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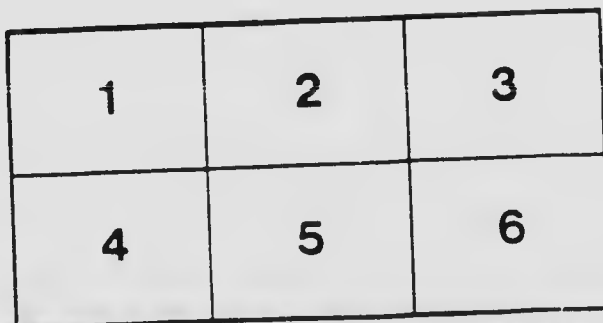
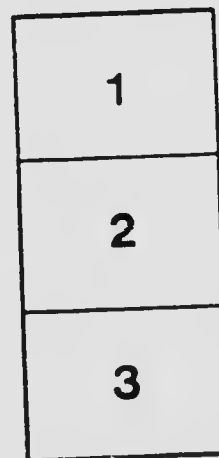
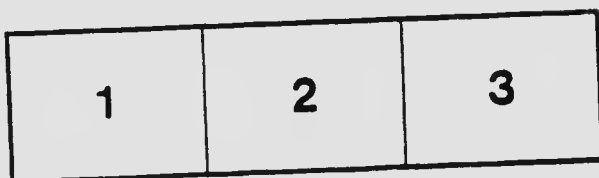
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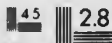
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OXFORD PAMPHLETS
1914-1915

THE
STAND OF LIÈGE

BY

A. NEVILLE HILDITCH

Price Fourpence net

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
HUMPHREY MILFORD
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MAPS

Between pages 20 and 21

THE STAND OF LIÈGE

The Brabant armies on the fret
For battle in the cause of liberty.

WORDSWORTH.

ON the morning of August 4, 1914, the sentinels pacing the ancient citadel of Liège, where the infantry barracks were situated, cast, no doubt, many anxious glances eastwards, where the Vesdre wound, through Verviers and Limbourg, to the German frontier. They could see in that direction, and to the south, in the direction of Luxembourg, now, they knew, in German hands, long rolling stretches of wooded upland, rising gradually to where the heights of the Ardennes bounded the prospect. The journey between London and Cologne had no stretch more charming than the twenty-five miles, dotted with pretty country-houses, picturesque villages, and small manufactories, traversed by a stream winding through a deep and beautiful valley, between Liège and Herbesthal. In the opposite direction, to west and to north, spread the broad and fertile plains of Hesbaye and Dutch Limbourg, broken by hilly stretches. The morning was sultry and cloudy. The panorama that lay below, magnificent as it was, could not be seen to best advantage. The broad Meuse, joined to the south of the city by the Vesdre and the Ourthe, lost itself in haze. Visé, ten miles to the north, could be discerned dimly upon the east bank. The soldier's eye could pick out the forts which girdled the city: Fléron and Evegnée, dominating their villages, lay

nearest the German frontier. Below, descending by steep curving streets and stairways, and intersected by numerous canals and streams, was Liège itself.

Liège, lying in a richly cultivated valley, is strikingly picturesque. The towers of numerous old churches, some dating back to the tenth century, grace the left bank of the river, where the principal part of the city is placed. The chimneys of many factories and foundries rise upon the right bank, the Outremeuse, the quarters of the artisan inhabitants. Innumerable barges line the Meuse near the iron-works and coal-pits of Seraing. The river is spanned by several remarkably fine bridges. The Liégeois who, on August 3, discussed in their tree-lined boulevards and their cafés the national crisis that had arisen with the delivery of Germany's ultimatum, could regard with complacency many historic buildings and invariably well laid-out streets. That ultimatum had, indeed, placed their country and themselves in a terrible position. Events had been moving rapidly for some days. A fever of anticipation and of preparation had settled upon the city.¹ The Belgian army had begun to mobilize. The Garde Civique had been called up. Then reservists were summoned in the middle of the night by knocks at their doors and by the ringing of church bells. Horses and vehicles of all sorts were commandeered. Even the dogs harnessed to the milkmen's and bakers' carts were taken off, wagging their tails in the prevailing excitement, to draw the machine-guns of the infantry. Carrier-pigeons also were requisitioned. A food panic commenced.

¹ The writer is indebted, for many succeeding facts concerning the internal condition of the city during the defence, to the account of an eye-witness, Dr. Hamelius, of Liège University, in his book, *The Siege of Liège*.

Provision dealers, overwhelmed by the rush of buyers, at first refused to accept banknotes, though payable on sight. There was a run upon the banks, amid noisy scenes. In some cases the city firemen had to be employed to disperse the crowds by playing the hose upon the more turbulent creditors. Cattle from the surrounding district were driven in, and stood, lowing plaintively, in suburban fields. The animals, it was remarked, seemed struck by uncanny fear. Many sickened and died. Refugees of all nationalities poured through the city towards their respective countries. Harrowing tales and sensational rumours were exchanged. It was reported that the 25th Prussian Regiment was deployed along the frontier near Moresnet. German airships were said to have passed over Brussels by night. A local paper published on August 2 an account, copied by the press of foreign capitals, but later proved unfounded, of a considerable French victory near Nancy. There were not wanting signs which, if contributing to the alarm of the citizens, stimulated their faith in Leman, their military governor. Thirty thousand navvies had been at work on Sunday, August 2, digging trenches and erecting earthworks between the forts. Thousands of troops had been brought up from Diest by forced marches to augment the garrison. Wanderers by night might have observed mysterious preparations, and the secret transport of bulky objects in connexion with the forts. The precautions had proved to be justified. On August 3 newspaper placards, 'Belgium Refuses,' spread sudden news among the disturbed populace of the rejection of Germany's proposals. The next day dawned upon an anxious but determined city. Yesterday had sent defiance to Germany. What was to-day to bring? Did their neighbours indeed

intend to make war upon them? Within a few hours, before night fell, an overwhelming enemy might be in their midst. The horrors of war might have overtaken their homes. The citizens could not but despair of the ultimate result of the onslaught of a foe so mighty. But they waited, during hours of acute suspense, with fortitude. Events soon revealed themselves. During the morning the distant rattle of rifle-fire broke out suddenly in the wooded country beyond Herve. A sharper and more continuous fusillade opened in the direction of Visé. Some time later a nearer and more sinister sound, the deep thunder of guns, was heard. The Germans were bombarding the forts.

Reports poured in at General Leman's head-quarters. The Germans had entered Limbourg: they had pushed on to Verviers: they had advanced to Herve: a large force had reached Dalhem, and was approaching Visé. The climax came. The enemy had arrived outside Fléron, and were preparing to attack. Leman's eyes might well be troubled; but his jaw was set hard.

It may be well now to recount the first stages of the German advance. Troops had crossed the frontier, early that morning, in three columns. It is recorded that, on their journey by open goods-train to Herbesthal, old men ran out to bless them, women and girls to encourage them, and to press upon them food and drink. Passing trainloads cheered each other, and promised to meet again in Paris. They were in high spirits. The task immediately before them appeared easy. It seemed incredible that Belgium would, or could, resist their progress. The main column, detrain- ing at Herbesthal, took to the road and advanced into Belgian territory. Cavalry patrols were sent on ahead. A few stray shots fired upon them showed that Belgian

scouts were on the alert. No resistance was offered. The cavalry, passing through Limbourg, met with some of the retreating Belgians at Verviers. There was a slight skirmish. The Belgians retired in safety, and made good use of their retreat in blowing up bridges and tearing up the railway. The line was, indeed, remarkable for the engineering skill of its construction. German infantry, meanwhile, had commandeered locomotives and rolling-stock found at Limbourg, and had, partly by rail and partly by road, reached Verviers. The terror-stricken inhabitants withdrew into their houses, and watched the arrival of the Germans from behind closed shutters. The invaders proceeded to the town hall. The Belgian flag was torn down and replaced by the German amid the cheers of the troops. Martial law was proclaimed in French. A German officer, placed in charge of the administration of the town, began to billet troops and requisition supplies. Large forces had, meanwhile, been pushing forward by various routes towards Liège. One column made rapid progress for some distance by means of the railway, until the torn-up portion of the line compelled recourse to the road. Other columns converged upon Herve, about ten miles due east of Liège. Continuous firing broke out in a northerly direction as the advance was proceeding. Belgian troops, after a skirmish at Warsage, had retreated, destroying bridges in their wake, to Visé. Here they were making their first stand.

