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# HOW THE FIGHT WAS WON

## A General Sketch of the Great War

By

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Recommended by the Department of Education of  
Ontario, for use in Collegiate Institutes, High  
Schools, and Continuation Schools

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"The world shall tell how they stood fast,  
And how the fight was won,  
As long as faith and freedom last  
And earth goes round the sun."

—Harold Begbie

# HOW THE FIGHT WAS WON

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## CHAPTER I

### THE CAUSES OF THE WAR

By 1914 GERMANY had reached the summit of her power. The steady and rapid growth of her industries and her commerce had brought her much wealth and great reputation. Her navy, negligible fifteen years before, was then second to Britain's only. Her army, always formidable, had been increased in size until it approximated her ideal of "a nation in arms," and had been fashioned by a generation of Prussian drill-sergeants into an extremely effective machine.

The consciousness of power gave birth to vast and ill-formed dreams of empire. Germany had taken a leading position among the nations of the world, but still she was not satisfied. She was desirous of becoming the arbiter of the destinies of Europe. More than that, her vaulting ambition saw a world subdued and paying homage to the Teuton. By force of arms she had grown; Poland, Denmark, Austria, and France had been forced in turn to yield to her might and contribute to her aggrandizement. By force of arms she would continue to grow. France, whose astonishing recovery after the Franco-Prussian war had disappointed Germany's expectations, would be utterly crushed. Britain, whose flag covered one quarter of the habitable globe, would be forced to pay tribute to conquering Germany, and her colonies would provide that "place in the sun" so fervently desired. The Slav hordes of

Russia, an ever present danger, would be thrust back upon their steppes and forests. Such were the grandiose ambitions, the impossible dreams, which emanated from her rulers and permeated her whole people.

To German eyes some such scheme of conquest seemed not only feasible but also necessary. Fear of Russia, an inheritance from the days when the Teutonic Knights formed a barrier between civilization and Slavdom, underlay the German belief that the Russian giant must be bound before he attained full growth. Germany was thoroughly persuaded, and not without reason, that the Franco-Prussian war had been but an episode in the long struggle between Frank and Teuton for the possession of the debatable ground of Alsace-Lorraine, and that the final reckoning was yet to come. She thought that her industrial and military efficiency would prove more than equal to Russia's great but ill-organized strength. France she considered a despicable foe. She was certain that the British, in her eyes a decadent people, would never submit to the sufferings entailed by participation in a Continental war. Russia and France first; then Britain's turn would come. Britain's defeat would usher in an era in which Teutonic arms would render Teutonic influence and culture paramount throughout the world. So, curiously enough, the people of Germany were convinced that their safety could be best secured through a tremendous war of conquest.

Germany, though mad with lust of power, was not insane enough to try to conquer the world unaided. Austria, conquered by Prussia in 1866, had become her subservient ally. Italy had been driven by an unsympathetic France into an alliance with Germany in 1881. Every effort had been made to attach the lesser peoples of Europe to the German cause. German kings ruled in Rumania and Bulgaria. King Constantine of Greece was

German in education and sympathies. Turkey had been courted for twenty-five years, and finally threw aside her traditional ties with France and Britain to enter into close relations with Germany.

The nations directly threatened by German ambition naturally tried to strengthen their positions in order to hold her in check. France sought and won Russia's friendship, and in 1896 the two countries entered into a close alliance. King Edward VII of England, one of the most far-sighted statesmen of his day, saw that Britain could no longer maintain her policy of "splendid isolation" in the face of the German menace. Largely owing to his efforts, Britain and France established cordial relations in 1904, an understanding which grew in intimacy, until, in 1912, it became to all intents and purposes an alliance for defence. In 1907 Britain discussed with Russia all the differences which had arisen between them, mainly in connection with Persia and India, and settled amicably all disputed questions.

So Europe was divided into two great camps—the Triple Alliance, consisting of Germany, Austria, and Italy—and the Triple Entente, formed by France, Russia, and Britain. Italy, however, was but a half-hearted partner in the Triple Alliance. The Italians were always unable to regard Austria as anything but their natural enemy, for they could not forget the years of Austrian oppression which Italy had endured nor the fact that many miles of Italian territory and many thousands of Italians had never been freed from Austrian misrule. The old resentment toward France had passed away, and a more natural feeling of kinship with the other great Latin nation was taking its place. In 1913 Austria tried to obtain Italy's sanction to an unprovoked attack on Serbia; Italy's curt and decisive refusal showed clearly how little her allies could count upon her aid in a war of aggression.

There were several reasons why Germany could not wait much longer before making her bid for world power. Italy, as we have seen, was showing unmistakable signs of becoming restive under an alliance with her hereditary foe. Austria-Hungary was held together only by the loyalty of her polyglot population toward the old Emperor, Francis Joseph. In all probability his death would mark the beginning of the disintegration of his patch-work empire. Germany herself had reached a pitch of armed power beyond which she could not hope to progress save at the risk of bankruptcy. On the other hand, the Triple Entente was growing stronger every year. Russia, awakened by the humiliation of her defeat at the hands of Japan, was busily engaged in reconstituting her army and in replacing her lost fleet. The development of her industries was proceeding apace, making her a stronger and more dangerous foe. France, always looking for the day when the German threat would materialize, had strengthened her army by new laws increasing the length of service and the personnel of her officers' corps. Even peaceful Britain, loath to believe in the reality of the danger, had been forced to adopt some half-hearted measures to increase her military strength. In a few more years Russia would be a tremendous enemy, the French army would be at top strength, and Britain at least no weaker. Then Germany's opportunity would probably have passed for ever.

For some years prior to 1914 Germany had been carrying on intrigues in the near East, with the intention of extending her influence through Turkey into Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. The Balkan war of 1912, from which Serbia emerged with increased territory and prestige, erected a formidable Slav barrier between Germany and Turkey. To Austria was delegated the task of removing Serbia from her path. Austria was quite willing

to comply with this desire of Germany, for in her recently acquired provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were many Serbs who wished their country to be under Serbian rather than Austrian rule. As long as Serbia remained uncrushed, she would be a constant incentive to revolution within Austrian territory. Already in 1913 Austria had considered an attack on Serbia, but nothing was done because of Italy's refusal to be a party to such injustice. In 1914 an opportunity arose which gave Austria a pretext, at least, for crushing Serbia, and this time nothing could turn her from her course, for behind her stood Germany, ready for the terrific contest which was the inevitable result of Austria's action.

On Sunday, June 28th, 1914, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, visited the town of Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia. As he was riding slowly through the town with his wife, a Bosnian Serb named Prinzip suddenly ran forward out of the crowd and fired three shots at them from a Browning pistol. The Archduke was hit in the neck, the Duchess received a terrible wound in the body while trying to shield her husband. Both died within an hour.

At first the news of the assassination caused little more than a ripple of interest through Europe. Austria laid the blame for the tragedy at Serbia's door and announced that she would demand assurances from Serbia which would prevent the recurrence of such outrages.

On July 23rd the Austro-Hungarian Government presented its demands to Serbia. Among other less drastic requirements, Austria demanded that any Serbs privy to the plot against Archduke Ferdinand should be brought to trial, and that Austro-Hungarian delegates should take part in the judicial proceedings. Compliance with this meant for Serbia a virtual surrender of her rights as an

independent and sovereign state. An answer to Austria's Note was demanded within forty-eight hours.

Serbia, acting upon Russia's advice, accepted all the Austrian demands except two; the one, on the ground that she did not clearly understand the meaning of the request, the other, because its acceptance was possible only by a violation of the constitution. These two conditions she offered to submit for arbitration to the Hague Tribunal. Such complete submission by Serbia would have satisfied Austria had her object been merely to teach Serbia a lesson on the danger of fostering political intrigues on Austrian soil. This, however, was not her ultimate aim; the Note had been made very harsh, and the time limit set for receiving an answer had been made very short, in order to make acceptance of the terms impossible, and so to furnish an excuse for war. The Austrian Ambassador replied to the Serbian Government that nothing less than a complete acceptance would satisfy his Government, and he demanded his passports. In all this Germany gave Austria her full support.

At once Europe awakened to the danger which threatened her. Diplomats laboured day and night to prevent a general conflagration, but the conciliatory efforts of Britain, France, and Italy met with no success. By July 29th Austrian guns were bombarding the Serbian capital; Russia, as champion of the smaller Slav states, had ordered a mobilization of her southern commands as a warning to Austria; France was making feverish preparations to aid Russia should Germany intervene; Belgium, fearful that her neutrality would be violated, had ordered a mobilization in self-defence; Britain, certain that war could not be averted between France and Germany, was concentrating her fleet in readiness for all eventualities. The same day von Bethmann-Hollweg, the Imperial Chancellor, proposed to the British Ambassador to Germany that

Britain should remain neutral in the impending struggle. He guaranteed that Dutch neutrality would be respected, but was unwilling to give the same assurance with regard to Belgium, although Prussia, as well as Britain, was a signatory to the Treaties of 1831 and 1839 which guaranteed Belgian neutrality. He was willing to give Britain an undertaking that no annexation of French territory in Europe would be made if Germany should be victorious; but would not give a similar assurance with regard to the French colonies. Britain indignantly rejected a proposal which implied that British honour was so slight a thing that her own interests would outweigh her treaty obligations to Belgium and her moral duty to France.

On August 1st Germany declared war upon Russia, alleging as cause Russia's refusal to order an immediate demobilization. France was involved at once by her alliance with Russia. On August 3rd Germany demanded of Belgium a free passage for her armies, requesting an answer within twelve hours. Belgium refused the demand, as the Treaty of 1839 expressly laid upon her the duty of maintaining her neutrality against any nation wishing to violate it, and appealed to Britain for aid. The following day Britain asked Germany for a promise that the wishes of Belgium should be respected, and instructed her ambassador to return home if a favourable reply were not received before midnight. The German Government did not even wait for the full time to expire, but handed Sir Edward Goschen his passports at 11 p.m. From that hour Britain was in a state of war with Germany.

In one of the last interviews between the Imperial Chancellor and Sir Edward Goschen occurred an illuminating exchange of views regarding the sacredness of treaty obligations. "Do you mean to say," asked the Chancellor with incredulous scorn, "that you are going to make war for a scrap of paper?" "Unfortunately, Sir," re-



plied Sir Edward, "that scrap of paper contains our signature as well as yours." No rejoinder could have been more in keeping with British tradition and British honour.

So began the Great War. The Austrian Note to Serbia brought to a head the long-standing antagonism between Slav and Teuton and gave Germany the opportunity to bring on at a favourable moment the war for which she had been long preparing. To France it meant a life and death struggle with her hereditary foe. Belgium chose to risk honourable annihilation rather than dishonourable security. Britain drew the sword, not merely because she saw in Germany a terrible menace to her own safety, but, primarily, because of the violation of Belgian rights and because of the danger to France. But beyond and above all this, the struggle assumed even deeper significance. It was to determine whether the ideals of the democratic and free peoples of the world should be vindicated, or whether they were to be crushed in the grip of the iron fist of reactionary militarism.

## CHAPTER II

## THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1914

From the beginning it was obvious that Germany had to bring the war to a successful conclusion within a short time or face inevitable defeat. Threatened by Russia on the north and east, by France on the south and west, her only reasonable prospect of success was seen to lie in the delivery of a crushing blow to one or other of her foes, before the two by combined effort could crush her. Russia had to bring her troops great distances over wretched railways and roads, so that it would be some time before her armies reached their maximum strength. Germany was willing to gamble on Austria's ability, if assisted by weak German forces, to hold Russia in check, while the main German armies swept down into France and crushed the western foe. Although Germany had no conception of the strength of the forces which Britain was eventually to put into the field, still she was well aware that growing British armies would reinforce France if time were given. Further, British soil was invulnerable, but the possession of the French coast would give Germany excellent bases for operations by air and sea against British shipping and British cities. A successful and brief campaign against France would nullify Britain's participation in the war to a great extent; it would lessen the chances of any other nation taking up arms with the Entente; it would leave the German armies free to crush the slow-moving forces of Russia; in brief, it would win the war.

The frontier between Germany and France was guarded on the French side by a series of strong fortresses extending from Belfort to Verdun. The French general staff

had made their plans with a view to the defence of this line, relying upon the barrier of Belgium for protection toward the west. The outbreak of the war found strong French forces in the east, where no heavy attack was made during the whole war, and comparatively weak forces along the Belgian frontier, where troops were urgently needed. Successful resistance to the German invasion depended upon securing the time needed for a re-grouping of her armies. This was Belgium's task.

By the evening of Monday, August 3rd, German columns were already on Belgian soil. By evening of the next day they were closing in on Liège, the strongest frontier fortress in Belgium, which was defended by General Leman with a hastily mobilized force of 20,000 men. The southern forts held out for three days, then General Leman, seeing that to hold his infantry longer in Liège would be useless, despatched them to join the main Belgian army along the River Dyle. The northern forts continued their resistance until the Germans brought up their heavy siege trains and destroyed them by long-distance fire. On August 15th the last fort was taken. With it General Leman was captured, after a most heroic resistance which had delayed the German advance for at least ten days when every day was of incalculable value.

After the fall of Liège, the German armies moved upon the Belgian field forces, which up to this time had fought only scattered actions with bodies of German cavalry. After four days of fierce fighting, the Belgian troops, hopelessly outnumbered, withdrew to the fortress of Antwerp, leaving Brussels to the foe. On August 20th the German troops entered the Belgian capital.

The same day began the siege of Namur, which barred the route into France down the Meuse valley. The heavy German siege guns were quickly placed in position, and in five days destroyed utterly the solid concrete and steel

fortifications of the fortress. By August 26th all resistance there was at an end, and the path was clear for the great rush of the German forces into France.

Meanwhile Britain and France were using the time so dearly bought by Belgium to bring their forces into action. On August 7th the embarkation of the British troops began; by the 17th the whole of the Expeditionary Force had landed safely in France. The troops were hurried north to take up a position on the left of the French armies, which now began to extend into Belgium. By August 22nd they were holding a front of twenty-five miles, centering upon the Belgian town of Mons. Sir John French was in supreme command of the whole force. Under him were Sir Douglas Haig, destined eventually to lead the British troops in France to glorious victory, and Major-General Allenby, who little thought as he led the British cavalry against the German hordes that fate had marked him for an even more spectacular *rôle* in far-off Palestine.

On August 22nd two German armies flung their massed troops against the French forces holding the line of the Sambre River. Under the impetus of the German attacks the French line broke, and the troops composing it began a hurried retreat southward. Although this left the right flank of the British army without support, no word of the retreat reached Sir John French until the evening of the following day.

