we have known. Possibly, the Allies simply could not bring up the men to meet the German thrusts. But, in any case, where the enemy have won, they have won by overwhelming attack. The shooting of our professional soldiers is reported to have been better; and it should have been. The artillery of the French is confessedly better. But it is still possible for two and three to one to win in battle.

AND that simple, old-fashioned fact is what we are really calculating on to win the war. We expect the Russians to finally arrive in front of the defences of Berlin with two or three to one in their favour. As I write, they have made great strides in their necessary campaign for the driving back of the Austrian forces on their Galician flank. They obviously must dispose of this Austrian menace on their lines of communication before they can safely advance in force into Posen and strike at the heavy line of fortifications on the Oder. They must no more march into a trap than the French and British could afford to allow themselves to be driven into one. But if they hurried forward through their own "Polish triangle" for the purpose of striking an early blow at Berlin, and left the whole Austrian army on their flank in Galicia and a Prussian army on their northern flank in East Prussia, they would run a grave risk of suffering an immense and crushing disaster by seeing their invading armies surrounded, cut off on the rear from their supplies, and

compelled to surrender. That would be a Russian Sedan.

CLEARLY, the Western Allies must exercise patience. They must suffer and be strong until the Russian Blücher arrives. The smashing power of the German army has not been over-estimated. Those who told Britain that she was imperilling her priceless Empire by failing to follow the sinister example of her Continental neighbours and provide an adequate army, have been abundantly justified by events. We hold the sea. Our navy is supreme. There is not even any talk about either an invasion or a raid upon British shores. Yet we are in a position of grave peril—as I write—because the armies of France and Britain are being driven slowly back before the German Car of Juggernaut. If Britain had had one million trained men to launch into the fray, there would have been a far different story to tell—indeed, it is very doubtful whether Germany would have ventured upon war at all. No one hates the very idea of conscription more than I do; but where is the difference in suffering between preparing a million men before war breaks out, and flinging the same number—half-prepared—into the horrible maelstrom after war has commenced. The latter is what we are doing. We will easily send a million if we must. But they will be less effective—more of them will probably be killed—and they cannot now prevent the war by their very readiness,

as they might conceivably have done had they constituted an army-in-being two months ago.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

WAR is a tragic inheritance from the past. In a civilized continent like Europe, it is a verminous appendix, constantly inflamed. That is, it is a social organ, which may have had its uses once, but which is only potent for mischief now. But it would be quite as sane for a man to pretend that he had no "appendix," and refuse to get it removed when it clamoured most painfully for that operation, as for a nation to pretend that an imminent danger of war did not exist because war is "so illogical."

THE MONOCLE MAN.

Aid from Australia

Who, like Canada, is Ready and Eager to Help the Mother Country

AUSTRALIA is now a close second to Canada in sending aid to England. She is sending 20,000 men to the front. This, as in Canada, will be followed by other contingents. Australia has somewhat the advantage of this country in what is practically a system of conscription involving the whole male population capable of bearing arms. Junior cadets from twelve to fourteen train ninety hours a year; seniors from 14 to 18 must put in four days, twelve half days and 24 night drills a year; citizen soldiers from 18 to 25 must put in 16 whole day drills, of which eight are in camps of continuous training. A final corps from 25 to 26 makes up the reserve, behind which again is the large corps of rifle clubs supported by the Government. On this basis Australia has a larger percentage of men more or less trained to bear arms than Canada, which has not yet come anywhere near the conscription system.



THE WAR MANIAC

"COME ON EVERYBODY, JOIN THE CARNIVAL OF BLOOD!"