Visé occupied a position of considerable strategic importance. It commanded the passage of the Meuse north of the city, which was at present exposed to attack from the east alone. Unless Visé were in German hands, it would be impossible completely to invest Liège,

or to throw forward cavalry into the country beyond. The capture of Visé was, indeed, an essential preliminary to the capture of Liège. Von Emmich, the veteran German commander, fully aware of this, had meditated a surprise. While his main body was advancing by Limbourg and Verviers, a number of motor-cars, carrying German troops, followed by large bodies of cavalry, crossed the frontier and proceeded rapidly to Dalhem. Two miles away, on the near bank of the river, lay Visé. So far no opposition, other than a few stray shots, had met them. They could not expect as propitious an entry into Visé, and they prepared for action. It was soon seen that Belgian troops were in occupation. Light German artillery was brought up, and fire was opened. It was the first engagement of the war. One can well imagine that the nerves of the combatants, as yet unhardened to the sight and sound of battle, were strung to the highest pitch. It is, indeed, in his first engagement that the soldier usually shows whether his natural disposition is for advance or for retreat. The defence of Visé foreshadowed the defence of Liège. The Belgians showed spirit. The Germans could make no progress for a considerable while. Time was precious. The attack on Liège itself, which the seizure of Visé should precede, would soon open. They commenced a series of fierce assaults upon the town. Many houses were set ablaze by bursting shells. The inhabitants, furious at the wanton attack upon their peaceful dwelling-place, began to take a share in the fighting. Many were, indeed, provided with weapons. The manufacture of fire-arms, for which Liège was famed, was largely carried on in the workers' homes. The people were familiar with their mechanism and use. Shots were fired from the houses. Boys and women flung stones upon

the attackers. Finally, after a desperate struggle, entry into the town was effected by the Germans. They were too late to save the bridge. The Belgians, retreating, destroyed it, and took up a position on the opposite bank of the river. A body of Uhlans, making for the bridge, was almost annihilated by a hot fire opened upon them by infantry hidden among the broken piers. At the same time shots were fired from houses near the bank. It is possible that these came from Belgian soldiers. The German infantry, pouring through the streets, proceeded to indiscriminate reprisals. A large number of the inhabitants were shot down. All resistance having ceased, the remaining population were herded together into the centre of the town, and surrounded by German troops. The commanding officer addressed the sullen Belgians in French. Urgent necessity, he said, not deliberate enmity, had forced the Germans to invade Belgian territory. But the inhabitants must submit to German military law. Every attack on the troops would be immediately punished with death. A shot rang out suddenly. The officer fell badly wounded. A group of eight Belgians, from whose midst the bullet was fired, were seized on the spot. A file of riflemen was drawn up. The eight, without attempt at discrimination, were summarily executed.

While the attack upon Visé was in progress, the German columns were concentrating on Liège. Their front line stretched roughly from Visé on their right wing to Nessonvaux on their left. Their centre rested upon Herve. Cavalry had cleared the way for them as they advanced. By evening their first line had halted before the forts and entrenchments of Liège, and were in readiness to attack.

The Germans were in great strength. They formed

the 3rd Army, called the Army on the Meuse. Their commander, General von Emmich, had known, during sixty-six years of life, nearly half a century of military experience, and had seen service in the campaigns of 1870. Before the outbreak of war he had been at Hanover in command of the 10th Army Corps, the famous Iron Division of Brandenburg. That corps, together with the 7th, were now with him before Liège. The 9th Corps was proceeding from Altona, and would join him later. His present forces numbered some 90,000 men, of all arms. A cavalry division was also at his disposal. Of field artillery the three corps mustered among them 72 six-gun batteries, and 12 four-gun heavy howitzer batteries. Each infantry regiment carried six machine guns. But no heavy siege artillery had been brought up. The heaviest guns that von Emmich could show, his six-inch howitzers, were inferior in calibre and in quality to many within the Liège forts. It was, indeed, a part of the German scheme to travel lightly equipped. Von Emmich's plans had been carefully prepared. He would 'take Liège in his stride'. It was not unlikely that the Belgians had calculated on at least twelve days elapsing from the commencement of the German mobilization before Liège could be attacked. Evidence already showed that they had been surprised. Probably there were only a few thousand troops in the city. He could engage the eastern forts with his artillery, push his forces through the wide intervals between them, and have the city at his mercy. If the forts held out, he would invest them, brush aside the Belgian field troops, and sweep forward as rapidly as possible. The country was rich in agricultural produce. The German troops would feed upon the fat of Belgian land. It seemed unnecessary to encumber themselves with great

supplies of provisions and of baggage. Speed was the great object. If the Germans, by a sudden *coup de main*, could seize Liège, could scatter the Belgian field army before fully mobilized, could occupy Namur and Brussels, there was nothing to prevent their immediate advance upon Paris. The French would be unready. The British needed time. If, indeed, their 'contemptible little army' placed itself in the way, it should be instantly trampled down by weight of numbers and annihilated. The heavier German artillery, designed to shatter the fortifications of Paris, could have some preliminary practice upon the forts of Liège, did they refuse to yield. Their capture was not essential to the occupation of the city, nor to the crossing of the Meuse. But it would be necessary to drive the Belgians from the rampart of trenches between the forts. The 7th Corps was massing before the nearest three, Barehon, Evegnée, and Fléron. It was evening. Light showers had fallen during the day. The sky was overcast. But the light would still hold good for some hours. The first shells were sent screaming towards the Belgian lines. The firing soon became general. The German infantry prepared for action. A night attack, after the bombardment had weakened the Belgian defence, was contemplated.

Let us now return to Liège. The garrison had been busy. Scouts had kept General Leman informed of the enemy's movements. The forts were in readiness. Infantry manned the trenches on the eastern side of the city. Many buildings and obstacles which stood outside the line of defence, and which seemed likely to afford cover to the attackers, were demolished. The place was, indeed, naturally strong. But its governor laboured under a fatal disadvantage. The force at his disposal was altogether inadequate to its defence. It

had been estimated in 1890 that a garrison of at least 74,000 was essential. General Leman had only 40,000. The Germans brought against him first twice, then three times, that number. This disproportion was, however, in some measure compensated for by the skill, the resource, and the courage of Leman himself.

He was known as the silent general. He was essentially a man of action. But his personality was strong because he could be trusted implicitly. Other officers might be more popular among the troops. Leman was a martinet in discipline. He expected much from his men. He followed and studied his profession zealously. It is related that, after being all day on horseback, he would often sit up discussing problems of strategy and of tactics, of which he was a master, until early morning. He seemed, indeed, incapable of fatigue. He was a recognized expert in Roman law, in military architecture, in engineering science. To attributes of mind were added many qualities of heart and of temper. He mingled prudence with tenacity, kindness with force of will. His judgement was as cool, his resource was as ready, in pressing home a success as in sustaining a reverse. He knew accurately, indeed, the weaknesses and the capabilities of his position at Liège. Even had it been garrisoned by forces adequate to its sustained defence, instead of half that number, it was hardly impregnable. The fact that, without the necessary numbers, constituted its strength as a *place d'arrêt*, constituted also its weakness as a defensible stronghold. Its twelve works, though inter-supporting, were isolated from the city and from one another. There was no key-fort.