During Sunday, August 23rd, the British line held firm against a succession of massed attacks delivered with great determination by the German army under General von Kluck. So effective was the British defence that General French did not realize the overwhelming odds he was facing, until he received a telegram from General Joffre, Generalissimo of the French forces, which informed him that not less than three German army corps were attacking

his front, that his right flank was exposed by the defeat of the French along the Sambre, and that another German corps was sweeping around his left. It was at once apparent that to defend the position at Mons would be impracticable. Even a few hours would see the British force wholly enveloped and facing annihilation.

On Sunday evening the retreat began, following a day of the fiercest fighting, in which 80,000 British soldiers held in check at least 150,000 of the picked troops of Germany. For ten days the British army continued to withdraw southwards, fighting stubborn rearguard actions almost every step of the way. On September 3rd the Marne was reached and crossed, and the British took up a position along the Grand Morin.

The French armies stretching eastward had also been forced to retire under the stress of tremendous enemy pressure. Stubborn battles were fought at the Semois, the Meuse, and the Aisne, but the German onrush could not be checked. Only one river defence remained between Paris and the German hosts. The Marne marked the extreme limit of the German invasion of France.

On September 5th the French armies held an arc-shaped line stretching from Verdun to the Ourcq River at its confluence with the Marne. Farthest to the east, if the French forces between Verdun and the Swiss frontier are excepted, the Third Army under General Sarrail held a line from Verdun to Bar-le-Duc. Opposing him was the Crown Prince of Germany. General Langle, commanding the Fourth Army, continued the defence to Vitry. General Foch, with the Ninth, confronted von Buelow and von Hausen. General d'Esperey, with the Fifth, held the line of the Grand Morin. Next in line came Sir John French with the British Forces, while farthest to the left lay the Sixth French Army, which had been strongly reinforced by troops from the garrison of Paris.

On Sunday, September 6th, began the four-day Battle of the Marne, fought by more than three million men over a line one hundred miles long. It ended the German expectations of a swift decision in France, it threw the German armies upon the defensive, and thus changed the whole character of the war.

Von Kluck, thinking that the British force was *hors de combat* after its strenuous ten days' retreat, and ignorant of the large concentration of men in the Sixth French Army, made a fatal mistake in moving his troops across the British front on September 5th, in an effort to crush d'Esperey's force along the Grand Morin. At dawn on September 6th these two armies attacked his troops, and von Kluck found himself in a most unfavourable position. The bulk of his force was engaged with d'Esperey, his right wing was turned by Manoury, and General French was threatening the right flank of the columns attacking d'Esperey. Throughout September 6th, 7th, and 8th, the French and British on the Allied left made slow but steady progress in their attack. Farther east the troops under Foch and Langle held their ground in the face of most violent attacks delivered in the hope of breaking the Allied centre.

Wednesday, September 9th, was the crucial day of the battle. By then the German right was in full retreat, but the Allied armies farther east had not been able to gain ground. On the morning of the 9th General Foch drove the right wing of his army between von Buelow and von Hausen. After a day of dogged fighting, in which 10,000 Germans were killed in this single sector of the line, he forced the German centre to retreat in haste.

By the 10th the Battle of the Marne was won. The whole German line from the Ourcq to Bar-le-Duc was in full retreat, losing heavily in killed, prisoners, guns, and transport.

On September 13th the German forces reached the Aisne River, behind which ran a series of high bluffs forming a very strong defensive position. On the following day the Allied armies crossed the river and began an attempt to oust the Germans from the hills beyond. In five days of incessant fighting the Allied forces pushed their way well up the opposing slopes. The German defence, however, proved too strong to permit a successful frontal attack; and General Joffre was compelled to change his strategy. He began to extend his left wing to the north-west, intending, if possible, to roll up the German line to the east by flank attacks. Meanwhile, the fighting along the Aisne and to the eastward degenerated into trench warfare and artillery duels, in which neither side won any marked advantage. During the bombardment, the Germans, without any good military reason, shelled the Cathedral at Rheims and wantonly destroyed one of the most magnificent mediaeval buildings on the Continent.

The northward extension of the Allied line progressed rapidly. By September 20th Manoury had reached Lassigny, and a new French army under de Castelnau had taken up a line from Lassigny to Chaulnes. Ten days later, Maud'huy, commanding another newly organized French army, extended the line through Albert to Arras and Lens. The British army was transferred to the extreme left of the Allied line and took up a position in West Flanders. To move eastward against the German flank, however, proved to be impossible, as fresh German troops kept pouring down into Northern France and held the Allied line in check.

The great surge of the German armies southward left the Belgian field army in possession of Antwerp. The Germans could not possibly afford to leave in their rear a force of well over 100,000 men in a position which offered a constant menace to their lines of communication through

Belgium. On September 28th the bombardment of the outer forts of Antwerp was begun. On October 5th two British naval brigades arrived in Antwerp to help in the defence. They, however, could not even postpone the inevitable. On October 9th the inner defences of Antwerp had fallen under the constant hammering of the huge German howitzers, and nothing remained for the garrison save a retreat southward to the Allied line. This difficult operation was successfully accomplished with the aid of the British 7th Infantry and the 3rd Cavalry Divisions which had landed at Zeebrugge and Ostend on October 6th.

By October 20th the whole Allied line from Albert to the sea was in the position in which it was to meet the desperate attacks of the German armies attempting to break the northern sector of the Allied line, and so to reach the Channel ports. The Belgian army, supported by French Marines and Territorials, lay along the Yser Canal from Nieuport to Dixmude. A force of French cavalry filled the gap between Dixmude and Bixschoote, from where the British lines ran in a salient around Ypres to Givenchy. From Givenchy through Arras to Albert lay Maud'huy's army.

Upon this front the Germans launched four simultaneous attacks. Von Beseler moved his troops against the Belgian line on the Yser, and succeeded in pushing it back a few miles in eleven days of dogged fighting, lasting from October 17th to October 28th. On that day the Belgians, no longer able to withstand the heavy German onslaughts, played their trump card and inundated the country for twenty miles by damming the Yser at the coast, where the support of British warships had enabled them to hold their ground. The Germans, caught in the rising waters, were drowned by hundreds, and scores of their field guns were swallowed up by the flood. By the beginning of November the Belgian front from Nieuport



to Dixmude was safely guarded by an impassable barrier of mud and water.

Further south the British Second Army Corps under General Smith-Dorrien and the French under General Maud'huy had to meet equally violent attacks about La Bassée and Arras. The attacks began on October 22nd and ended on November 2nd, reaching their climax during the last three days of October. Everywhere the Allied lines held firm, and the attacking troops suffered enormous losses in their stubborn efforts to break unbreakable battalions. In this hard-fought engagement the Lahore Division of the Indian army, which had landed at Marseilles a month before, played a gallant part and won a well-deserved encomium from the British commander. Maud'huy had equal fortune in defending Arras. By November 1st the German attacks were definitely halted; and the French, attacking in their turn, were pushing the German lines back from Arras.

The heaviest assault of all fell upon the salient at Ypres. For three weeks masses of fresh German troops were hurled against the thinly held British lines. The British losses were frightful; whole battalions were wiped out; one division was reduced to one sixth of its strength. Yet the British soldiers held their ground with that indomitable tenacity which had aroused Napoleon's enthusiasm a century before. Outnumbered eight to one, outgunned perhaps twenty to one, they succeeded in throwing back the picked troops of Germany in one fierce encounter after another. Their courage multiplied their numbers, so that one German officer after the battle was certain that at least four British army corps had been used in one sector of the line which one division had actually held. The issue of the battle ended the German hope of sweeping through to the channel ports.

The line in France had now become stabilized from

Belfort at the Swiss frontier to the sea at Nieuport. Both sides were well entrenched and were busily engaged in perfecting their defences. The 1914 campaign put a definite end to the German expectations of a short, sharp struggle ending in complete victory. Instead, both sides could look forward to a long, wearing conflict, in which no decisive victory could be won until one side or the other secured such a great preponderance of strength that it could break through the defence system of its opponent and restore the "war of movement" by which alone a military decision could be reached.

On the Eastern Front Russia had begun her campaign in East Prussia auspiciously in early August. The German frontier forces, after suffering a heavy defeat at Gumbinnen, were shut up in Königsberg, and the Russian troops were rapidly overrunning East Prussia. Their early success was more than counterbalanced by a most disastrous defeat at Tannenberg on August 28th. This battle won for von Hindenburg, the German commander, the popularity and esteem in Germany which he was to enjoy throughout the war, and resulted in his appointment as Generalissimo of the Teutonic armies on the Eastern Front.

Rapid changes followed on this Front. In the south the Austrians were utterly defeated in four pitched battles, and, as a result, Lemberg and the whole of Eastern Galicia passed into Russian hands. Von Hindenburg in the north advanced to the Niemen River, but was soon forced to retire and suffered very heavy losses in the battle of Augustovo. Two attempts to capture Warsaw, the capital of Russian Poland, were checked by the stubborn resistance of the Russian troops. By Christmas of 1914 the Eastern Front had become stabilized along an entrenched line from the Vistula to Bessarabia.

The Serbs also scored signal successes over the

Austrians. Early in August an Austrian force crossed into Serbia. On the 18th of that month the Serbs completely defeated the invaders in the battle of Shabatz, and on the 23rd reported Serbia clear of the foe. A second attempt in September met with no better luck. Then, late in the autumn, Austria concentrated an army of 300,000 men to crush Serbia for ever. The Serbs, too weak to face such a force without every advantage of ground, withdrew to their mountains and left Belgrade to the foe. On December 3rd the two armies came into contact. In the three days' battle which followed, the Serbs completely defeated the Austrians. By December 15th Belgrade was again a Serbian city. Of the splendid army which had entered Serbia so confidently only scattered and broken fragments remained.

On sea the war found the British Navy in complete readiness. Within a week after the outbreak of hostilities, German sea-borne commerce ceased to exist. Over ten per cent. of the total shipping of Germany and Austria had either been captured or was interned in neutral ports.

In the East, Japan, as Britain's ally, took up the struggle with Germany. On August 15th she demanded of Germany an immediate withdrawal of all armed German vessels from Japanese and Chinese waters and the immediate delivery of Kiao-Chau in order that it might be restored to China. No answer to her ultimatum was received, so on August 23rd Japan declared war on Germany and proceeded to attack the German forces at Kiao-Chau. These formally surrendered to General Kamio on November 10th.

The German squadron based on Kiao-Chau did not wait to assist in the defence, but sailed east toward the coast of South America. Two cruisers were detached from the main squadron to raid British shipping in the Indian Ocean. One of these, the *Koenigsberg*, was destroyed by

*H.M.S. Chatham* in the Rufigi River in Africa. The other, the *Emden*, after a short but exciting career, in which she captured seventeen British merchantmen and torpedoed a Russian cruiser and a French destroyer, was sunk by the Australian cruiser *Sydney* off the Cocos Islands on November 9th. The main German squadron under Admiral von Spee met the British Atlantic squadron under Admiral Cradock off the coast of Chile. The latter had under his command two old armoured cruisers, the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth*, a light cruiser, the *Glasgow*, and a converted merchantman, the *Otranto*. In the action which followed, the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* were sunk by the gunfire of the heavier and more modern German ships. The *Glasgow* escaped by her speed.

On December 7th Admiral Sturdee arrived at the Falkland Islands with two battle-cruisers, the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible*, and three armoured cruisers, the *Kent*, the *Cornwall*, and the *Carnarvon*. This squadron was augmented by the light cruisers *Bristol* and *Glasgow*, which joined it in the South Atlantic. The next morning von Spee with his victorious squadron came in sight. The British squadron at once gave chase. The situation was now reversed, for the British vessels were heavier, faster, and carried larger guns than the German ships. The *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Nurnberg*, and *Leipzig* were sunk, and only the *Dresden* escaped the avenging guns of Sturdee's squadron.

In the North Sea the opening year of the war was marked by the absence of any great naval engagement. Toward the end of August the British lured into action some of the German cruisers which had kept closely to the protection of Heligoland, and three of them were sunk without the loss of a British ship. This taught the Germans caution, and for two months they were content to

keep their fleet within secure harbours, while they tried in vain to reduce our superiority with mines and submarines.

The five months of the war at sea in 1914 proved conclusively that Britain still was mistress of the seas. The Pacific squadron under von Spee had been destroyed, the German commerce-raiders had been rounded up, British sea-borne commerce was scarcely affected, while a complete stop had been put to German foreign trade. Further, the British navy established a blockade of Germany in the North Sea, and so was depriving Germany of her imports. It was the beginning of that ceaseless and ever-tightening pressure which choked the economic life of Germany and which was the greatest single factor in causing her final collapse after four years of war. Owing to her command of the seas, Britain was able to bring troops from India, Canada, Australia, and South Africa, to play their part in the conduct of the war. She was able to take from Germany 100,000 miles of territory in Oceania, to wrest from her clutch her great colonies in Africa, and to meet successfully the threat to Egypt and to India which followed Turkey's declaration of war.

On November 1st Turkey definitely threw in her lot with Germany. She had previously given evidence of this intention by harbouring the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, two German cruisers which escaped the British Mediterranean fleet to find refuge in the Dardanelles. Late in October a horde of Bedouins invaded the Sinai Peninsula, and, at the same time, three Turkish torpedo boats raided the Russian port of Odessa on the Black Sea. Nothing remained for the Allies save a declaration of war.

The Turkish armies were unable to operate in Europe, owing to the belt of neutral Greek and Bulgarian territory which separated Turkey from Serbia. Their first efforts were directed against Russia in Transcaucasia. A strong force based on Erzerum and Trebizond advanced over the

Russian frontier in the middle of December. On New Year's Day, 1915, they met a crushing defeat at Sarikamish and had to flee in disorder to Erzerum and Trebizond. The Russian captures of men and material were enormous, and Turkey was put on the defensive in Armenia.

The Persian Gulf, into which flow the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, had been a sphere of British influence for many years. There the pipe-line of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company delivered enormous quantities of oil, badly needed for the Navy. The British possessions in India, threatened by Turkey, could best be defended by a barrier thrown up the valley of the Tigris through Mesopotamia. Even before the declaration of hostilities with Turkey, small detachments of Indian troops had been placed at the head of the Gulf to protect British interests there. These were reinforced, and in November began to move inland. After defeating the Turkish forces in that neighbourhood in several small engagements, they occupied the town of Basra. On December 9th Kurna, at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, was taken and formed an advanced base for the troops operating in Mesopotamia.

Two important additions were made to the British Empire as an immediate result of the entrance of Turkey into the war. Egypt, which theoretically at least had been a Turkish possession, was formally declared a British protectorate on December 17th, and Cyprus, which had been leased by Britain from Turkey in 1878, was annexed to the Empire.