The rough circle of forts and trenches around the city formed a circumference of about thirty-three miles. Each fort lay about four miles from Liège, and two or

three miles from the next. The country within this circular area, covering many square miles, was in general, excluding the city itself, richly cultivated and thickly populated. The eastern half, the scene of the fiercest fighting, was hilly and wooded. A great number of men would obviously be required to ring this extensive district with a line of troops. Leman's force, comprising the regular garrison, his own 3rd Liège Division, and the 15th Brigade, numbered no more than 40,000. It was impossible for him to defend the whole of the circle at the same time. If the Germans crossed the Meuse, surrounded the city, and attacked the whole line simultaneously, the defence must instantly collapse, and the surrender of the field troops would become inevitable. Leman saw that he must at all costs prevent the enemy from crossing the Meuse. It was more likely that they would try to force a passage to the north than to the south of the city. Envelopment from the south would necessitate the bridging of three rivers instead of one, and would be considerably longer. He must also economize his men by manning only those trenches directly opposite the enemy's lines. His field troops were mobile, and included many cavalry. He would keep large numbers in reserve. He must be constantly on the watch. Immediately any unguarded portion of his line was threatened, he must hurry his reserves to the gap. At every point in the circle at which a German force appeared, a covering Belgian force must be waiting. It was conceivable that small detachments might enter at undefended spots. Mobile reserves must be ready to cut them off at once. Such was Leman's general strategy. The manner of the German advance confirmed his dispositions. The Germans had struck at Visé, and had seized it. But

Belgian troops now lay along the western bank of the river in readiness to repel any attempt at crossing. Small parties of German cavalry could be seen on the other side. Patrols were also observed near Barchon, Evegnée, and Fléron. It soon became evident that masses of infantry and artillery were concentrating opposite these three forts. The latter fired a few practice shots. Soon the woods were resounding to the roar of the first artillery duel of the war.

The bombardment continued without intermission for some hours. Both Belgians and Germans, under fire for the first time, no doubt experienced many new emotions. The Germans, however, suffered far more from the fire than their opponents. The defenders knew well the ground in front of them. The range of every landmark was known to them. Manœuvres had taken place in that district only the year before. The firing from the forts engaged was naturally far more accurate than from the German batteries. The guns of Evegnée destroyed two German pieces, without structural injury or the loss of a single man. Darkness began to set in. It became difficult to distinguish objects on the heavily-wooded slopes opposite each position. Little impression had so far been made upon the defence. The Belgian losses were inconsiderable. The forts were quite undamaged. As night deepened, the flashes of the guns grew more distinct, their booming louder. Searchlights in the forts were brought into play. Their beams, sweeping the wide area from Barchon to Fléron, disclosed masses of German infantry approaching the Belgian lines.

Those lines described, from Barchon to Fléron, a curve. Both these forts were roughly triangular in form, were surrounded by a ditch and by barbed-wire entanglements. The works were of concrete, sur-

mounted by revolving turrets of steel, called cupolas. Within the latter were mounted the heavier guns, of which each fort possessed eight howitzers and mortars, and four quick-firers. Machine-guns for the repulse of storming parties stood upon the ramparts. Four others in the ring of forts were similar to Barehon and Féron. Between the two latter, somewhat advanced from their line, was Evegnée, called, from its reduced size, a 'fortin'. It was similar to them in type, but much smaller in scale and less powerful in armament. Five others in the ring were 'fortins' like Evegnée. Open grassy slopes, called glacis, surrounded each fort, which presented, rising little above the glacis, but a small mark for fire. The total armament of the twelve works was some 400 pieces. Some of the heavier guns, indeed, the Germans would not expect to find. Some months before, the Belgian Government had ordered fortress artillery from Krupp of Essen. Early delivery was asked for, and payment was made. When the European horizon darkened a deputation was sent to Essen. The guns were overdue. A report had got abroad that treachery was afoot. What, indeed, was the cause of delay? The deputies were received cordially and feasted royally. The Germans, however, would not commit themselves as to the guns. There was nothing for it but to take other steps. Under cover of darkness, in a mysterious manner, to avoid detection by spies, pieces of heavy calibre were moved from Antwerp to bring the armament of Liège to full strength. Their efficacy had already been proved. It was no doubt a matter of surprise to German gunners that their artillery was easily outmatched.

Belgian officers, as they scanned the enemy's advance, must have knitted their brows in astonishment. They

could see the German infantry marching through the fields in close formation, without haste, without attempt to take cover, as if on parade. A deployment of barely five paces separated man from man. It is recorded that, forty-four years before, the battlefield of Gravelotte was strewn, behind the Prussian firing line, with skulkers who had left their ranks, while the more courageous had advanced. Some were lying down in the furrows, their rifles pointed towards the front as if in action; others had openly made themselves comfortable behind bushes and in ditches. It is not improbable that the Germans before Liège adopted advance in mass to check wholesale straggling. But the Belgians seized their opportunity. The cupolas in the forts swung round. The field artillery, the hotchkisses, the maxims, were trained upon the approaching columns. Flame sprang and thunder roared from the muzzles of a hundred guns. Bullets swept in a blast of death, gust after gust, the dim shadowy stretches, pasture and standing grain, woodland and broken ground, before the long front of battle. But the Germans maintained for some time an inexorable advance. At many points in the long line the stricken front ranks, falling back upon one another, formed a barrier of corpses. The woods, indeed, provided useful cover from which to fire. But the German artillery could not cover effectually such a form of infantry attack. The fighting was hottest near Barchon. The Germans pressed a fierce assault upon the trenches, held by two Belgian regiments. So near did the enemy draw, so sharp was their fusillade, that Leman, ever on the watch, hurried up reinforcements. It was determined to assume the offensive. A spirited bayonet charge followed. The Germans fled. Their main columns were forced to

retire for some distance to re-form their shattered ranks. The Belgians, indeed, resorted to the bayonet at many other points. The Germans, stoically brave in facing a devastating fire, rank behind rank, almost shoulder to shoulder, showed little inclination to face the bayonet. It was probably some hours before the last attack ceased. The defenders had maintained their ground. No portion of their line had been penetrated. The forts were undamaged. They must have inflicted enormous losses upon the enemy. Dawn broke. Daylight revealed a ghastly and a pitiable sight. From any point hundreds of bodies could be seen lying on the slopes. In some parts they lay piled four feet high. The woods were scarred and the fields furrowed by shell-fire. The Belgians themselves had suffered severely. Their wounded were carried into the city. The defenders were, however, allowed little rest. Early in the morning the bombardment was renewed.

Wednesday, August 5, opened dull and hot. The German firing line had lengthened. The 10th Army Corps had now come up on the left of the 7th, the corps repulsed during the night. The cannonade stretched from Visé to a considerable distance below Liège. Six of the most easterly forts, from Pontisse to Embourg, became involved. Their guns were well able to hold their own.

Within a few hours infantry attacks recommenced. The assaults, now along a wider front, were pressed as fiercely as ever. The enemy advanced across open country in close formation, as before, and by a succession of short rushes. They ran forward, dropped on their fronts, fired a rifle-volley, and ran forward again, with shells bursting in their midst. But each time they attempted to storm the Belgian lines they were

met by a terrible fire. At last a large body of Germans succeeded in gaining a footing on the near slopes of one of the forts. Its larger guns could not be depressed to reach them. Victory seemed within their grasp. But streams of bullets from machine-guns were suddenly played upon their ranks. They retired in disorder. The spectacle from the forts of attacks such as these moved the pity of the Belgians themselves. The smoke of the guns was soon carried away by the wind. Wounded Germans were observed struggling to release themselves from their dead comrades. So high in some parts became the barricade of the slain and injured that the fire of the defenders was in danger of being masked. The Germans did, indeed, in some cases make use of this human barricade to creep closer. At points where they came within 50 yards of the trenches the Belgians did not hesitate to rush out to attack them with the bayonet. One man is said to have dashed forward alone, and to have returned in safety after killing four of the enemy. All assaults were successfully repulsed. But the defenders were hard pressed. The firing line became so lengthened that Lemans had no alternative but to throw almost all his available troops into the fighting. During the morning, aircraft, both Belgian and German, eager to display their capabilities, hummed continually to and fro. Men who, in time of peace, would have fraternized as fellow adventurers in a new sphere of science, had in war become intent on one another's destruction. A Zeppelin appeared in the distance, but drew off. Belgian aeroplanes were notably successful. One airman, subjected to a fusillade of shots as he flew over the enemy's lines, remarked coolly on landing in safety, 'How badly these Germans shoot!' A German machine

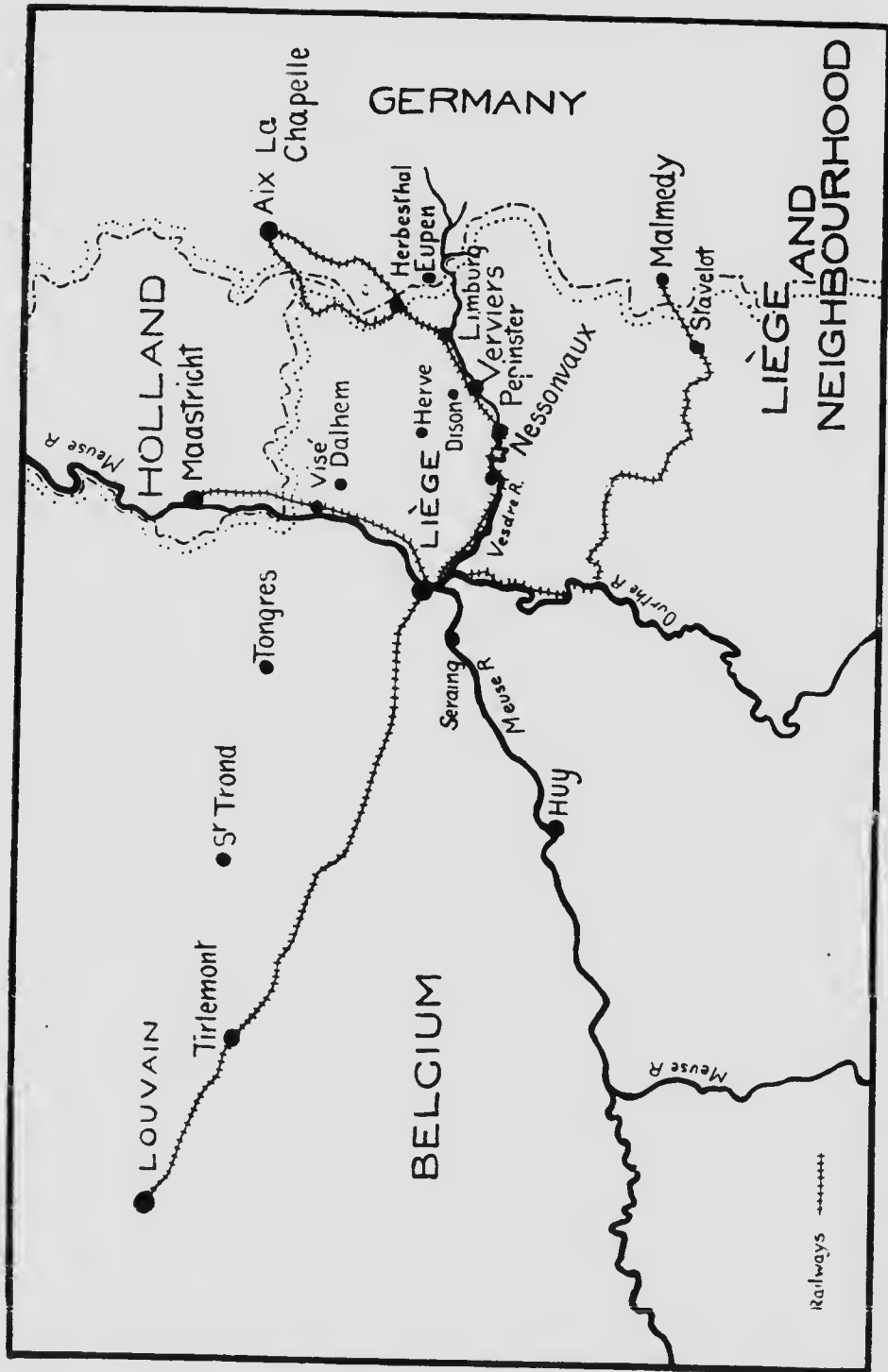
was shot down near Argenteau. Another was inadvertently brought down by the Germans themselves. It was not easy, indeed, although the German Taubes bore a mark in black resembling the Iron Cross of Prussia, to distinguish between friend and enemy. Below, guns thundered without ceasing, and the drone of air-machines swelled the uproar. To the airmen above, deafened with the familiar sound of their engines, the battle-field was completely silent.

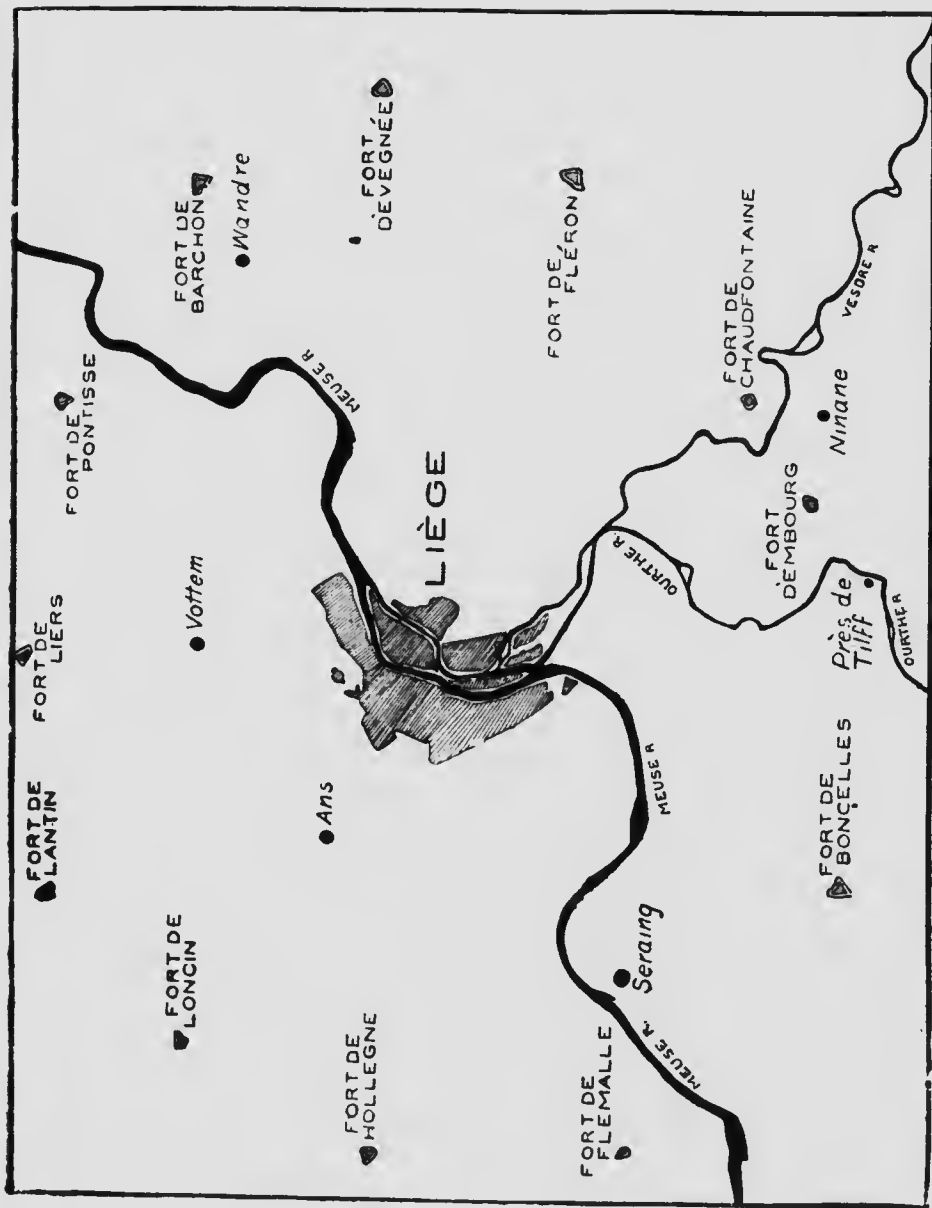
General Leman and his staff spent part of the day in council of war at the military head-quarters in the city. A review of events and of the present position did not present unsatisfactory features. It was, indeed, no small matter to have repulsed with untried troops the first onslaught of what was reputed to be the finest fighting machine ever evolved. So far they had done well. The Germans were at a standstill. All their efforts to break the line were being checked. They could not cross the Meuse in force. But how long could the defence be sustained? Could the Belgians hold out till relieved by the French? Much depended upon whether the enemy were successful in getting across the Meuse in large numbers. If so, it would become necessary for the field troops to retire before surrounded. The city would have to be abandoned. The forts, amply garrisoned and provisioned, must resist to the last and embarrass the German advance. There was no need yet to think of retiring. But preparations, in case it became necessary, should be made. Meanwhile, the city must be kept calm. Business was at a standstill. The populace were very agitated. Trains leaving the city were stormed. The citizens as yet knew little of what was happening in the firing line, and many contradictory reports were abroad. It