Meanwhile the colonies which Germany had acquired in Africa and Oceania were being swept from her. In August an expedition from New Zealand seized Samoa, while Australia took possession of Kaiser Wilhelm's Land and the islands which, with it, formed the bulk of the German possessions in the Southern Pacific. Later in the

year Japan occupied the Marshall Islands, the last bit of German territory in the Pacific. These were turned over to Australia. The German possessions in Oceania, totaling 100,000 square miles in area, had passed into worthier hands.

In Africa a short campaign by Anglo-French forces sufficed to conquer the German troops in Togoland by the end of the first month of the war. The colony of Cameroons proved a little more difficult, but it, too, was completely overrun by Allied troops early in 1915. General Louis Botha, one of the bravest and most skilful of the Boer leaders in the Boer war, had become Premier of British South Africa. After subduing a rebellion at home, which was organized by a few misguided malcontents, led by General DeWet, he crushed the German forces in German South-West Africa and received their unconditional surrender in July, 1915. German East Africa, the most important of her colonial possessions, offered a stronger defence and was not completely conquered until the final year of the war.

By the end of the year 1914 it was plain that the German expectations of a short, sharp struggle would never be realized. Across France stretched an impenetrable barrier of Allied troops, closing the path to victory in the West. In the East Russia had shown surprising strength, and her soldiers had taken heavy toll of the German and Austrian armies. Even little Serbia had hurled back the overwhelming forces which had threatened her destruction. Overseas, one by one, the German colonies fell into the hands of Britain or her Allies, and this Germany was powerless to prevent. Every day made the position of Germany worse, for behind the screen of the trenches in France and behind the protecting hulls of the gray monsters whose guns held the sea Britain was arming and training the millions of her best manhood who had

answered the call to arms. In Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand, in South Africa, in India, in every corner of the earth which owed allegiance to the British flag, men and munitions were being prepared for the great struggle. For another year Germany could count on an equality of men and a superiority of material for the war, but after that she must continue the war with a constantly increasing inferiority in both. In 1915 her greatest effort must be made; and the penalty of failure would be disastrous and humiliating defeat.



## CHAPTER III

## THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1915

After the Battle of the Aisne the struggle in the West entered into a new phase, which was to continue without real alteration until the last three months of the war. Instead of manoeuvring freely and coming to grips in the open, the opposing armies constructed a continuous line of fortifications from the sea to the frontier of Switzerland. Neither side could outflank the other, so that a frontal attack offered the only possible method of forcing the enemy from his position. Even this was impossible unless the attacking force had sufficient heavy artillery to blast the opposing trenches out of existence. Even when this was done, the difficulties of moving up artillery over the shell-torn ground proved an insuperable obstacle to a rapid advance. To secure a real break through proved an impossible operation, until the Allies had a great preponderance in both men and munitions and until they had evolved a scheme of tactics suitable to the conditions which they faced.

Through the winter the British forces in France were heavily reinforced. By March they numbered half a million. In their ranks was included the splendid First Canadian Division, which, after training at Valcartier in Canada, had been transported to England in November and had reached France the following February. The British forces were divided into two armies, the First, under Sir Douglas Haig, and the Second, under Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien.

On March 10th Sir John French attempted an offensive against the Aubers Ridge, which dominates the

important city of Lille. The new British levies showed splendid courage, managed to advance a mile or two on a narrow front, and took the village of Neuve Chapelle. In this operation, so meagre in its results, they suffered over 13,000 casualties, an indication of how costly an attack upon a well-constructed trench system must be unless the attacking force has a tremendous preponderance in artillery, which at that time the British did not possess. A smaller engagement was fought at St. Eloi on March 15th, in which the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry especially distinguished themselves.

The British army was soon forced to relinquish the offensive. On April 22nd heavy German attacks were made on the Ypres salient, just at the junction of the French and British armies. Two brigades of the Canadians were holding the extreme left of the British line at the point of the salient. Early in the morning they saw a curious bank of greenish vapour swirling down upon them from the German lines. For the first time poison gas was used in battle. The French Colonial troops upon their left reeled under that deadly wave, then broke and fled, leaving a breach in the line four miles wide. The Canadians held their ground and formed a new alignment to face the Germans who rushed to the attack in the wake of the gas. For a week the Canadians fought against overwhelming odds. They were gassed again on April 24th, but in spite of that held their position. Five days later they were relieved, after holding at bay for seven days four picked German divisions. It was their first great achievement, the beginning of that glorious series of exploits which won for the Canadian Corps a reputation second to none in the Allied armies.

After the first week the fighting at Ypres ebbed away in a series of minor engagements, and ended on May 13th with the British line still unbroken. Once more the

Channel ports had been saved by the tenacious resolution of the British soldier. It proved to all the world the splendid fighting qualities of the new British armies, but it also showed the tremendous handicap under which they had to fight. The Germans had guns and shells in abundance; the British stock was woefully inadequate. So great an outcry was raised in England against the War Office, which had failed to equip our troops adequately, that the Government was reconstructed, with Lloyd George occupying the new and important position of Minister of Munitions. He injected new life into the production of war material, and from then on Britain increased her output until, a year later, the British equipment equalled the German and in two years far surpassed it.

The ordinary course of trench warfare was interrupted again by attacks by the French in the Artois and by the British at Festubert and Hooge. No material results were achieved by these except the weakening of the German forces.

On September 25th General Castelnau attempted to break through the eastern side of the great salient formed by the German lines in France. His men swept against the German trenches on a front of fifteen miles in the Champagne. On the same day the British and French forces on the western side attacked at Loos and Vimy Ridge. More than 30,000 prisoners and 175 guns were captured, but the German line held.

The German armies in the West were content to hold the French and British troops at bay during 1915. The events of 1914 had proved that no decision could be reached in the West until an even greater superiority could be established by the German armies. As long as Russia threatened her from the East, Germany could not bring to bear sufficient strength in France to reach a decision. She believed that Russia could be decisively defeated in a year's

campaign, and, with this in view, threw all her available men to the Eastern Front, leaving just enough in France to hold the line with safety. With Russia finally out of the struggle, the whole weight of her arms would win an equally decisive victory in France the following year.

The year opened auspiciously for Russia. Von Hindenburg made a third attempt on Warsaw, only to be foiled once more by the superb resistance of the Russian armies. Failing in this, he attacked upon the northern flank of the Russian line and won a preliminary success, but by the middle of March the Russians had regained practically all the ground lost. Simultaneous attacks on the Narev River yielded still smaller results. The Germans were defeated in a pitched battle at Przasnysz on February 26th, and were compelled to relinquish their plans for the invasion of Poland until a more favourable opportunity offered. In Galicia the fortress of Przemyśl surrendered to the Russians on March 22nd. With it 120,000 prisoners and 1,000 guns fell into their hands.

But meanwhile the Germans were forging a thunderbolt which was destined to be the beginning of the end of Russia. A huge concentration of men and heavy artillery was made behind the Donajetz River, across which lay a Russian army under General Dmitrieff, all unsuspecting of the tremendous onset which was about to overwhelm it. General von Mackensen was in charge of the operations. On May 1st 2,000 guns opened fire on twenty miles of the Russian front and in a day wiped it out of existence. Through this breach poured the German hosts, and the Russians were forced to retreat.

From then until the autumn the Russian campaign was a victorious advance for the Germans. The Russians fought bravely, but their artillery could not match the weight of metal concentrated by Germany. By the end of June all Galicia had been evacuated.

The road was now open for the fourth and final invasion of Poland. Von Hindenburg from the north, Leopold of Bavaria from the west, von Mackensen from the south, closed in upon the Polish salient. On August 5th Warsaw was in German hands. The fortresses of Novo Georgievsk, Kovno, and Brest-Litovsk fell in quick succession. By the end of the month the German line had advanced over a hundred miles, making enormous captures of men and material as it moved.

By the beginning of September the Russian resistance was beginning to stiffen. The Germans had outrun their artillery and supplies. Their transportation problems were becoming very difficult. By the end of September the Russians were beginning to counter-attack successfully, and were able to hold a line running from Riga along the Dvina River to Dvinsk, and south from there through Pinsk and the Pripet Marshes to the fortress of Rovno on the Sereth River. They had suffered grievous losses in men and guns, but their armies were still in being, and the long Russian winter would give them an opportunity to repair their strength in readiness for the campaign of 1916.

While the British and French were trying in vain to break the German line in the West and while the Russians were retreating before the guns of von Hindenburg and von Mackensen, interesting developments were taking place in Asia. Early in the year the Turks attempted to attack the Suez Canal from Syria, but their forces were decisively defeated by the British garrison of Egypt early in February.

In Mesopotamia Turkish troops attacked the British forces at Kurna, but were defeated in the Battle of Shaiva. Following this victory the British advanced seventy-five miles up the Tigris and occupied Amara on June 3rd. The following month an expedition pushed up the Euphrates valley and took Nasiriyeh. These easy victories

won over scattered Turkish forces made the British leaders over confident. General Townshend was sent up the Tigris with too small a force to deal with the Turkish troops which barred his advance upon Bagdad. At first his expedition prospered. On September 29th Kut-el-Amara was taken without difficulty. Farther up the river, at Ctesiphon, the Turks had concentrated a large army. There General Townshend suffered a serious defeat and was forced to retire to Kut-el-Amara. The Turkish troops pressed the pursuit and were able to surround the town before the General could withdraw his troops. He made a magnificent defence against overwhelming odds. For six months he held the Turks at bay, while a relief expedition was being organized at Basra. It was held back by bad weather and floods, and just failed to reach Kut in time to prevent General Townshend's surrender on April 28th, 1916.

Early in 1915 an attempt was made to strike a blow at the centre of the Turkish Empire. If the Dardanelles could be forced and Constantinople occupied, Turkey would be put definitely out of the struggle. So, from February 19th to March 17th, a composite fleet of French and British warships bombarded the Dardanelles defences. On March 18th an attempt was made to force a passage through the Straits into the Sea of Marmora, but the Turkish batteries, set in implacements cut in the solid rock, had survived the hammering they had received and were too strong for the attacking fleet. Floating mines, carried by the swift current flowing through the Straits toward the Mediterranean, were sent against the Allied fleet. Three battleships, the *Bouvet*, the *Irresistible*, and the *Ocean* were lost, and the Dardanelles remained in Turkish hands. It was plain that naval power alone was unable to force a passage.

On April 25th a force of 120,000 men under General

Sir Ian Hamilton forced a landing on five small beaches on Gallipoli Peninsula. The Turkish defences came almost to the water's edge, but the British troops with indomitable courage made good their landing and won a precarious foothold at the edge of the cliffs. Two hills dominated the whole Peninsula. These were the objectives of the Allied force. Through May, June, and July, the Turks proved too strong, although Allied warships aided our attacks by shelling the Turkish defences. Three more battleships, the *Goliath*, the *Triumph*, and the *Majestic*, were lost by torpedo attacks during May. The Allied casualties were frightfully large, disease was rife among the troops, and the water supply so scanty that they could scarcely endure the heat of the sun, beating pitilessly down upon the bare rocks among which they fought. In August a final effort was made. Fresh troops numbering 25,000 were landed at Suvla Bay. It was hoped that a combined attack by all forces would bring the heights of Gallipoli into Allied hands. Once more the Turkish lines proved impregnable, and at the end of a day of terrible fighting the goal was as far off as ever. The Allied forces maintained their positions on Gallipoli without attempting to advance until December 19th, when they were withdrawn without loss.

So ended one of the most tragic episodes of the war. The Allies suffered over 100,000 casualties and the loss of six warships, with no counterbalancing gain. Worse still, British prestige in the East was dealt a severe blow, from which it did not recover until the magnificent achievements of Maude and Allenby in Mesopotamia and Palestine restored once more to the Eastern peoples their old belief in the invincibility of Britain. For the soldiers who fought in that hopeless struggle no praise can be too high. They faced invulnerable defences. Without shelter they withstood the hurricane of fire hurled upon them by the Turkish batteries. They suffered agonies from heat and

thirst. They were struck down in thousands by disease. For seven months they fought on with dogged courage against impossible odds. They failed, but history cannot show a more glorious defeat.

We have already seen that Serbia had completely defeated three Austrian attempts at invasion in 1914. During the spring and summer of 1915, the Austro-German forces were too busy smashing the Russian front to pay much attention to her. By the end of August the Russian campaign had been won, and von Mackensen was sent to organize and command a large army destined for the invasion of Serbia. On October 7th two large armies of Austro-Germans crossed the Danube. The Serbians, exhausted by their efforts of the preceding year and unable to replenish their stores of artillery and munitions, again fell back to the ridges to make their defence. Their situation, desperate at first, became absolutely hopeless when Bulgaria, seeing in Serbia's plight an opportunity to avenge her defeat in the Second Balkan War, sent in three armies to take the Serbians in the rear. The Serbs had to retreat to the Babuna Pass, where they made a strong stand in early November. They tried to hold off their foes until the French and British troops concentrated in Salonika could come to their assistance. The Allied forces were too late; and the brave Serbian armies, sadly reduced in number, fell back upon Monastir. There they were caught by the Austro-German and Bulgarian armies. They fought as long as they could, then fled, and made their escape into the wilds of Albania. The scattered remnants of their forces were gathered together and removed to Corfu. There they rested and reorganized. Finally, they were incorporated with the Allied army of Salonika and did splendid work in the final campaign in the Balkans which broke the Bulgarian armies in the last year of the war.



The defeat of Russia and the crushing of Serbia were counterbalanced by a welcome accession to the ranks of the Allies when Italy decided to stand with them against the Teutonic Alliance. Following diplomatic negotiations in which Germany and Austria offered her great concessions if she would remain neutral, Italy denounced the Triple Alliance on May 3rd, 1915, and twenty days later declared war upon Austria. The following day the Italian armies, under Count Luigi Cadorna, began their advance into Austrian territory. One army seized positions in the Trentino and barred this route to the Venetian plain. Another advanced into the Alpine Ranges and occupied the mountain peaks. The main force of Italy was thrown against the Isonzo River, behind which lay the fortified town of Gorizia, blocking the road to Trieste. The Austrians were using all their strength in the Russian campaign and were content to remain upon the defensive. From July 2nd to the middle of August a great battle was fought along the Isonzo River. The Austrians made good their defence, and the Italian armies, despite heroic efforts, were unable to break the Isonzo line. For the rest of the year the Italian front remained unchanged save for the acquisition of further strong positions in the mountains.

The beginning of 1915 brought another convincing demonstration of the superiority of Britain on the sea. On January 24th a squadron of German battle-cruisers, comprising the *Moltke*, the *Seydlitz*, the *Derfflinger*, and the *Bluecher*, put to sea accompanied by six light cruisers and a destroyer flotilla. The whole force was under the command of Rear-Admiral von Hipper. Before leaving the shelter of Heligoland he had enlarged the mine fields there and had concentrated a large submarine flotilla north of them. He intended to lure the British to these hidden perils and there destroy as many ships as he could by mine and torpedo.