was, indeed, believed by many that some of the forts had been silenced. Spy-hunting had been in progress. The city was undoubtedly infested by spies. It might be possible to turn the fact to account. By a cunning ruse Uhlan patrols might be lured, in the hope of capturing Leman himself, into the suburbs, and there trapped. The wildest rumours also were current among the people of help at hand. It was realized that the journey by rail from the French frontier could be done in three hours, from Paris in five. Both French and British troops were reported to be approaching the city. The streets became filled with joyous crowds, who eagerly bought up the little tricolour flags opportunely vended by hawkers. The excitement was intense. It seemed, indeed, on the whole desirable that hope should be kept high. Leman and his officers were suddenly interrupted by a violent hubbub without. Loud cries could be heard. The General, followed by his staff, rushed anxiously outside. Had the Germans broken through? Shouts greeted his appearance. Leman observed eight soldiers, in some foreign uniform, hastening towards him. He scanned them in amazement. Major Marehand, one of his staff, sensed danger. A fusillade of revolver shots was suddenly fired by the strangers. Marehand had thrown himself in front of the General, and fell, mortally wounded. 'Give me a revolver quickly,' cried Leman. But he was almost alone. A staff-officer, a man of Herculean build, shouted to him not to expose himself, and lifted him up over the wall of an adjacent foundry. He then swung himself over. Their assailants attempted to follow. Leman and his companion were drawn up through the windows of a neighbouring dwelling. But by this time Belgian officers and gendarmes, dashing

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MAPS





LIÈGE AND ITS FORTS

out to the General's help, had engaged the Germans in a desperate scuffle. An officer and two gendarmes were killed. But all the raiders were finally accounted for.¹

While these stirring events were taking place in the city, desperate attempts were being made by the Germans to cross the Meuse near Visé. The guns of Pontisse and Barchon covered the river-banks for some distance. Belgian cavalry and artillery were guarding the west bank between the forts and the Dutch frontier. The enemy's pontoon bridges were destroyed as soon as built. A favourite method of the Belgians was to wait until the structure was almost completed before wrecking it. This had been tried very successfully the day before at the ford of Lixhe. In some cases, indeed, the ordinary bridges had been left standing, and were carefully covered by concealed artillery and infantry. German columns were allowed to defile on to their structures. Shot and shell were then suddenly rained down. The bridge columns gave way. Horses and men were precipitated into the water, and the dead became massed between the parapets. The Germans, however, did not press their attack on the banks of the Meuse in sufficient strength or with sufficient skill. Some parties were, indeed, driven by the Belgians over the Dutch frontier. All attempts to cross the river were frustrated.

During the day the attack upon the forts was pressed stubbornly. Belgian outposts and cavalry patrols kept continual watch in the wooded ground in front of the defences to give warning whenever the enemy approached. At some points Uhlans made determined efforts to penetrate the line. Fierce encounters ensued

¹ Several versions are given of the attack upon Leman's life: as far as can be judged, the above account is substantially trustworthy.

between hostile cavalry. Near Fléron a squadron of Belgian lanciers, about 150 strong, fell upon 500 of the enemy. The trampling of the horses, the jingling of the accoutrements, the cries of men and beasts, the flashing lances, the waving pennants, made up a sight and sound not the least splendid, though becoming rare under modern conditions, in warfare. The Belgians, despite the odds, scattered the hostile squadrons with great slaughter. But they themselves lost their captain, and were cut up very severely.

Night approached. The Belgians were weary. They had been fighting intermittently for many hours. Little relief from trench work was possible. The numerical superiority of the Germans enabled them constantly to renew their firing line. A bright moon came out. The searchlights were brought into play. For twenty-four hours fierce fighting had been in progress. But the position was substantially the same.

The night passed without serious event. Every few minutes, indeed, the crash of a heavy gun and its responding roll disturbed the silence. At some points night attacks were delivered, but successfully repelled. Towards dawn, rain began to fall. August 6 opened, dreary and windy. The soldiers were soaked to the skin, and fatigued by long duty. At about seven o'clock two aeroplanes, clearly visible against the low clouds, were observed above the Belgian lines. Fire was opened upon them both by the Germans and by the forts. The machines rocked dangerously in eddies caused by exploding shells. They were, however, piloted by Belgians, and flew off safely westwards into the country. During the day, as previously, the Belgian lines were constantly bombarded and assailed. The gloomy weather seemed to make the cannonade more sullen. The towns-

men of Liège, listening anxiously from their cellars, could hear, between short intervals of silence, the boom of guns, the rattle of rifle-shots, sometimes singly, often in a burst. The Liégeois were rapidly accustoming themselves to their novel conditions. Whenever a shell screamed towards the city a warning bell signalled danger, and prompted a rush to cellars. Every now and then, however, a shell would fall amid the houses and explode. The screams of the injured, the shrill cries of alarmed women and children, the shattered and sometimes burning dwellings, were remembered with horror by the survivors of the siege. Fabrications as to forthcoming relief continued to be circulated and believed. A British force was said to have been seen at Ans, only a mile away, and would shortly arrive by rail. The credulous who hastened to the railway station returned after a long wait disappointed and disheartened. Temporary panics were caused by two parties of Uhlans who had, by design, penetrated to the suburbs in quest of General Leman. It could be guessed, from the reception they received, that they had been expected. Not a man escaped. One detachment was all shot down, and the other all captured. But, in general, the city grew calmer. Old men began to recall the days when they had heard afar the cannonade of Sedan. An examination for the university degree, arranged for this day, was proceeded with. When German prisoners were brought through the streets, even ladies ventured to examine curiously, but without emotion, the conquered enemy. It is said that Lieutenant von Förstner, of Zabern notoriety, was one of the first to be taken. Intense enthusiasm and hope were everywhere manifested at the valiant conduct of the troops in the trenches. There was still some uncertainty as to what had happened.

But it was known that Belgium had reason to be proud of her soldiers. Every one was anxious to be doing something to help. Large numbers of young men were enrolled in the Army and hastily taken off to Antwerp for a six-weeks' training. Many older citizens joined the Garde Civique, and were employed in preserving order, in guarding prisoners, and points of military importance. Some of the Garde, however, took part in the actual fighting. During the day a detachment was assailed near Bonnelles. The encounter that followed ended in the total discomfiture of the Germans. The enemy had, indeed, lost much of the buoyant enthusiasm in which they had opened the campaign. Their casualties had been terribly severe: some battalions had only a third of their officers left. Many of the wounded were dying in the open fields for lack of attention. Great relief, therefore, was felt when it became known that their commander had asked for an armistice.

Von Emmich had, meanwhile, been reinforced by the 9th Army Corps. They came up on the morning of August 6, and were badly needed. Von Emmich himself could not but be bitterly mortified at his unexpected check before Liège. Not only were his own plans upset, but the calculations of his Emperor and of the Army Staff at Berlin were in danger. He had hoped to earn the praises of his country. But what could he expect now but her reproaches? Repeated failure, disappointed anticipation, immense losses, had demoralized his men. Delay had disorganized his commissariat. He had counted on feeding upon the produce of Belgium. But the way to that source was blocked. The territory he had already occupied, even if the Belgians had not driven off most of the cattle, was too small to support his army. The vast supplies of bread that all the bakers

of Verviers were turning out, under military direction, were inadequate. Prisoners taken by the Belgians complained of ravenous hunger and thirst. It was told how, on the morning before, August 5, the men were vastly chagrined only to receive, when looking forward to ample rations of drink and food, a small piece of sausage. Von Emmich had asked for an armistice of twenty-four hours in which to bury the dead. That period would enable him to reorganize his forces. Strong reinforcements also were on the way. He had already another army corps, 40,000 strong, at his disposal. A great effort to cross the Meuse must immediately be made. Undoubtedly the clue to victory lay there. The city must be enveloped. The Belgians, though they had resisted so well the attack from the front, could hardly be expected to cope with a simultaneous attack from the rear. Von Emmich, despite his mortification, could not, indeed, resist admiration at the valour of the defence. He was, moreover, acquainted with General Leman, whom he had met on manoeuvres the previous year. He could have wished that his unfortunate Uhlans had effected the Belgian leader's capture. Leman's answer to his request was brought to him. The armistice was refused.

Stirring events had, meanwhile, been taking place, during the morning and afternoon of Thursday, August 6, in the firing line. About half past eleven the enemy, under cover of artillery, crept up towards Barchon. The Belgians reserved their fire. The Germans, when within close range, drew together for the final onset. At a concerted signal the Belgians loosed upon them a hail of shrapnel and of bullets. The enemy were swept back with terrible slaughter, and abandoned seven machine-guns. At another point, where the defenders were

holding the stately Château de Langres against great odds, the Belgian commander tried a ruse. Quantities of explosives were carried within: a fuse was prepared. The Belgians made a show of resistance before quietly evacuating the building. A large body of Germans rushed in triumphantly, and commenced to ransack the rooms. The Belgians, waiting with nerves on edge at a safe distance, were suddenly stunned by the crash of a deafening explosion. A great column of flame shot up, carrying in its wake masses of shattered masonry and timber. An incident of a similar nature occurred to the north of the city. Under Lemar's directions a field outside the Belgian lines had been skilfully mined. The General sent out a small detachment to take up a position just beyond this field. The Germans, as he had calculated, got in the rear of this force in order to cut it off. Electric wire connected the explosives to the defenders' lines. The current was switched on. A sheet of flame and smoke arose. The German force was annihilated. Trivial as they were, these successes contributed to raise the spirit of the Belgians. But more important operations were in progress on the banks of the Meuse north of Liège. At the end of the day it became evident that the Belgians could maintain their ground no longer.

Fighting had, indeed, opened propitiously in this quarter. A counter-attack, delivered by the Belgians from the heights near Wandre upon German outposts, had been attended with brilliant success. Many of the enemy had been cut off from their main body and forced to retire in disorder towards Visé. But around that town operations were in progress which augured ill for the Belgians. Great reinforcements of artillery and infantry had been hurried by the German General to

the river-banks. A crossing must be forced at all hazards. Batteries were placed so as to cover the engineering work. Large parties of Germans, working in little boats, were engaged in building pontoon bridges at different points. The fire from Pontisse and Barchon greatly hampered the operations. But the Belgian troops on the opposite bank were prevented by the German artillery from impeding effectually the enemy's crossing. The river-valley was low and flat, and afforded little cover. Large numbers were gradually passed over during the day. Horses were swum across. Cavalry took the field. Numerous bodies overran the surrounding district. One force was cut off and completely routed by Belgians, who took many prisoners. But by five o'clock in the gloomy and sultry afternoon the Germans had begun to spread out, and to advance southwards in the direction of Liège.

Leman, who had watched the movements he was powerless to prevent with dismay and sorrow, realized that all was over. He had to accept the inevitable. He had foreseen that, sooner or later, the Germans would make use of their superior numbers by enveloping the city. He had made plans in accordance. Delay would mean disaster to his field troops. He reluctantly gave orders for a general retirement. This was no easy operation. Large forces were ordered to continue throughout the evening to harass the advance of the Germans who had crossed the Meuse. Some German infantry who had reached Vottem, a village within the circle of forts, were surprised by the Belgians and hoisted the white flag. When the Belgians approached they were fired upon at close range. Numerous instances of treachery and inhumanity have been recorded, indeed, in the fighting at Liège. Germans in many cases fired

on doctors, on Red Cross ambulances and wagons, or marched into battle displaying Belgian flags and wearing Belgian cockades. The Liégeois watched with mingled emotions the retreat of their defenders westwards through the city. It was disappointing that the courageous resistance of the last two days should seem all to have been for nothing. The horses of the artillery trains and the cavalry squadrons were jaded and blood-stained. The infantry were tired out and footsore, but determined, since duty called them elsewhere, to escape capture by the Germans. During the evening and night the field troops were all withdrawn from the city, and marched off towards Louvain. A garrison of 250 men was left in each of the forts, all of which so far were in good condition. Leman decided to remain at his post. He could have retired with his army. He would, no doubt, have been received at Brussels with honour and enthusiasm. He might add to military renown already won in future operations. But better results, if less personally attractive, might be gained if he stayed to co-ordinate the defence of the forts, and to exercise moral influence upon the garrisons. From Loncin, which he took as his head-quarters, the long columns of the departing troops could be seen passing into the darkness. The retreat had been conducted without serious hitch. Some stragglers had, no doubt, been cut off. Minor street fighting, in which civilians had unfortunately taken a share, had occurred in parts where German cavalry had pressed forward. But the main Belgian army was in safety, and the enemy did not yet appear to be advancing. The twelve forts, calling to one another throughout the night in the rumble of their big guns, prepared doggedly to fight until the inevitable end.