The same day the British battle-cruiser squadron under Sir David Beatty was scouting in the North Sea. Beatty had in his command the *Lion*, the *Tiger*, the *Princess Royal*, the *New Zealand*, and the *Indomitable*, accompanied by seven light cruisers and a destroyer flotilla. Morning found the British squadron cruising off the Dogger Bank. At 7 a.m. the *Aurora* signalled the rest of the fleet that enemy vessels were in sight. The German squadron turned and made for home as soon as the British ships appeared.

The British cruisers sped in pursuit. Soon the *Lion* caught up with the *Bluecher*, gave her a salvo from her great guns, and flew on. The *Derfflinger* next received the same attention, and the *Seydlitz* soon after. Behind the *Lion*, the *Tiger* and the *Princess Royal* engaged the *Derfflinger* and the *Seydlitz*, while the *New Zealand* and the *Indomitable* battered the sinking *Bluecher*. At 11 a.m. the *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger* were blazing. The *Lion* was beginning to get her shots home on the *Moltke*, which led the German line. Three minutes later the *Lion* was struck by a German shell which injured her feed-pipes, and was forced to fall out of line. The battle streamed past the disabled flag-ship, and before Sir David Beatty could catch up with the speeding vessels in the destroyer to which he had transferred his flag, Rear-Admiral Moore had broken off the engagement through fear of mines and submarines. The *Moltke* escaped almost unscathed. The *Derfflinger* and the *Seydlitz* reached port, but were so badly damaged that they were useless to Germany for a long time to come. The *Bluecher*, fearfully punished by the heavy broadsides of the British guns, was finally torpedoed and sunk by the destroyer *Meteor*. The *Lion* was escorted to port, and the damage she suffered was speedily repaired.

Events of much greater import than the clash of battle cruisers occurred in the same month. Early in the year Germany announced that all food-stuffs within her bor-

ders would be considered Government property, so that the needs of her armies could be properly met. This meant that no distinction could be drawn between imports of food for civilians, which Britain had hitherto allowed, and imports for war uses, which she wished to prevent. Consequently, on January 26th Britain proclaimed a food blockade of Germany. Germany retaliated by proclaiming the area surrounded by the British Isles a war zone, in which German submarines would sink at sight any vessel whatsoever. This blockade was to become effective after February 28th.

So began the submarine blockade, one of the foulest and most dastardly schemes a belligerent ever devised. It proved frightfully effective, for month after month the total loss of shipping from German submarines mounted higher and higher, and the strain upon the merchant shipping of Britain grew enormous. But the menace of the submarine was met and conquered. It brought its own punishment to Germany. Because of it Germany earned the hatred of the rest of the world, and the United States was reluctantly compelled to enter the lists against Germany at a time when even the slightest accession to the strength of the Allies sufficed to ensure her defeat.

On May 7th a thrill of horror ran through the world at the news that the *Lusitania* had been sunk off the coast of Ireland with fearful loss of life. Over 1,500 non-combatant passengers were drowned when the great vessel was torpedoed by a German submarine. Among them were many Americans. The world looked for an immediate declaration of war by the United States. President Wilson, however, contented himself with a remonstrance, in which he asserted the right of Americans to travel how and when they wished. Germany made a courteous reply, and the exchange of notes which followed was continued for almost two years.

It is pleasant to turn from the cowardly and murderous submarine campaign of the Germans to the exploits of British submarines in legitimate warfare. No more exciting tale of adventure can be told than that of the deeds of the two submarines E. 14 and E.11. During the Gallipoli campaign these two were sent to impede Turkish operations in the Sea of Marmora as much as possible. They had to traverse the Dardanelles, a difficult task at any time for a submarine, but a most perilous one when Turkish guns were ready to bark at the slightest sign and Turkish mine-fields threatened imminent destruction. Both submarines made the passage safely. E. 14, commanded by Lieutenant Commander E. C. Boyle, sank two gunboats and a transport. E. 11, under Lieutenant Commander Eric Naismith, sank one gunboat, two transports, one communication ship, and three store ships. For weeks all traffic on the Sea of Marmora was stopped. Both vessels returned to the Mediterranean in safety, and their young Commanders were each awarded a well-earned V.C.

From the beginning of the war Germany had consistently tried to intimidate the civilian populations of the countries with whom she was at war. She was utterly ruthless in her dealings with the Belgians and the people of Northern France. The submarine campaign was expected to undermine the morale of the British people as much as it was expected to impede their conduct of the war. It was in much the same spirit that Germany determined to attack French and British cities by air. In her Zeppelins she had a weapon which had proved almost useless in land warfare. It was of use for sea-scouting, but as long as her navy avoided battle there was little opportunity for its use. She determined, therefore, to turn it to advantage by bombing defenceless towns.

The first Zeppelin raid on England occurred on January 19th, 1915. Between April 14th and May 26th eight

raids passed over the towns on the east coast of England. The first raid on London was made on May 31st. Paris, too, was visited, but the defences of Paris were so strong that it was a less inviting target than the huge expanse of London, which lay open beneath their bombs. The raids were absolutely useless from a military point of view, but many civilians, many women and children, were killed by the Zeppelin crews. Just as the outrages in Belgium had hardened the temper of Britain, just as the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the murder of innocent passengers had caused a wave of hatred toward Germany which demanded her absolute defeat, so the Zeppelin raids hardened the determination of Britain to render impotent a nation which so flagrantly violated every law of decency and honour.

With the passing of 1915 passed the most disastrous year of the war for the Allies. Germany had defeated Russia, crushed Serbia, and had brought Bulgaria into the war upon her side. The British had suffered disasters at the Dardanelles and in Mesopotamia. On the Western Front France and Britain were unable to break the German line of defence. The menace of the German submarine campaign was steadily growing. Germany might well look forward to the coming year with confidence, even though she had not won a decision and even though the armies of Italy had joined forces with her foes.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1916

With Russia beaten back and Serbia crushed, the German High Command decided to try to reach a decision in France in the spring of 1916. Their attempt centred at the important fortress of Verdun. If successful, a path would be opened for them down the Meuse valley to the rear of the Allied lines. A break-through would permit them to roll the eastern flank of the Allies into Switzerland, and the western toward the sea.

The German lines were distant eight miles from Verdun, about which lay a net-work of fortified positions. The most important of these were Fort Douaumont, half-way between Verdun and the German trenches, Fort de Vaux, lying a little closer to the city, and Fort de Souville, the last strong position before Verdun. Dead Man's Hill and Hill 304 also formed bastions in the French line of defence.

On February 21st the massed fire of over 1,500 guns fell upon seven miles of French trenches and simply blotted them out of existence. The Germans advanced their batteries, and the following day wiped out the French second line. In four days they advanced four miles and took Fort Douaumont. Then the French, hurriedly reinforced, began their counter-attacks. For weeks the struggle raged incessantly about Douaumont, Dead Man's Hill, and Hill 304, and the French did not relinquish these positions to the foe until they had exacted a terrible price for them. Then Fort de Vaux became the centre of the struggle. It did not fall until June, after three months of continuous battle. Finally, the Germans were definitely

halted before Fort de Souville and were too exhausted to continue their attacks. In nearly four months of bitter fighting they had advanced some five miles, had lost hundreds of thousands of the best of their soldiers, and were no nearer to Verdun or a break-through than they had been at the end of February, a few days after the beginning of their attack. During midsummer the fighting at Verdun languished, while the Germans, French, and British were engaged in the Battle of the Somme. Late in the autumn a series of splendid attacks, under the direction of General Mangin, won back for the French nearly all the ground which the Germans had taken and netted them 20,000 prisoners and many guns. The defence of Verdun will always rank as one of the greatest of military achievements.

While the French army was engaged in this terrible contest, the British farther to the west had a comparatively peaceful time. Sir Douglas Haig had taken over the supreme command from Sir John French and was rapidly organizing the new armies, which were now ready for the field. For the first time since the opening of the war, the British were sufficiently strong in men and guns to attempt a really large offensive movement.

On July 1st the Battle of the Somme, which was to last until autumn, opened on a twenty-mile front. General Foch co-operated with Sir Douglas Haig. The French objective was the town of Peronne, the British, the town of Bapaume, both important road centres lying well behind the German lines. It must not be forgotten, however, that territorial objectives at this stage of the war were not of supreme importance. The real objective was the weakening of the enemy forces to such an extent that a decision over them could be won. The war was still a war of attrition.

The Battle of the Somme comprises a series of engage-

ments beginning on July 1st, 1916, and terminating on November 18th of the same year. In front of the British lay three lines of heavily fortified trench systems, extending along a ridge of high ground, which formed the watershed between the Somme River and the rivers of southern Belgium. Each line of defence was based upon splendid natural defensive positions, such as woods, chalk-pits and quarries, villages and hills, and in addition was strengthened by all the methods which German ingenuity could devise. The taking of a single strong point in one line often meant a battle lasting for days, in which thousands of men were used on both sides. The clumps of wood which dotted the country offered the Germans particularly good facilities for defence. No fiercer fighting occurred in the whole war than the dogged struggle for Trones and Mametz Woods, the terrible contest in Delville Wood, where the South African troops made a splendid reputation, or the battle of High Wood, where the Australians gave the foe ample proof that the horrors of Gallipoli had not dimmed their courage or sapped their strength. The Canadians, too, had another opportunity to show their quality, and Courcellette proved that they were as terrible in attack as indomitable in defence.

By the end of September the Germans had been pushed off the high ground which they had held prior to the battle. The British and French troops had won splendid positions from which to continue their assaults. The German losses had been very heavy. Almost 80,000 prisoners and over 300 guns had fallen into the hands of the victors. The total German casualties were well over 500,000. An open autumn would probably have enabled the Allies to inflict a crushing defeat upon the German armies, but the heavy and incessant rains of October and November gave the enemy a respite and robbed the Allies of the full fruits of their victory.



On the Western Front Germany fared badly indeed in 1916. Her armies rolled upon the French at Verdun, only to suffer terrible losses in their vain attacks. The new levies of Britain, most of whom had never handled a rifle until a few months before, crashed into the centre of the German defences and crumpled them up in four months of dogged fighting. The French and British airmen, during the whole period of the Somme Battle, held the mastery of the air. The British artillery, for the first time in the war, was superior to the German in weight and efficiency. A new weapon, the armoured tank, made its appearance at Courcellette and proved that wire entanglements and trenches could be taken with slight loss to the attacking infantry. A full half of the entire German army, although fighting a defensive battle and supported by the strongest fortifications, suffered defeat at the hands of the Allies on the Somme. But Germany's power was not yet broken, and eighteen months of weary fighting yet faced the Allies before the beginning of the drive which brought final victory.

On the Eastern Front the Russian lines remained unchanged after their great retreat of 1915 until June. The Austro-Germans, certain that Russia could never recuperate sufficiently to drive them from their strongly entrenched lines, had grown careless. But Russia had worked feverishly to make good her losses; heavy shipments of guns and munitions were received from her Allies, and fresh millions of her peasantry were called up to fill the gaps in her war-worn ranks. By the beginning of summer she was once more ready to strike.

On June 4th General Brussilov attacked on a 300-mile front from the Pripet Marshes to Rumania. The weight and the speed of the blow took the enemy completely by surprise. Huge gaps were torn in the northern and southern ends of the long battle-line, and through them rushed

the Russian cavalry. In the north General Kaledine advanced fifty miles in a few days, captured 70,000 men and hundreds of guns, and recaptured the fortresses of Dubno and Lutsk. In the south the Austrians were cleared out of Bukowina, losing 40,000 men in prisoners alone in the first week of the offensive. By the end of June the Russians had captured 200,000 men and hundreds of guns.

In July and August the Austro-German resistance stiffened, and the Russian advance slowed up and finally came to a complete stop. To the world, at the time, it seemed that Russia had again found herself, and that the following year would see her irresistibly pressing on to complete victory. As a matter of fact, it was her final effort as a nation. Weakened by terrific slaughter, the Russian armies, during the long winter which followed, proved a fertile ground for the German propaganda, and in the following spring, when the Russian revolution overthrew the Government of the Tsar, the Russian soldiers refused to go into action. Anarchy followed, ending in the triumph of the Soviet form of Government under the auspices of Trotzky and Lenine, who negotiated the infamous treaty of Brest-Litovsk, by which Russia officially made peace with Germany.

One result of Brussilov's campaign was to bring Rumania into the war on the side of the Allies. She had long cherished the ambition of uniting with her those parts of Transylvania which, though under Austrian rule, were Rumanian in population. On August 27th, 1916, Rumania declared war on Austria. She had two boundaries to defend—one where Rumanian and Bulgarian territory adjoined each other in the Dobrudja, the other the long line of mountains separating her from Transylvania. One army was left to guard the Bulgarian frontier, three were sent into Transylvania. At first the invasion was successful, for the Rumanians met only frontier forces, small in num-

ber and poor in quality. But behind them a large army was being gathered to crush her. On September 20th von Falkenhayn, in command of the Austro-German forces, began to drive back the Rumanian armies. After seizing the frontier passes he moved down into the Wallachian plain; while von Mackensen, in command of a mixed army of Bulgarians, Turks, and Germans, moved into the Dobrudja. Early in December the two armies met before Bucharest. There the Rumanians fought a final battle, in which they were defeated, and withdrew to Moldavia, leaving their capital and the whole of Wallachia in the hands of the victors.

In Mesopotamia, after General Townshend's surrender in April, the year passed quietly. The Turks were unable to win any further advantage, while the British were busy preparing a force adequate in numbers and equipment for the conquest of the whole province. The fruits of that thorough preparation were gathered the following year, when Sir Stanley Maude wiped out the stigma of Kut-el-Amara by a most brilliant and successful campaign.

In Armenia the Russians opened a vigorous campaign in the late winter of 1916. Crossing the frontier, they advanced upon the Turkish troops garrisoning the fortress of Erzerum and the port of Trebizond. On February 16th Erzerum fell, and soon after Trebizond was occupied. Turkish troops hurried to Armenia to oppose the Russian advance, and held them in check until the Russian armies disintegrated the following year.

In Egypt General Murray was making preparations no less thorough than those of General Maude. After a quiet year fresh Turkish forces threatened the Suez Canal in the late autumn of 1916. General Murray cleared them out of the Sinai Peninsula and drove them to the Syrian frontier. This operation cleared his path for the campaign in Palestine which followed the next year.

The Allied force under General Sarrail at Salonika spent most of the year in watching King Constantine of Greece, who showed plainly his hostile intentions toward the Allied troops. Toward the autumn the attitude of Greece had become so strongly pro-Ally that General Sarrail felt safe in advancing against Bulgaria. In the middle of September he attacked the Bulgarian lines. His offensive culminated in the capture of Monastir, which the Serbs entered on November 19th. The Bulgarian positions beyond proved too strong to force; and the opposing armies held their lines until the final sweep into Serbia in the closing year of the war.