The Germans, apparently, did not realize their success till some hours after the Belgians had evacuated the position. Perhaps the east frontal attack was not pressed home by the besiegers in the hope of restoring confidence to the besieged while the enveloping attack was progressing across the Meuse. The enemy could hardly anticipate, indeed, so sudden a retirement. But during the night and early morning large forces passed between the forts and entered the city. The Liégeois, rising from their slumbers, found the invaders within their gates, and guarding the principal points of advantage. One of the bridges, indeed, had been blown up the night before by the retreating Belgians. The railway tunnel had also been blocked. Kleyer, the burgo-master, had prepared the citizens for their fate the previous evening by a printed circular, outlining the laws of war with regard to the participation of civilians, and cautioning peaceful submission. Little panic was evinced. The German military authorities installed themselves in the Citadel and in the public buildings, and took over the administration of the city. Martial law was proclaimed. The Garde Civique were employed to keep order among their fellow countrymen. One hundred of the Garde, and later Kleyer, Bishop Rutten, and some principal citizens, were confined in the Citadel as hostages. The walls of the city were placarded with posters announcing that, if another shot was fired by the inhabitants upon the German troops, these hostages would be immediately executed. All weapons were ordered to be given up on penalty of death. So suspicious of a rising were the invaders that barricades were erected, machine-guns placed, and guards posted in many of the principal streets. Long columns began, during August 7, and continued for many days after-

wards, to file in endless procession through the town. They passed into the interior upon a mission more important and more arduous than the capture of Liège, which had been won only at great cost. Germany affected to see in the seizure of the city a brilliant military exploit and a propitious opening to the campaign. Boundless enthusiasm was everywhere manifested. At Hanover Fran von Emmich read the news aloud to the exulting populace. It was announced in Berlin by an *éclat-de-camp* sent out by the Kaiser to the crowds before the castle; and policemen on bicycles were dispatched to shout the joyful tidings along the *Unter den Linden*.

General Leman, meanwhile, had taken up his quarters in Fort Loncin. His army had got away safely and intact. Its adroit retreat had reserved it for future usefulness. He could turn to the next phase of the resistance conscious that his men and he had already rendered valuable service to their country and to their country's friends. The enemy's occupation of the city and advance over the Meuse had been delayed for over forty-eight hours. Even now a passage had been forced, the unbroken chain of forts could hinder the Germans from advancing except slowly and with difficulty. The days thus gained were of incalculable value for the completion of Belgium's mobilization, and to the allies who were coming to Belgium's aid. Leman saw in success already accomplished the inspiration of deeds that could yet be done. He must urge upon his fort commanders that they must struggle to the very last. They must harass the enemy's movements in every possible way. Pontoon bridges over the Meuse must be constantly destroyed by shell-fire. The forts had, indeed, an abundant supply of provisions, of water, and of ammunition. Little

material damage had so far been done to their structures. Leman would himself visit each fort daily, to bring news and instructions. The outer world was not entirely cut off. Under the protection of the guns of Lonein, light railway engines could still be run from the junction of Ans along the Brussels line. There seemed, indeed, little hope of relief. But the forts had so far proved able to resist the heaviest guns that the enemy had brought up. Belgium had spent much money, and had employed the greatest military engineer of the nineteenth century, upon their construction. They might be overcome by sheer weight. But they must not fall, other than as ruins, into the hands of the Germans.

Morning broke. The artillery remained silent. The Belgians in the forts could not doubt, from various signs, that the Germans were in the city. It remained to await vigilantly the enemy's next move. The day wore on, but without event. An occasional rifle-shot was the only sound of war. It was difficult to know what the enemy were doing. The combatants, indeed, needed rest badly. No doubt the Germans, like the Belgians, were resting. Night came. But silence still reigned.

This comparative calm lasted about three days. During that time the shots fired on either side were very few and intermittent. The Germans kept outside the range of the fort guns. Small parties approached, indeed, unmolested, to pick up their wounded. Gruesome stories are told of the cremation of their dead. Many corpses were said to have been pitched, under cover of darkness, into the Meuse. The total casualties were estimated at about 30,000. Aeroplanes were busy in the sky. Large forces of the enemy's cavalry seemed also to be scouring the country beyond the western forts. But this state of affairs could not

last long. The Germans had succeeded in occupying Liège, but they had so far gained little advantage from that success. Great armies would soon be hastening from all parts of Germany towards the Belgian frontier. But before they could advance across that frontier in any numbers or with any speed, the forts of Liège must be reduced. Poutisse and Barchon threatened the passage of the Meuse to the north of the city, Flémalle and Boucelles to the south. Embourg dominated the Ourthe valley for some miles. Fléron and Chandfontaine overlooked the railway approach from Germany. Loucin guarded the line from Liège to Brussels. It became obvious to the Belgians that a great effort would soon be made by the Germans to break up the obstacles that impeded their progress. Guns were placed upon the Citadel, and in other parts of the city. On Monday, August 10, the great artillery duel was renewed.

The first phase of the defence of Liège began on the evening of August 4, and ended on the evening of August 6. During an interval of three days no fighting took place. The final phase lasted from the 10th to the 18th. Throughout this latter period, over a week, the forts were incessantly bombarded and frequently stormed. In one desperate attack upon Flémalle, delivered early in the morning of August 10, no less than 800 of the enemy were killed, many of them caught in barbed-wire entanglements. On some days rain fell; on others the sun shone. But the guns roared almost without pause. To make any impression upon those masses of earth, of stone, and of iron, the targets for innumerable shells, seemed at first impossible. The fort enpolas, revolving in wreaths of smoke, uttered thunder and darted lightning on all sides. Many outlying houses and farms were set ablaze by the Belgian guns.

Little clouds of smoke sprang constantly from the green hill-sides opposite, and covered the position of the German artillery. The forts were soon completely invested. Lemait visited each daily as long as possible. On one of his journeys he was injured in the leg by falling masonry. Undeterred, he took to using a motor-car. When the forts were each surrounded, however, he was confined to Loncin, where he prepared for a final stand.

One by one, as the days passed, the forts fell. The first and most persistent attacks were made on Fléron, Flémalle, Embourg, and Chaudfontaine. The guns of Embourg were, indeed, notably well served. Three motor-cars, driven by German officers along the Tilff road, were smashed by shells, one being hurled below into the Ourthe. Chaudfontaine also showed considerable accuracy. A detachment of the enemy, screening themselves behind a forage cart, was ascending a slope leading to Ninave, where German guns had been placed, when several shells, bursting in the cart, killed the whole party. Chaudfontaine, however, was soon after blown up. The Germans, after assailing the eastern forts, concentrated their fire upon the western, notably on Pontisse, Liers, and Lantin. Day succeeded day without the gain of any substantial success. The Germans realized that their artillery was inadequate. Unless the Belgian guns could be outranged and out-classed, there would be no end to this disheartening struggle. The forts were probably provisioned for months. It was, no doubt, with considerable impatience that the arrival of siege artillery was awaited.

Meanwhile, during the bombardment of the forts, a bombardment of the city itself was twice opened. This seemed, indeed, to afford some ground for a rumour

spread abroad that the Germans had threatened, if the forts were not surrendered, to shell the town. Few cases of civilian outbreaks seem to have taken place. The damage and the casualties, however, were not in either case severe. The inhabitants were prepared beforehand, and the troops in the city taken out of the danger zone. The Cathedral of St. Paul and the University building were partly demolished. Some of the streets were torn up and littered with wreckage. Otherwise than by these two outbreaks, the Germans appeared anxious to win the favour and to restore the confidence of the citizens. Few of the latter, indeed, would venture into the streets. It is said that, in a vain attempt to revive business, German soldiers were ordered by their officers to throng the food-stalls and the shops, while the Belgian authorities were forced to run the trams, which had ceased working, though no passengers appeared. The daily goose-step parade, however, attracted many spectators. The Liégeois gradually grew accustomed to the sight of German soldiers in their streets and cafés, drinking and playing cards, and to the sound of the guns, many placed in parts of the city itself, steadily bombarding the forts. As is usual in a city in a state of siege, the inhabitants looked upon themselves as the sole interest of the world. No news were forthcoming of the course of war outside. It was known that large forces of the enemy had passed through the city and into Belgium. Wild rumours were rife. Reports such as 'Berlin on fire', 'Great German disaster', picked up by railwaymen at Ans, were gloated over. More truthful accounts, however, soon got abroad regarding the behaviour of German troops in neighbouring villages, culminating in the burning of Visé.