The Italian front was the scene of a great Austrian offensive in May. Archduke Charles, the heir to the Austrian throne, came blasting his way down the valleys of the Trentino with half a million men and 2,000 guns. On June 1st he reached the edge of the Venetian plain and threatened the Italian armies on the Isonzo with disaster. Count Cadorna was equal to the emergency; fresh troops were thrown against the Austrian front, and in ten days drove them back to their starting-point.

After disposing of the Austrian offensive, the Italians were free to conduct their own. In the beginning of August the Italian army of the Isonzo hurled itself against the defences of Gorizia. The Austrians could not withstand the weight of the attack; on August 8th Gorizia fell, along with 20,000 prisoners and many guns. The Italians were unable to press their advantage, for the offensive had depleted their stocks of munitions, for which they were dependent, no less than Russia, upon Britain.

From the beginning of the war the British navy had looked forward eagerly to the day when the German High Seas Fleet would leave the security of its harbours and meet the British ships in battle. The actions which had hitherto occurred in the North Sea had been merely

brushes with an elusive foe. Very different was the Battle of Jutland, the greatest naval engagement of the war. In it the main battle fleets of the two nations fought for the mastery of the seas. After the battle the White Ensign of England still floated proudly over the North Sea. What remained of the sorely-battered German fleet had sought the security of the fortifications which alone had kept it in being during almost two years of the war.

On Tuesday, May 30th, the British fleet left harbour to make one of its customary sweeps through the North Sea. It sailed in two divisions. To the north moved the Battle Fleet under Sir John Jellicoe. It consisted of twenty-four superdreadnought battleships, a squadron of battle-cruisers under Rear Admiral Hood, and the usual complement of cruisers and destroyers. Far to the south Sir David Beatty was leading the 1st and 2nd Battle-cruiser Squadrons and the 5th Battle Squadron, ten dreadnoughts in all, accompanied by three light cruiser squadrons and four destroyer flotillas.

At noon on May 31st Sir David Beatty had come to the end of his southward sweep and turned back to rejoin Sir John Jellicoe. At 2.20 p.m. the *Galatea* signalled enemy vessels to the east. Beatty at once changed direction to the east, in order to cut off the German ships from their base. Admiral von Hipper, in command of the German battle-cruiser squadron sighted by Beatty, at once turned south to rejoin Admiral von Scheer, who was following with the whole German High Seas Fleet. Beatty immediately gave chase. Then ensued the first phase of the Battle, during which Beatty was the pursuer and von Hipper the pursued.

At twelve minutes to four both sides opened fire at a range of eight miles. At first the odds were almost even, for the four battleships in Beatty's command could not come into action as quickly as his battle-cruisers. Von

Hipper's five ships were well handled and did excellent shooting. Almost at the beginning of the action a big German shell penetrated to the magazine of the *Indefatigable*. There was a huge burst of flame, a terrific explosion, and ship and crew were gone. But soon the four great ships of the 5th Battle Squadron came within range and supported the British battle-cruisers by long-range fire. Ten minutes later the German battle-cruiser third in line was a seething mass of flame. Five minutes later the *Queen Mary*, the best gunnery ship in the British fleet, was hit in a vital spot and blew up. This left Beatty with four battle-cruisers against four, while the four British battleships were doing their utmost to come to closer quarters.

Meanwhile fifteen German and twelve British destroyers dashed out between the lines of the racing battle-cruisers to try a torpedo attack. They met in the middle and fought fiercely, while the great shells from the opposing battle-cruisers passed over them. The German destroyers were beaten back, and two were sunk, but they had succeeded in preventing an effective torpedo attack upon their capital ships. Only three British destroyers got within range of the German battle-cruisers, which received them with a tornado of fire, sinking one, disabling another, and forcing the third to retire.

At 4.38 the *Southampton*, which had been scouting ahead of the battle-cruisers, reported the main German fleet ahead. Four minutes later Beatty himself sighted it. He at once turned north, and after him streamed the whole German fleet. The Germans had twenty-two dreadnoughts in line and hoped to complete the destruction of Beatty's squadrons. But just as the British had lost two battle-cruisers when they had a considerable preponderance of strength, so now the Germans were hit hard when they were by far the stronger. By five o'clock

one of their battle-cruisers was so badly mauled that it could not continue in line. A little later the destroyer *Moresby* got home a torpedo on a German battleship and put her out of action.

For three hours and a half Sir John Jellicoe had been speeding south, while Beatty kept him informed of the course of the action which he had been fighting. As the two fleets drew together, Beatty altered his course eastwards to turn the German van. The German line was forced to conform to his movements and also turned east. Then Beatty took advantage of his superior speed and circled the end of their line, forcing it to turn south. In this way he placed his ships between the German fleet and its base and enabled Jellicoe to bring his great fleet into action to the greatest advantage.

While the British squadrons were forming into line of battle, the Germans tried to gain time by using their light craft to impede them. The British cruisers and destroyers had a fierce fight to clear the way for the following battle-ships. The light cruiser *Chester*, scouting for Admiral Hood, fought three German cruisers for twenty minutes. In this action she lost more than half her men. But she did her work, and her information enabled Hood to bring his squadron into action in the most effective fashion. The destroyer *Shark* dashed down between two lines of German destroyers, firing her guns and torpedoes right and left. She sank two Germans and gave the rest a mauling, until she was hit by torpedoes on both sides at once and went down like a stone. The destroyer *Onslow* attacked a German light cruiser which was trying to torpedo Beatty's flagship, the *Lion*. She hit her with every gun at short range and, later, finished her with a torpedo. The armoured cruiser squadron under Sir Robert Arbuthnot swooped down on the German light cruisers, sank one, disabled two, and was driving the rest before it, when

suddenly out of the mist loomed the great ships of the German battle-line. A hurricane of huge shells fell on Sir Robert's cruisers. His flagship, the *Defence*, was sunk, the *Black Prince* and the *Warrior* were terribly shattered. They managed to get away under cover of the mist, but both sank shortly after. Sir Robert's last act was to signal an apology to his command.

At 6.20 Admiral Hood brought his battle-cruiser squadron into action ahead of Beatty so as to overlap the German line. The Germans, seeing that their only hope of escape lay in preventing this, trained every gun that they could bring to bear upon his flagship, the *Invincible*. She struck back with all her might, but the terrific fire she was under simply smashed her from stem to stern. At last a shell reached her magazine. Sheets of flame leaped a hundred feet into the air. Her boats were whirled into the air higher still. Then a belch of smoke and steam, and another gallant ship and a gallant crew had gone.

After this the two remaining cruisers of Hood's squadron took station astern of Beatty's four. Behind them the six squadrons of Jellicoe's battleships formed into line, and behind them the 5th Battle Squadron, which had accompanied Beatty up till this time. By 6.50 the whole British fleet was united, forming a line of thirty-four dreadnoughts more than twelve miles long. The Germans now had only one thought—escape. Their destroyers emitted huge volumes of dense smoke to help them hide in the thickening mist. Thousands of torpedoes were launched against the British line, but only one ship, the *Marlborough*, was struck, and she was able to continue the fight. From this time until complete darkness fell at nine o'clock the battle went on by fits and starts. Whenever any part of the German line was visible through the fog and smoke, the British guns hammered it with terrible



salvoes. The *Iron Duke*, Jellicoe's flagship, caught a German battleship for a few minutes only. When the mist closed down again, the German was blazing like a furnace. The *Marlborough* got home fourteen salvoes on another and drove her out of the line. The battle-cruisers were equally successful in the van of the line. The *Lion* and the *Princess Royal* each set an opponent on fire. The *New Zealand* and the *Indomitable* hammered another until she hauled out of line, listing heavily and blazing furiously. During this phase of the battle the German gunnery became much poorer, while the British improved as the action developed.

At last complete darkness fell, and the British fleet made its dispositions for the night. It lay between the Germans and their home ports, and Jellicoe hoped to renew the battle in the morning. It was impossible, however, for him to guard the whole opening through which the Germans could slip home, and their ships managed to work their way around him into harbour.

By nine o'clock the next morning the British light craft, which had been scouring the sea for signs of the German fleet, had all come in after a fruitless search. By one o'clock it was evident that the Grand Fleet held the North Sea unchallenged. So the British fleet made for its base, replenished its stores of fuel and ammunition, and by half-past nine the following evening was ready for sea once more.

Far different was the case of the German ships which had succeeded in reaching port. They were so badly shattered that months were needed to render them fit for battle. Further, their crews had no stomach for further fighting against the British fleet. From Jutland to the end of the war the German sailors absolutely refused to go to certain defeat again. Jutland confirmed once more the absolute mastery of the seas which is Britain's boast.

More than that, the issue of the Jutland fight convinced the German leaders that no effort of theirs could loosen the strangle-hold of the British blockade. In despair they turned once more to submarine warfare as their only possible hope of bringing Britain to her knees. The murderous campaign which ensued forced even the reluctant United States to enter the war upon the side of justice and freedom. In fact, subsequent events will show that it is not too much to say that Jutland determined the whole course of the war and was a decisive factor in securing Germany's final defeat.

A few days after the Battle of Jutland came news of a disaster at sea which deprived Britain of one of her greatest leaders. The cruiser *Hampshire*, carrying Lord Kitchener and his staff on a mission to Russia, struck a mine and foundered off the Orkney Islands. A handful of survivors reached shore, but Lord Kitchener and his staff were not among them.

In the dark days of August, 1914, Lord Kitchener had been the unanimous choice of the British people for the important work of organizing them for war. The glamour of his achievements in Egypt, the Sudan, and South Africa, coupled with the wonderful magnetism of his stern, forceful character, had made of him a national hero. No British soldier had a finer record or greater prestige, and not only the United Kingdom but the whole Empire turned naturally to him for guidance. He was appointed Secretary of State for War, and the magic of his name brought millions of men thronging to the colours. The new armies of Britain were his creation to such an extent that the world knew them as "Kitchener's Army." He had laid the foundation of victory, and to him Britain owed an immense debt of gratitude. The news of his death cast the whole Empire into mourning.

## CHAPTER V

## THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1917

The Battle of the Somme had shaken severely the confidence of the Germans in their ability to hold off the Allied forces. The great strength of the British army surprised them. They had never believed that the new levies of Britain could meet their own highly trained troops and defeat them. They had been certain that the British could not develop highly technical services, such as the artillery, to the efficiency requisite in modern warfare and on a scale sufficiently large to constitute a real menace to their armies. The Battle of the Somme brought home to them the miracle which Britain had accomplished; and long before the rains of October halted the British offensive, the Germans were constructing an immensely strong line twenty miles to the rear of their advanced positions, in readiness to receive the wearied troops which were slowly but surely breaking under the hammer-blows of Haig.

Fortunately for the German armies, the wet weather of autumn enabled them to hold the British on the Somme until winter came. This respite gave them an opportunity to strengthen still more the line upon which their stand during 1917 had to be made. It also permitted them to choose their own time for the inevitable retreat. This was set for the middle of March, when the condition of the ground would prevent the British and French forces from pressing the pursuit.

On March 17th Allied patrols found that the evacuation of the German advanced positions had commenced. The British and French forces followed cautiously in the

wake of the retreating Germans, who fought rearguard actions whenever the pursuing forces pressed them too quickly. As they retreated, they destroyed and devastated the whole country-side with their usual thoroughness. The Allied forces found poisoned wells, violated churches, orchards wantonly destroyed, and houses systematically looted of everything of value. Their unspeakable conduct during this retreat branded the German forces once more as foes whose lust for useless destruction placed them beyond the pale of civilization.

On April 4th the retreat was ended, and the Allied forces everywhere faced the Germans in their chosen battle positions. The new line, which was known in Germany as the Siegfried line, and among the Allies as the Hindenburg line, ran from Arras to Laon in front of the important towns of Cambrai, St. Quentin, and La Fère. The positions about Arras and Laon were the pivots upon which the Siegfried line rested. Upon those pivots the next Allied offensive was directed.

On April 9th the Battle of Arras opened, after an intensive artillery preparation which lasted for five days and surpassed in violence anything that the war had yet produced. The British fliers won the mastery of the air in a week of heavy fighting, during which they destroyed forty-six enemy planes. With their help the British artillery did wonderful shooting, putting battery after battery of German guns out of commission. The enemy, blinded by his inability to cope with the British airmen, was unable to make an effective reply.

At 5.30 a.m. on April 9th the British troops went over their parapets under the protection of a terrific artillery barrage, which slowly moved before them as they advanced. At the left of the sector attacked lay the great fortress of Vimy Ridge, which had defied capture in June, 1915, when the French under D'Urbal had failed in their

assault. Against this strong position the Canadian Corps advanced. They rushed with wonderful speed up the slope to the crest, and then swarmed over to the plateau forming the top of the Ridge. The British guns had been unable to deal with the Germans there as effectively as they had done with those upon the slope. As the Canadians topped the crest, they came under a deluge of rifle and machine-gun fire. Never halting, they fought their way on from shell-hole to shell-hole, and by nine o'clock all Vimy Ridge except Hill 145 and its northern corner were in the hands of Canadians. These positions were captured the next day, and one of the buttresses of the German line was wholly ours. With it over 4,000 prisoners were captured.

Along the rest of the twelve-mile front attacked the British had equally good fortune. The German positions were breached everywhere, and in three days 12,000 prisoners and 150 guns were taken. On the following days the breach was widened. But again bad weather intervened and slowed up the advance. The German reserves were brought up and thrown into the battle. From April 15th to the beginning of May, the British fought small actions to improve their positions, and beat off many furious counter-attacks.

On May 3rd the British troops again attacked in force on a twelve-mile front from Arleux to Bullecourt. The Canadian Corps upon the left broke through a very strong line of defence and took the village of Fresnoy. On the right the Australians, not to be outdone, captured a section of the Siegfried line at Bullecourt. Both positions were subjected to extremely violent counter-attacks, which compelled the British to relinquish Fresnoy village and prevented for some time any extension of the gains made at Bullecourt.

By the beginning of June the Battle of Arras was

over. It resulted in the capture of over 20,000 prisoners and 257 guns. The possession of Vimy Ridge proved of inestimable value the following year, when the Germans made their last desperate bid for victory. The supposedly impregnable Siegfried line had been overrun on a six-mile front. The battle, while not decisive, had again demonstrated the superiority of the British troops over the foe, and was an important link in the chain of battles which eventually so weakened the German armies that they were unable to withstand the final Allied drive the following year.

Meanwhile the French, under General Nivelle, attempted to shake the hold of the Germans upon Laon, the southern pivot of the Siegfried line. From April 6th to the 15th tremendous attacks were launched upon the Aisne Heights. Over 20,000 prisoners and 175 guns were captured, but the French suffered so heavily that the offensive had to be stopped before it accomplished its object. On May 15th General Nivelle was replaced by General Petain, with General Foch as Chief of Staff. Under the direction of these two great leaders the French army regained its confidence. By June the French held securely the greater part of the Heights of the Aisne and the Chemin des Dames, one of the strongest of the German positions. In August and September two sharp attacks in the Verdun area completely restored the French lines as they had been prior to the great German attack in 1916. During October and November the conquest of the Aisne Heights was completed. These operations, however, were quite subsidiary to the main Allied effort, which was being made by the British far to the north.

The failure of the French to shake the southern pivot of the Siegfried line prevented Sir Douglas Haig from pushing the advantage won in the Battle of Arras. Finding himself checked in that area through no fault of his own,

he turned his attention to Flanders. A successful offensive there would bring great results. It would clear the Belgian coast and prevent the use of Zeebrugge and Ostend as submarine bases. It would turn the northern flank of the German line and offer the Allies a chance to roll the Germans out of France.

For more than a year the British had been carefully preparing an attack upon the Wyttschaete-Messines Ridge, which commanded the Ypres salient. Tunnelling companies had driven over five miles of galleries under the ridge. Twenty-four mines, charged with 1,000,000 pounds of ammonal had been placed under the German trenches. On June 7th, at 3.10 in the morning, these mines were exploded, and the unsuspecting Germans were annihilated by the tremendous force of the explosions. Before the air was clear, the British troops were over their parapets and advanced rapidly upon the Ridge. By the end of the day their entire objective was won, and over 7,000 prisoners and sixty-seven guns were taken. The British casualties were trifling.

For a month and a half after the Battle of Messines, the British kept the German line on the qui vive by various small attacks in widely separated sectors, while preparations were being made for another hammer-blow.

On July 31st everything was in readiness. The battle-field chosen was the Ypres salient, which had seen already two of the fiercest contests of the war. After a very heavy bombardment, the British assault divisions went over the top at 3.50 a.m. under the protection of the mightiest barrage the war had yet seen. By nightfall the objectives along a fifteen-mile front had been reached or passed, and 6,000 prisoners had been taken.

At mid-day of August 1st a heavy rain began to fall, making a morass of the battle-field, over which a further

attack was impossible. By the middle of the month the ground had dried sufficiently to permit movement.

On August 15th Haig re-opened the battle. The Canadians to the south of the salient swept over Hill 70, which had been an important observation point for the Germans since the failure of the British to hold it after the Battle of Loos. The German counter-attacks were easily beaten off, and nightfall found the Canadians in possession of all their objectives and over 1,000 prisoners.

On the following day the British again attacked in the Ypres salient. After a day of fearful fighting in knee-deep mud, the British succeeded in tearing a hole in the German positions and in taking 2,000 prisoners and thirty guns.

Once more the weather came to the aid of the sorely-pressed Germans. The rest of August was one continuous downpour, and the British were unable to move from their positions.

Toward the end of September the ground dried a little. On the 20th and 26th fresh attacks won ground for the British. By the end of October the British line had pressed forward until it faced Passchendaele, the last and highest of the three ridges surrounding the Ypres salient.

On October 30th the Canadian Corps attacked the ridge itself. After a fearful struggle they succeeded in reaching Crest Farm. There they beat off five determined counter-attacks and held every inch of ground won. On November 6th they attacked again and took the village of Passchendaele. Four days later they completed their task by an attack which won all the essential positions upon the ridge. The Ypres salient, where for three years the German guns had held the British line at their mercy, was finally wiped out.

The last offensive of the year took place far to the south. On November 20th Sir Julian Byng attacked at



Cambrai. His blow was a complete surprise, for the Germans had had no warning. The British tanks ploughed through the German defence line, and behind them came the British infantry. In a week's fighting 10,000 prisoners and 142 guns were gathered in. The British armies, however, exhausted with a most strenuous year of campaigning, had not sufficient strength to develop their advantage. On November 30th the Germans launched very heavy counter-attacks and pressed back the British line. The battle ended with the British in possession of a small portion of their original gains.

In Italy General Cadorna launched an offensive as soon as the weather permitted. During May the Italians attacked along the Isonzo line from Tolmino to the Adriatic. They captured almost 24,000 prisoners and thirty-eight guns and broke through the Austrian defence system in many places.

In August the offensive was resumed. A month's fighting gave the Italians control of important positions in the Bainsizza Plateau. An additional 30,000 prisoners and many guns were captured. But the terrific losses suffered in the two offensives of the year forced General Cadorna to relinquish his schemes for further advance, until he could secure the necessary men and artillery to assure their success.

But the period of the German and Austrian defensive was now over. Russia had been finally defeated. The Eastern Front, which had demanded so large a part of their military strength, could now be manned by second-rate troops and held with very little artillery. The Germans could now bring all their strength to bear in the west; and it was plain to every one that the Western Allies would have to parry some gigantic blows before they could hope for final victory.

The first of these fell upon the Italian front. On

October 4th General von Below attacked the Italian Second Army on the Bainsizza Plateau. The Italians were weakened by the bloody campaigns of the year and had been infected by insidious German propaganda. Under the weight of von Below's attack they broke and fled. In twelve hours the Bainsizza Plateau was cleared, and the Italian front was extensively pierced. In three days the Italians lost over 60,000 prisoners and hundreds of guns, and the German troops continued to advance with increasing speed. Only a swift retreat could save the Italian forces from utter annihilation. By November 1st the Italian armies had reached the Tagliamento River, and there halted for a day or two to re-form. On November 3rd the pursuers forced the river, and the retreat was continued to the Piave River. By November 10th the Italians were in their positions along this river and there halted the Austro-German advance. During the retreat more than 200,000 prisoners and 2,000 guns fell into the hands of the victors. The first of the smashing blows planned by Ludendorff had fallen and had just failed to eliminate Italy from the struggle.

During the first two years of the war Turkey had managed to keep her Russian and British foes in check with a fair degree of success. The Turks had defeated the Dardanelles expedition, had captured Townshend at Kut-el-Amara, and had kept the Egyptian army on the defensive at the Suez Canal. The victories won by the Russians in the Caucasus were fruitless, because of the disintegration of their armies after the Russian revolution. But the Turk had a more tenacious foe in Britain. The early misfortunes which had befallen the British expeditions, far from producing any slackening of effort, served to accelerate adequate preparations for two great campaigns which would break the Turkish power in Asia Minor once and for all.

On August 28th, 1916, Sir Stanley Maude took command of the British forces in Mesopotamia. Under his energetic leadership the reorganization of the expedition, begun after the disaster at Kut-el-Amara, was carried out thoroughly. Four months were spent in making most complete preparations for the coming campaign. When the troops moved against the Turks, it was with the assurance that the groundwork of victory had been laid.

On December 12th the campaign opened. The British troops moved up the Tigris against the Turks, who had fortified a strong position at Kut-el-Amara. The latter made a strong defence. Their efforts, however, were of no avail. On February 24th, 1917, the British troops entered Kut after a month and a half of constant fighting. They pressed hard on the heels of the beaten Turks, who refused to come to grips again until they reached the Diala River, a tributary of the Tigris which joins that river about eight miles below Bagdad. Again the Turks were forced to retreat before the British onset. Their retirement left the way open into Bagdad, which General Maude entered on March 11th. Four columns were at once sent in pursuit of the Turkish forces. During March and April there was almost daily fighting. The Turks were defeated in nine pitched battles and in many minor engagements. By the end of April General Maude had pushed them eighty miles north of Bagdad and had made his hold on Mesopotamia absolutely sure.

During the fierce heat of the summer months all operations had to be suspended. The end of September saw the British troops again advancing. The Turkish garrison at Ramadie was cut off and forced to surrender on the left of the British front. This brilliant action netted Maude over 3,000 prisoners and thirteen guns. The following month the right wing of the British army had

equal success, occupying Tekrit, the main advanced base of the Turkish armies in Mesopotamia, on November 6th.

General Maude was not destined to see the final victory of his splendid troops over their stubborn foe. He was struck down with cholera and died on November 18th, 1917. No British commander, perhaps, had ever accomplished so much in so short a time. In a little more than a year he had completely reorganized an army which had been dispirited by defeat. He had inspired his men with his own unflinching courage and cheer. He had led them into the heart of the enemy's territory, winning a score of victories on the way. After his untimely death, the ablest of his lieutenants, General Marshall, took over the command of the Mesopotamian forces.

The British offensive against Turkey was not confined to Mesopotamia. The Egyptian army under Sir Archibald Murray had also a part to play. Toward the end of 1916 he had cleared the Sinai peninsula of the enemy and reached the Syrian frontier on January 9th, 1917. The Turkish lines at Gaza barred a further advance into Syria. In March Murray made an unsuccessful attempt to force his way through. A month later a second attempt was made, but also failed. In June Murray was recalled to England, and Sir Edmund Allenby was put in charge of the operations.

The summer months were spent in perfecting the railways which had been built across the desert of Sinai. By the end of October every detail of organization had been completed, and Allenby was ready to move forward in a whirlwind campaign rivalling that of Maude in Mesopotamia.

On October 31st the Turkish line was attacked. Gaza, at the extreme right of the Turkish front, was heavily shelled both by land batteries and British and French warships. This, however, was only a feint; the real

assault was delivered at the extreme left of the Turkish line at Beersheba. It was immediately successful; Beersheba was taken, and with it 2,000 prisoners and thirty guns. More important still, the Turkish defences were turned, and in a few days the Turks were in full retreat. By November 14th the British had advanced sixty miles, driving before them the disorganized remnants of the ten divisions which had held the Gaza defences. Over 9,000 prisoners and eighty guns fell to the victors.

The British were now within striking distance of Jerusalem. The Turks tried to defend the Holy City; but their troops, though heavily reinforced, could not do more than delay the victors. After three more weeks of stubborn fighting, Sir Edmund Allenby entered Jerusalem on December 11th. He had completed the task which the Crusaders began eight hundred years before.

During 1917 the greatest German offensive effort was made on sea, or rather, under the sea. Jutland had convinced German seamen that there was no hope of winning a decision over the British fleet. One method alone offered Germany a chance of success; an intensive submarine campaign, if successful, might bring Britain to terms before the German armies were vanquished in France. It might also bring the United States into the war; but that Germany regarded as a remote contingency.

A long-drawn out controversy between President Wilson and the German Government had followed the sinking of the *Lusitania*. On May 4th, 1916, the German Government promised that ships should not be sunk without warning, for it was becoming plain that the United States could not be indefinitely put off with vague replies. The re-election of President Wilson in the autumn of 1916 seemed to indicate that the peace party in the United States was still a strong majority, for Wilson's success in the Presidential campaign was due to the fact that he had

evaded a declaration of war despite Germany's hostile acts. Encouraged by this indication of the trend of American feeling, the German Government disregarded its promise of May 4th and informed Washington on January 31st, 1917, that Germany was about to enter upon an unrestricted submarine campaign.

On February 3rd diplomatic relations with Germany were ended; and the United States, abandoning its policy of "watchful waiting," entered upon the no less futile one of "armed neutrality." Events followed which made open war inevitable. Eight ships were torpedoed with the loss of many Americans during February and March. Documents were discovered which proposed an alliance between Mexico and Germany against the United States. In the face of such actions, even the most pacific of peoples could no longer avoid action. On April 6th, 1917, the United States declared war upon Germany.

After the United States had taken the step so long delayed, they entered whole-heartedly into the business of war. The creation of a huge army was undertaken. Large credits were advanced to her European Allies to aid the financing of purchases of war material. An extensive ship-building programme was begun, to counterbalance the inroads which the submarines were making upon Allied shipping. A squadron of battleships and some destroyers were sent across the Atlantic to co-operate with the British fleet. Her potentialities in men were vast, and, given time, her armies would more than make up for the defection of Russia. Upon the British and French armies devolved the duty of holding the German hordes, strengthened by large reinforcements from Russia, until the American forces could be raised, trained, and transported to France. Upon British shipping, already strained to the utmost by the tremendous task of transporting and provisioning the British armies, fell the greater share of

the burden of transporting the new American levies to the harbours of France. The first American troops reached France on June 25th, 1917, but it was not until a year later that their numbers and training were sufficient to permit them to play a real part in the war.

Meanwhile the Germans were striving their utmost to isolate Britain from the rest of the world by mines and submarines. They knew that upon the solid strength of Britain rested the whole structure of the Allied battle-lines. If Britain could be eliminated, if her Continental Allies could be deprived of her support, the war was won.

The British navy met the new danger as effectively as they had met the German battle fleets at Jutland. Thousands of trawlers, manned by hardy fishermen, swept the sea-ways and kept them clear of mines. Destroyers and seaplanes co-operated in chasing the elusive submarine. Huge mine-fields were laid, through which the submarines could not pass. Miles of steel nets were put in position and caught many a German U-boat. Merchantmen were sent in convoys, well guarded by British destroyers, instead of singly and unprotected. "Q" boats, to all appearances an easy prey for the lurking pirate, but actually well armed and manned by Navy men, also took a heavy toll. Depth bombs were invented and used with deadly effect. It was an uphill fight—during 1917 and 1918 the British losses of merchant shipping totalled some four and a half million tons—but at last the submarine was conquered. By the beginning of 1918 it was plain to Germany that her submarine campaign had definitely failed either to eliminate Britain from the war, or even to interfere seriously with the forwarding of supplies to the battle-fronts. Then in despair, she gathered up all her strength for a last vicious lunge at the wall of steel which kept her from victory in France.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1918

In the spring of 1918 the Germans were able for the first time during the war to concentrate the whole of their first-class fighting troops and of their artillery upon the Western Front. The Russian armies had dissolved in the wild anarchy of Bolshevism. The Italians had been thoroughly beaten at Caporetto, and the work of holding them on the Piave could safely be left to the Austrians. The German divisions which had formed the spear-head of the armies which had overrun Serbia and Rumania were no longer needed there. By the end of February the Germans on the Western Front outnumbered the British and French troops by at least 500,000, and their artillery, increased by the thousands of guns taken from the Russians and Italians, was correspondingly superior. But the Americans were reaching France in increasing numbers, and Britain still had a reserve of troops in the British Isles. By midsummer the temporary superiority of the Germans would be finally wiped out, and Germany had no sources of recruitment from which to increase her armies. The first six months of 1918 offered her the last opportunity to win a decision over the sorely tried armies of France and Britain.