It is recorded that, in the Franco-Prussian campaigns of 1870, an Alsatian named Hauff killed two Germans who were plundering his farm. He was seized and shot immediately. His wife found her little son crying over his father's body. 'Mamma,' said the boy, 'when I grow up I will shoot the Germans who killed Daddy.' The widow fled from the place and settled near Visé. Her son in due course grew to manhood, became a farmer, and married. He had two sons. One day he learned that the Germans were invading the country, to intimidate the Belgians. At length a party of Germans arrived outside his farm. Hatred blazed in Hauff's eyes as he took his rifle in his hand. There was a sharp report, and a German fell. The farmer was dragged outside, and placed against a wall. His last moments were spent in the bitterest anguish. His two sons were seized and placed beside him. All three were immediately executed. This occurrence was but a beginning. Several shots were fired at Visé on the evening of August 15. It is alleged that these were fired by drunken Germans at their own officers. The destruction of the town was begun during the night. It was almost entirely burnt. From all over the district, indeed, came tales of wanton and indiscriminate retribution wherever the laws of war were said to have been transgressed, perhaps unwittingly, by civilians. A splendid harvest had been expected. Many fields of wheat, already cut and placed in 'stooks', lay rotting for want of attention. Days afterwards observers were shocked at the desolate aspect of the countryside. In the village of Herve, famous throughout Belgium for its flavoured cheeses, 19 houses remained out of about 500. Corpses were strewn everywhere: a smell of burning pervaded the

atmosphere. The drastic nature of the reprisals could be estimated from notices such as 'Spare us!' 'We are innocent!' displayed upon houses still standing. The high roads around Liège were torn up at intervals of about forty yards. In rare cases, sights such as children playing innocently in pretty gardens, where houses had escaped demolition, recalled, amid the prevailing havoc, the happy days of peace. There was much to remind one of war. Long German columns continually passed through the district. Soon the heavier artillery began to arrive. One class of gun in particular might well arrest the attention of spectators. It was in four pieces, each drawn by three traction-engines. A thirteenth engine went on ahead to aid the ascent of hills. This gun was the new 16-inch siege howitzer. It had been constructed in secret, and was the largest piece in existence. A single shot was said to suffice to pierce the strongest steel armour. These guns were intended to batter Paris. Meanwhile, they were to be tested upon Liège.

The forts were still holding out stubbornly. A force of 30,000 of the enemy had been left for their reduction. They were shelled day and night. They were, indeed, proving a dangerous thorn in the enemy's side. They disconnected his lines of communication. They retarded the passage of troops and transport wagons. Pontoon bridges especially were objects of the attention of the fort artillery. One Belgian gun was said to have destroyed no less than ten. But on August 13 and 14 the German heavy artillery began to arrive. It was brought into action. Fort Boncelles was one of the first to receive the fire. Bombardment was opened at six o'clock on August 14, and continued for two hours. The guns were so placed that the garrison

could neither see nor fire at them. At eight o'clock two German officers approached, and called upon the fort to surrender. Guns still more colossal than those already used, they said, would render its destruction instantaneous. The Belgian commander replied that honour forbade surrender. His men burst into a cheer. The Germans returned, and the bombardment was continued. The fort began to feel the effects. The chimney of the engine-house fell in ; part of the works caught fire ; the electric light went out ; suffocating fumes filled the galleries. Resistance was maintained throughout the day and night. But at six o'clock next morning the concrete chambers which held the guns began to give way. Several of the cupolas turned no more. Two hours later a shell pierced the roof and burst inside the fort. Several men were wounded. Further resistance seemed useless, and it was decided to surrender. Three white flags were hoisted. While the Germans were approaching the Belgians disabled their guns and rifles and destroyed their ammunition. The enemy took possession of the fort. The prisoners, looking back as they were marched off, could see nothing but a heap of ruins.

Similar destruction gradually overtook the remaining forts. Their fabrics crumbled under the constant impact of heavy shells. Their garrisons, forced to retire into the small chambers within the central concrete blocks, had to inhale oxygen to keep themselves alive. Many were, indeed, at last asphyxiated. Storming parties could no longer be resisted by machine-guns. The strongest of the forts, Loncin, the quarters of General Leman, succumbed in turn. It was shelled by the heavier German guns at a distance of seven miles. The batteries upon the Citadel of Liège were

also turned upon it. It is asserted that, during twenty-six hours of bombardment, shells were rained upon the works at the rate of six a minute. The incessant concussions and explosions at last shattered the structure to ruins. Lema saw that the end was inevitable. He destroyed all his plans, maps, and papers. The three remaining guns were disabled, and the ammunition kept beside them exploded. He had about one hundred men left. These he led out of Loncin in a daring effort to reach another fort. But they were seen by the enemy, and had to abandon the attempt. A German storming party rushed forward to a final assault. But suddenly a shell tore through the battered masonry, and exploded in the main magazine. The fort blew up. There was a terrific crash. Huge masses of concrete were hurled high into the air. An immense cloud of dust and fumes arose. When it had cleared away the Germans advanced. The ground was strewn with the bodies of their storming party. A Belgian corporal with a shattered arm raised his rifle and started to fire at them as they approached. Most of the garrison were buried under the ruins. Lema lay, white and still, pinned beneath a massive beam. He was drawn from his dangerous position, half suffocated by fumes, by some of his men. 'Respectez le général. Il est mort,' cried a soldier as the Germans came up. He was borne gently away to a trench, where a German officer gave him drink. He came to his senses and looked round. 'The men fought valiantly,' he said. 'Put it in your dispatches that I was unconscious.' He was placed in an ambulance, and carried into Liège. Shortly afterwards, when sufficiently recovered, he was brought before Von Emmich. The two commanders saluted. 'General,' said the German, holding out his hand,

'you have gallantly and nobly held your forts.' 'I thank you,' Leman replied: 'our troops have lived up to their reputation. War is not like manœuvres,' he added, with a smile. He unbuckled his sword, and tendered it to the victor. Von Emmich bowed. 'No,' he said, 'keep it. To have crossed swords with you has been an honour.' A tear sparkled in the Belgian's eye.¹

Nothing more remains to be told. The forts were not built to resist the pounding of artillery as heavy as that brought against them. They had been constructed when the typical siege gun was the 6-inch howitzer. They had to contend with artillery the calibres of which ranged as high as 16 inches. Each was reduced in turn. The last fell on August 17 or 18.

Thus ended the memorable stand of Liège. The struggle was watched with the intensest interest and emotion by the whole of the civilized world. British statesmen paid tributes to the gallant city. France conferred upon it the Cross of the Legion of Honour. The Tsar of Russia expressed his admiration in a message to the Belgian King. Events which followed proved the importance of the time lost to the Germans before Liège. British troops were enabled, reaching Mons not an hour too soon, to oppose a second bulwark to the advancing tide. The strategic value of the defence was hardly greater than its moral effect. The spell of 1870 was broken. German arms were looked upon as invincible no more. The story is full of human interest and dramatic incident. The struggle brought out many noble sentiments. It stirred many brutal passions.

¹ This incident is taken from the narrative of a German officer, published in the press. There is no reason to believe it is not substantially accurate.

It indicated, as the opening chapter in the greatest and most modern of wars, some tendencies of the impending conflict. Science was to be the weapon. Method of mind, weight of metal, ingenuity of destructive device, were to decide the issue. Most of the ancient glamour of battle was gone. But war, maturing as mankind matured, still showed, as human nature showed, both flashes of its youthful chivalry, and traces of its primitive barbarity. Human passions and emotions, human ambitions and ideals, were again at open strife. Lasting peace was the ultimate quest. Christian principle was the issue.