The front selected for her great effort was the line held by the British Fifth Army under Sir Hubert Gough. There were several good reasons for this choice. The line was dangerously thin, as the British had extended their front twenty-five miles in order to relieve the French. The extreme right of the Fifth Army formed the point of junction between the French and British armies, and the



German Staff hoped to divide the British from the French and then to deal with them separately. Behind the front of the Fifth Army lay the devastated area over which the Germans had retreated a year before, and back of it the old Somme battle-field. Consequently, the lines of communication in this section of the British front were far from satisfactory. On March 21st the blow fell. Sixty-four German divisions were thrown against the nineteen British divisions in line. Despite a most heroic resistance, the Germans succeeded in penetrating into the main zone of the British defences. The next day they succeeded in breaking through at various points, and compelled the British to retreat along the whole front attacked. By the end of the third day they had advanced nine miles at the deepest point and claimed 25,000 prisoners and 400 guns. The British line, though still intact, was worn perilously thin and could not yet do more than hold up the advancing foe at crucial moments when time was needed for the withdrawal of guns and men. By March 26th the Germans had reached and passed the old British lines from which they issued in 1916 to begin the Battle of the Somme. Two days later the enemy was in striking distance of Amiens. But the French reserves were now coming into line, and successful counter-attacks began to halt the German troops, wearied with incessant marching and fighting.

By the end of the first week in April the German blow was definitely parried. It had driven back a section of the British line for thirty miles and had inflicted serious losses upon it in men and material. But it had failed in its main purpose. The French and British armies still formed a continuous front, and Amiens, the most important centre of communications in Northern France, was still in Allied hands.

The greatness of the danger awoke the Allied Govern-

ments to the need of immediate action. The first step was the appointment of one supreme commander for the Allied forces. It was very plain that the Germans owed much of their success in the war to a unified command, and that the Allies had never made the fullest possible use of their resources in the field largely because of the lack of a single directing mind. On March 26th Ferdinand Foch, acknowledged by every one to be the most brilliant leader that the war had produced on the side of the Allies, was given supreme command of the Allied troops. A wiser choice could not have been made. Foch patiently and skilfully parried the German blows which followed, husbanding his resources until he had a force at his disposal sufficient to ensure the defeat of the Germans. Every day saw a marked increase in the number of his reserves. Britain sent over 355,000 men to France in the month following March 21st, and the Americans speeded up the training of their levies. In April, May, and June, over 600,000 American soldiers landed in France, and these mounting reserves enabled Foch to use his veterans boldly in the operations of early summer.

When Ludendorff, who was directing the German operations, saw that a further advance toward Amiens was impossible, he turned his attention to another sector which offered a promising opportunity for a telling blow. He chose the front running from La Bassée to Passchendaele, which was held by divisions that had been wearied by the heavy fighting before Amiens.

On April 9th nine divisions attacked on the southern half of this sector and again won an immediate success. For twenty days the assaults continued, and the British troops fought heroically against impossible odds. By April 29th the Germans were brought to a standstill, and their offensive ended without their securing the vital centre of Hazebrouck, the capture of which would have meant

the dislocation of the Allied line from Arras to the sea and the surrender of Dunkirk to the foe.

The third great German offensive fell upon the French guarding the Heights of the Aisne, which had been captured at so great a cost by the French in the preceding year. On May 27th forty divisions fell upon the French line and broke through it completely. By nightfall the Germans had advanced twelve miles, driving the French across the Aisne and back to the Vesle River. By the 30th the Germans had advanced thirty miles to the Marne River. The following week was spent in trying to enlarge the cramped salient in which they were held by pushing back the French on the western side. Finding the French defence impregnable there, the Germans attacked from Soissons to Montdidier, but did not succeed in making an appreciable advance. A similar effort at Rheims met with no better fate. By June 18th the German forces, exhausted by their three great offensives, were compelled to rest and reorganize for the final effort, which they believed would win the war.

The battle in the Marne salient was renewed on July 15th. Ludendorff believed that he was still strong enough to break out of the Marne salient and cut the Paris-Nancy railway. At the same time another army was to strike east of Rheims. The road to Paris down the Marne valley would then lie open, and, when all the Allied reserves were engaged in defending this route to the capital, a fresh assault on Amiens would complete the disruption of the Allied armies. To accomplish these aims thirty fresh divisions were massed on the two fronts to be attacked.

At dawn the German infantry swept over their parapets. But this time the French were ready for them. On the twenty-five mile front of Gouraud's army east of Rheims they could not advance an inch beyond the French outpost lines. Neither could they force back the French on the

edge of the Marne salient. Only at the extreme tip of the salient had they the least success, and that was due to the decision of the French commander-in-chief to permit the Germans to involve themselves more deeply in the trap which he had set for them. For along the western side of the salient lay General Mangin, with the Tenth French Army, heavily reinforced and ready to crumple in the German flank.

On the 18th Foch gave the word, and the French swept upon the German lines from Fontenoy to Vaux. By the close of the day they had advanced eight miles, cut the main line of German communication within the salient, and had rendered the position of the German forces on the Marne exceedingly precarious. Two days later the Germans began their withdrawal from the Marne salient under pressure by the four French armies which surrounded it. By August 4th they were back on the line of the Aisne and Vesle Rivers, after losing 40,000 prisoners and hundreds of guns in their retreat.

By the Second Battle of the Marne Foch had regained the initiative and had once more thrown the German armies in France on the defensive. It was the first step in the gigantic series of battles which he had been planning while the Germans were boasting that victory was in their hand. Before the enemy had time to recover from this defeat, Foch struck his second blow, this time with the British army at Amiens as his weapon.

Sir Douglas Haig chose the Amiens salient for his first blow. The troops chosen for the attack were the finest shock troops in the British army. The Third, First, and Second Canadian Divisions, with the Fourth in support, formed the extreme right of the attacking force. Next came the Second and Third Australian Divisions, with the Fourth and Fifth in support. The left wing was formed by the Fifty-eighth and Eighteenth British

Divisions, with the Twelfth in support. Four hundred tanks were in readiness to clear the way for the infantry, while three divisions of cavalry were concentrated east of Amiens in readiness to exploit to the full whatever success might be gained. Such an enormous concentration of artillery had been made that it wiped out the enemy's defences in four minutes of furious shelling just before the attack. Every precaution had been taken to keep the preparations secret; and the attack was a complete surprise to the foe.

Just before dawn on the morning of August 8th the British batteries opened a tornado of fire upon the German lines. Four minutes later the infantry went over the top. The Germans were completely surprised. At one point a regimental mess was captured while breakfasting. Many prisoners were taken in their billets, before they knew that a battle was being fought. By nightfall the British cavalry had advanced twenty-three miles from their positions in the morning. The next day the advance continued; and General Humbert's Third French Army added to the difficulties of the Germans by striking on the opposite side of the salient at Montdidier. By August 15th the Germans had been driven back to the old Somme battle-field and were making a stand at Bapaume and Peronne. The week's fighting had yielded 30,000 prisoners and hundreds of guns to the Allies, while the threat to Amiens was definitely removed.

But Foch had no idea of letting the Germans recuperate at their leisure. On August 18th Mangin struck at them between the Oise and the Aisne Rivers. By the 20th he had established himself on the Heights of the Aisne, after taking 10,000 prisoners and 200 guns.

On the morning of August 21st Byng struck with the Third British Army north of the Ancre River. By evening he had advanced three miles and threatened to outflank

the German line at Bapaume and Peronne. The next day Rawlinson had equal success between Albert and the Somme River. For three days the two British armies steadily pushed back the enemy over the old Somme battleground. By August 25th Byng was at the edge of Bapaume.

Meanwhile Haig had prepared another great blow to facilitate the British advance. At 3 a.m. on the morning of August 26th Sir Arthur Currie, with the Second and Third Canadian Divisions and the Fifty-first Imperial, attacked astride the Scarpe River. He broke clean through the German defences on a five-mile front, winning as much ground in one day as had been won in six weeks in that area during 1917. This success, which was developed on the following day, threatened to outflank the Siegfried line, which alone offered a haven for the beaten armies of Germany. The threat materialized on September 2nd, when the First and Fourth Canadian Divisions and the Twenty-first Division of the British army attacked the Drocourt-Quéant switch-line. The attack went clean through one of the strongest positions in the West, and forced Ludendorff to retire behind the Canal du Nord, which formed a last line of defence before Cambrai.

By the first week of September the British were once more face to face with the enemy along the Siegfried line. In one month they had forced the Germans to relinquish all the ground gained in their March offensive, and had taken 70,000 prisoners and 700 guns.

Away to the East Foch had another surprise in store for the enemy. The German advance in 1914 had been halted on the banks of the Meuse at Verdun; but east of Verdun a sharp salient had remained projecting into the French lines at St. Mihiel. On September 12th the First United States Army under General Pershing crushed in

the salient, taking 15,000 prisoners and 200 guns with surprisingly small losses.

By the last week in September everything was ready for the final battle in France. The Allied forces from left to right lay as follows: The Belgians from the coast to Ypres; the French Third Army, under Humbert, which had been transferred to Flanders; the British Second Army, under Plumer, to the Lys River; the British Fifth Army, under Birdwood, in front of Lens and Lille; the British First Army, under Horne, opposite Douai; the British Third Army, under Byng, before Cambrai; the British Fourth Army, under Rawlinson, at St. Quentin; the French First Army, under Debeney, to the Oise; the French Tenth Army, under Mangin, on the Heights of the Aisne; the French Fifth Army, under Guillaumat, in front of Rheims; the French Fourth Army, under Gouraud, in the Champagne; the United States First Army, under Pershing, in the Argonne; the United States Second Army east of the Meuse.

Foch was now ready to open battle along the whole line from the Meuse to the sea. He began on the eastern end. At 5.30 on the morning of September 26th Pershing's and Gouraud's armies attacked on a front of forty miles. By nightfall Gouraud had advanced three miles, Pershing seven. The next morning Haig threw the First and Third Armies against the defences of Cambrai. The First, Third, and Fourth Canadian Divisions swept over the Canal du Nord. By evening the British had taken 10,000 prisoners and 200 guns. The next morning the Belgian forces, under the command of King Albert, assisted by part of Humbert's and Plumer's Armies, made a successful attack on a twenty-mile front from Dixmude to Messines. By nightfall they had duplicated the British captures of the day before. The same day Mangin and Guillaumat struck along their fronts and made good progress. On September

29th Haig struck again at the Siegfried line from Marcoing to St. Quentin, and the German defences crumbled before his blows.

The greatest battle in history had now been joined. The whole two hundred and fifty-mile front from the Meuse to the sea was engaged. Everywhere along the whole line the Allied forces were pressing on to victory. The Germans, gradually breaking beneath the weight of the assault, were clinging desperately to their last line defences; behind them lay open country in which they could not hope to check the victorious Allies.

By the end of the first week in October, it was plain that the British could not be held by the Siegfried line. In one section the Australians had broken clean through the last fortified line and had reached the open country. On October 8th the final attack was made. The whole Siegfried line disappeared in a day, and before nightfall the British cavalry were galloping eastward to harass the German retirement. That night Cambrai fell to the Canadians, and the following day they pushed three miles eastward of the town.

By the evening of October 10th Haig held Le Cateau, and our troops were driving the Germans back over the ground upon which the British Expeditionary Force had made such a gallant stand in August, 1914. By the 13th he was in touch with their forces along the Selle River. By October 20th he had forced the river positions and was ready to strike at the important centre of Valenciennes.

Meanwhile King Albert and his Belgians were not idle. On October 14th he attacked from Dixmude to Comines on the Lys River. In two days the French and Belgians advanced eighteen miles. On October 20th the advance guards of the Allies reached the Dutch frontier, and the Belgian coast was entirely clear of the foe. Lille, Courtrai, and Bruges, places which had seemed as inaccessible as



Berlin itself a few weeks before, were passed in a single bound.

On October 23rd Haig struck again and forced the positions along the Scheldt and Sambre Canal. By the last day of October he had cleared the way to Valenciennes. On November 1st the Canadians, along with the Twenty-second and Seventeenth Corps, attacked on a six-mile front south of the city. That afternoon four companies of Canadians entered Valenciennes from the west. Next day the capture of the city was completed. At the same time, Gouraud and Pershing, away to the east, swung forward for twelve miles.

On November 4th Haig made his last great assault. He was moving against strong positions; but the British troops were not to be denied. That day they broke and scattered thirty-two German divisions, taking 19,000 prisoners and more than 450 guns. At the same time the Belgians to the north had moved forward and were closing in on Ghent. To the south and east the whole German defence began to collapse, and the stubborn resistance which had faced Gouraud and Pershing melted away. The Germans were no longer in retreat but in rout.

From November 5th to November 11th the whole Allied line moved forward. Here and there along the front, groups of Germans still offered resistance, but the organized armies of Germany were gone. Our cavalry, cyclists, and airmen herded them on, scattering death over all the packed roads leading back to Germany; while our infantry, exhausted by the terrific strain of the advance, moved forward as fast as their fatigue permitted. The most terrible disaster which had ever befallen an army was within measurable distance, for Foch had only to sweep the Americans north-eastward between the Meuse and the Moselle to force the unconditional surrender of practically the whole German army.

But Germany was now prepared to end the war upon any terms whatever. Already, in early October, she had tried to secure an armistice, but without success.

During the first week in November the unrest in Germany grew ominous. The Emperor had fled from Berlin to Army Headquarters, while the great mass of the people clamoured for his instant abdication so that peace might be obtained. The Navy was ordered to sea in the first days of November. The crews immediately mutinied, and the mutiny spread through the ports of Germany, with soldiers and sailors leading the movement. Disorders broke out in the great industrial centres. The spirit of the German people had at last been broken as completely as her military power.

On November 5th the German Government received word that Marshal Foch had been appointed as Allied representative to receive the German delegates and to communicate to them the terms of an armistice. The next day four German delegates were chosen and set out for the front. They arrived in the French lines at ten o'clock the next night, and presented themselves to Marshal Foch and Sir Rosslyn Wemyss, who represented the naval interests of the Allies, on Friday morning, November 8th. They were presented with the terms of the Allies and informed that they must accept or refuse them within seventy-two hours. At five o'clock on the morning of November 11th the armistice was signed. Foch immediately telegraphed to his generals that hostilities would cease on the whole front at eleven o'clock on November 11th.

The terms of the armistice amounted to an unconditional surrender. All invaded territory was to be immediately evacuated and the inhabitants repatriated. The surrender of a large amount of war material and transport was demanded. All prisoners of war in the

hands of Germany were to be repatriated immediately. All German submarines were to be surrendered. Certain ships of the German navy were to be handed over to the Allies, and the rest were to be disarmed and put under the surveillance of the Allies. The blockade of Germany was to be maintained. The Allies were to occupy the left bank of the Rhine and three bridge heads on the right bank—at Cologne, Coblenz, and Mainz.

A week later the march into Germany commenced. The French troops pushed forward through Alsace-Lorraine, welcomed everywhere by the population which at last, after forty-eight years of German rule, was restored to France. Further north, the Americans marched along the valley of the Moselle. The British advanced through Belgium to Cologne, with the Belgians on their left to the Dutch frontier. By the middle of December the armies of occupation were all in position, and the Allies were able to assemble their plenipotentiaries at Versailles to begin the long task of elaborating the final peace treaty, by which an enduring and just peace might be had.

While the French, British, and American armies were smashing the German armies in France, the Allied armies on more distant fronts had not been idle. Bulgaria, Turkey, and Austria, each in their turn, had yielded to the irresistible assaults delivered against their discouraged armies and had made unconditional surrender before Germany had bowed to the inevitable in the West.

On Saturday, September 14th, General d'Esperey, who had taken command of the Allied forces in the Balkans, ordered a general assault. In three days his composite army pushed forward twenty miles, and the momentum of their advance grew hourly. By September 26th the Bulgarian armies were but a disordered rabble. Three days later Bulgarian delegates arrived at Salonika and accepted without hesitation the Allied terms. The Bulgarian armies

were to be immediately demobilized; their arms and equipment surrendered; all Greek and Serbian territory still occupied by Bulgaria was to be evacuated forthwith; all Bulgarian railways and ships were to be placed at the disposal of the Allies; certain strategic points in Bulgaria were to be occupied by Allied forces.

At the same time Allenby was sweeping through Syria. He had met with stiff resistance after the capture of Jerusalem, and the early part of 1918 had been spent in minor operations, which slowly drove back the Turks from around the Holy City and gave Allenby a strong defensive line from which he could launch a fresh offensive. Then the serious situation in France required all the troops which he could send there; and he had to hold his hand through the summer months until he received reinforcements from Mesopotamia and India.

On September 19th Allenby began the offensive which was destined to bring Turkey to her knees. Opposite him lay three Turkish armies, the Fourth, Seventh and Eighth. The first assault fell upon the Seventh and Eighth, which lay west of the Jordan. The Eighth was smashed by the first attack, and through the gap opened in the Turkish lines rode the British cavalry. Thirty-six hours later the two Turkish armies were completely encircled. The British infantry shepherded them into the arms of the cavalry in their rear. By September 24th they had ceased to exist. The Fourth Turkish Army was destined soon to meet the same fate. Its lines of retreat lay through Damascus; but the exits from that city were closed by the fast-moving British cavalry columns on September 30th. In twelve days three Turkish armies had been completely annihilated, 60,000 prisoners and 400 guns had been taken, and the Turkish power of resistance was gone for ever.

The rest of Allenby's campaign was a triumphal march,

which did not end until he had occupied Aleppo, cutting the Bagdad railway, which linked Mesopotamia with Constantinople. In his whirlwind campaign of little more than a month, he had moved his battle-front more than 300 miles from his starting-point.

Turkey had had enough. Threatened in Europe by the Allied forces in the Balkans, broken in Syria by Allenby, unable to stop General Marshall's advance in Mesopotamia, she asked for an armistice. It was signed on October 30th, and hostilities ceased at noon on the 31st. The main terms were the opening of the Dardanelles and the Black Sea, the demobilization of the Turkish army, the severing of all relations with the Central Powers, and the placing of Turkish territory at the disposal of the Allies for military purposes.

From the close of the retreat after Caporetto until the end of October, 1918, the Italians had contented themselves with holding the line of the Piave. In June they had met and parried a blow by the Austrian armies, but General Diaz did not feel able to begin a counter-offensive at that time. But by the middle of October it was plain that the Central Powers were doomed; one successful stroke and the Austrian armies would go the way of those of Bulgaria and Turkey.

On October 24th Diaz struck. By the 28th the Piave had been successfully crossed on a wide front, the British Fourteenth Corps under Lord Cavan leading the movement. The next day the Austrians were in full retreat. On the 30th and 31st the retreat became a rout. The Austrian troops lost all semblance of discipline and thronged in disorderly masses into the mountain valleys or toward the crossings of the Tagliamento River. By November 4th the Italian troops were moving over Austrian soil. Over 300,000 prisoners and 5,000 guns had fallen into their hands in eleven days.

On October 27th the Austrian Government declared itself ready to negotiate a peace with its enemies and to conclude an immediate armistice on all Austro-Hungarian fronts. On Sunday, November 3rd the Austrian delegates received the terms of the armistice and accepted them without demur. At three o'clock on Monday afternoon hostilities ceased. By the terms of the armistice Austria was shorn of her army and navy and placed all her territories at the disposal of the Allies for military operations.

As we have already seen, Germany followed the example of her allies and submitted to the will of her opponents on November 11th. The Allied nations, after four years and three months of terrible warfare, had won as complete a victory as history can show. Germany, who had set out so boldly in August, 1914, upon her mad course of conquest, had paid the penalty of her arrogant assumption that she could set at naught the rights and laws upon which the security of the world and its civilization are based. Instead of dictating her will to the rest of Europe, she herself was forced to submit to the desires of the nations which she had so grossly wronged. The imposing structure of empire which she had built up at so great a cost of blood and gold was swept from her. Outside of Europe, not a square mile of the vast areas which she had owned remained to her. Within Europe, the great block of Central Europe over which she had exercised control was dissolving into a set of new states, all hostile to her save one—Austria. Her military power was irrevocably gone, and she knew that her conquerors would take good care that it should never become a menace to them again. Her fleet had passed from her control, while her merchant marine was also taken from her to make up, to some extent, for the depredations of her submarines. Further, she could look forward to the loss of some of her richest possessions in Europe. Alsace-

Lorraine was gone; German Poland, with its wealth of coal and iron, would become a part of the newly-formed kingdom of Poland; Schlesweig-Holstein was clamouring to be restored to Denmark. Not only had she failed to win more territory for herself, but she was certain to be forced to disgorge some of the richest booty of her previous conquests. No more complete humiliation for the arrogant race who had proclaimed themselves supermen could be imagined.

Germany would survive, although sadly weakened. But the end of the war brought with it the end of the Austrian Empire. A large new country, Czecho-Slovakia, had sprung up within its boundaries; while Rumania, Italy, Poland, and Serbia united with themselves the districts which were kindred to them in population and national feeling. When at last some order began to emerge from the chaos into which Austro-Hungary fell at the end of 1918, nothing remained to the Austrian Government save a small block of country about twice the size of Switzerland and containing only a few million people. Hungary, sadly reduced in size, had severed its connection with Austria. The fate of Germany's chief ally was worse than Germany's own.

The lot of Turkey was not more enviable. From her were wrested her possessions in Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, to pass under the control of Britain and France. Only a small strip in Europe, and Anatolia, which had a purely Turkish population, remained to her. The Turkish Empire, which had once extended from Persia to the walls of Vienna, had shrunk to a pitiful corner of Asia Minor.

More important, however, was the vindication of the free peoples of the world when thrown into conflict with the most reactionary nations of Europe. To the German doctrine that might is right had been opposed the un-

alterable conviction of Britain and France that right is might—and right had conquered. Back of the blind patriotism which animated the armies of Germany was no such conviction of the justice of the cause in which they fought as lay behind the no less ardent if more reasoned loyalty of the Allied forces. Nothing could daunt the Allied nations, nothing could turn them from their purpose of freeing the world once and for all from the deadly menace of German militarism. So, in the crisis of the war, the German victories of the spring of 1918 merely roused the Allies to greater efforts. On the contrary, when disaster finally hovered over the German armies, they had not the will to continue the struggle. At last Germany was forced to realize that the imponderable qualities of spirit at which she had sneered four years before, could, in the end, triumph over the material strength upon which she had placed her whole reliance.



## CHAPTER VII

## THE EMPIRE AND THE WAR

Germany, at the outbreak of hostilities, had with one voice announced to the world her belief that Britain was her chief and greatest foe. The entry of Britain into the war shook at once the foundations of her confidence, and rightly so. She knew the bulldog breed which had fought Napoleon for twenty weary years and at last had freed Europe from his dominion. She knew right well that, once Britain had put her hand to the plough, there would be no turning back. So Germany resounded with the song:

“We have one foe, and one alone, England!”

Seldom has England received a more sincere compliment.

From the beginning, Britain became the core of the alliance which stood between Germany and world dominion. The reason is obvious. Britain controlled the seas; and sea-power has always been the deciding factor in wars in which any save land-locked countries have engaged.

It was British shipping which enabled the Continental Allies to wage war upon the scale that modern operations demand. British ships carried nearly half of the total imports of France and Italy during the war. British ships carried to the various Fronts more than half a million vehicles, ranging in size from small carts to the largest locomotives; more than two million horses, mules, and camels; more than twenty-two million men. British ships carried over two hundred million tons of oil, coal, and munitions. In addition to this the regular trade of the Empire was carried on. The transportation of troops

alone meant the equivalent of moving the whole population of Canada, three times over, with all its baggage and the very houses in which it lives across thousands of miles of the most dangerous waters that man had ever to traverse. This was the task of the British Mercantile Marine, and most nobly was that task performed. Although fifteen thousand British seamen met death in the performance of this duty, not a man refused to go to sea again. Although nine million tons of British shipping was sunk by mine and submarine, there never was a time when supplies did not go forward to the Fronts in steady and sufficient volume.

The Navy's greatest task was to guard this immense flow of shipping from attack. It was a very difficult task, for a submarine is a most elusive foe. Yet that task was accomplished. Of the two hundred and three submarines destroyed in the course of the war, the British Navy accounted for one hundred and fifty-one. The French, the Italians, and the Americans together destroyed fifty-two. Out of the twenty-two millions of men transported during the war fewer than five thousand were lost on the way. Out of three hundred and seven wheat-ships which brought grain to Europe from America under convoy in the summer of 1918 only one was lost.

Not only did the Navy safeguard our own shipping, but it kept enemy shipping off the seas. Further, it established a cordon of vessels in the North Sea, which prevented Germany from obtaining supplies which she needed very badly. The ceaseless vigilance of the North Sea patrols was a very large factor in the final defeat of Germany.

So it is easily seen that upon British sea-power depended the issues of the whole war. If it had been destroyed, the fighting fronts in Europe would have been starved for men and supplies. The campaigns in Asia

would have been entirely impossible. Germany would have been able to import whatever she needed, and the war would have been won by her at the beginning.

The guns of the great British battleships held the German High Seas Fleet from the open sea for more than four years of war. The unremitting vigilance of the lighter craft gradually wore down the vicious submarines. The full harvest of their toil was not garnered, however, until the day when the bulk of the German navy passed between the stately lines of the British Grand Fleet into humiliating captivity. That day sealed the doom of Germany's naval ambitions and established still more firmly the Mistress of the Seas upon her throne.

The achievements of Britain and her Empire on land rivalled those of her Navy and Mercantile Marine. From one point of view, they are even more striking, for while Britain had been the chief naval power of the world for nearly two hundred years, her power on land was negligible in comparison with that of the great European powers. She had to build up great armies from a very small beginning, and the miraculous way in which this was accomplished will stand forever as a record of efficient organization.

When Sir John French faced the Germans in August, 1914, he had approximately 80,000 fighting men under his command. By the end of the war British Armies in France numbered close to 2,700,000. The number of prisoners taken on the Western Front alone was over four times as large as the original British Expeditionary Force—327,000, to be exact. The total of men put under arms in the United Kingdom during the whole war reached 5,704,416. The colonial forces reached astonishing totals; Canada put 628,964 men under arms; Australia, 416,809; New Zealand, 220,099; South Africa, 136,070; Newfoundland, 11,922; other small colonies,

12,000. India contributed over 1,400,000 men; South Africa and the West Indies more than 120,000 coloured troops. All told, the total number of men placed under arms by the whole Empire on land and sea numbered more than 10,000,000.

Not only in size, but also in efficiency and valour, the British armies were the equal of any in the war. In the final drive of 1918 the British army in France had to break the strongest defences and defeat the best troops the Germans possessed. During that drive it fought seven battles, each one greater than any in the previous history of British arms, taking 187,000 prisoners and 2,850 guns. Throughout practically the whole of this period, the attacking British troops were numerically inferior to the German forces which they defeated.

In that incomparable army the Colonial troops took a high place. On the opening of the drive on August 8th the Canadians and Australians formed the spear-head of the attack. Of their work on that occasion Sir Douglas Haig reported: "The brilliant and predominating part taken by the Canadian and Australian Corps in this battle is worthy of the highest commendation. The skill and determination of these troops proved irresistible." Again at the Drocourt-Quéant line and later at Cambrai, the Canadians played the leading role in decisive battles. On the morning of November 11th the Third Canadian Division completed the roll of glorious achievements by the capture of Mons. Beginning with St. Julien and ending with Mons, the Canadian Corps made a record of brilliant feats of arms which need fear no comparison.

The amazing muster of the Empire in the hour of need gave the world an enduring proof of the fundamental unity of the nations composing the British Commonwealth. Not one man, not one gun, not one cent was demanded of her colonies by Britain. What they did,

they did of their own free will. It is the glory of Britain that she has built up and is yet building up an Empire in which ties of sentiment and kinship, loyalty to her free institutions, and similar ideals of civilization have taken the place of the grosser and less effective bond of central authority.

The war has brought to the British Empire an enormous increase in territory. In Africa, some 700,000 square miles of land were taken from Germany and brought under British control. Over 100,000 square miles in the Southern Pacific were added to the Empire. After centuries of Turkish misgovernment, Palestine and Mesopotamia may look forward to an era of ever increasing prosperity under the protection of the Union Jack. In addition to territory formally annexed or placed under a British protectorate, Persia, Arabia, and Tibet have been brought within the sphere of British influence. The total increase in the land area of the Empire and its spheres of influence is greater in area than the territory contained in the United States of America, including Alaska.

Even in the midst of strenuous campaigns the British armies showed their desire to bring peace and plenty, rather than fear and destruction, into the countries they overran. While General Marshall was in occupation of Mesopotamia he began extensive agricultural and irrigation projects which, extended since the close of the war, bid fair to restore to the Euphrates Valley the prosperity it enjoyed when Babylon was at her zenith. Similar projects are in course of development in Palestine. Nothing could be more typical of the way Britain shoulders her responsibilities to the peoples that have come under her control.

It is, in fact, the great ideal of service to the world which lies at the root of the greatness of the British Empire. Conquests are not exploited to satisfy a nation's

greed, as Germany exploited Belgium, Serbia, or Rumania, but rather are regarded as opportunities of bringing succour to the needy and justice to the oppressed. The true Briton reveres his Empire for the might of its arms, the freedom of its institutions, and the justice of its dealings. But above and beyond this is the realization that the whole Empire is pervaded with a lofty sense of duty to humanity. This is the great truth which has won for the Empire the unshakeable loyalty of all its peoples, and which is carrying it ever forward in its great work of bringing justice and equity to the far corners of the earth.