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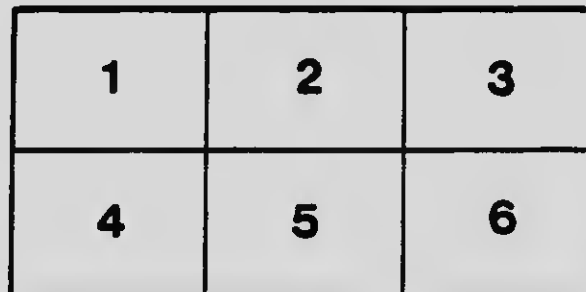
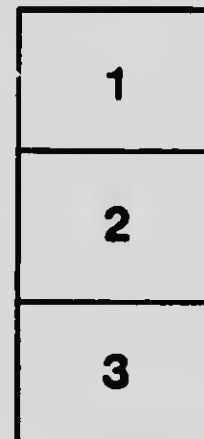
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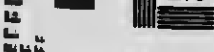
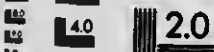
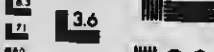
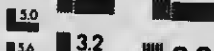
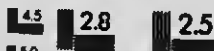
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TWO YEARS OF WAR

BY

THE RIGHT HON.

SIR GILBERT PARKER, BART.

Interview with the Associated Press
of the United States of America.

LONDON :

BURRUP, MATHIESON & SPRAGUE, Ltd.,
114, SOUTHWARK STREET, S.E.

1916.

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Parker, Gilbert. 10-

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TWO YEARS OF WAR.

You ask me to make a statement upon the two years of war, in which Britain, with her allies, France, Russia, Italy, Belgium, Portugal, Serbia and Montenegro, has been engaged.

Three months ago the task would have been far more difficult than it is to-day. Since then Great Britain and France have moved forward on their fronts, and with tremendous effect—but of that later. Also, during that time Russia has moved heavily upon the troops of the Central Empires, has driven in, league by league, the Austrian troops, has captured sector upon sector, city upon city in the regions where Austria was dominant, and has made prisoners of 300,000 men.

Over in Asia Minor, the field of conquest has been enlarged and developed. Erzerum and Erzingan have been captured and other centres of Turkish authority have been taken. The renowned Von Hindenburg, up in the Riga district, has been driven back mile upon mile, and Russian

prowess has proved itself beyond question. Russian generals like Brussiloff and Grand Duke Nicholas have re-established the Russian positions, weakened at the beginning of the war through lack of munitions.*

Looking back, one is forced to wonder how Germany was stayed in her march of conquest. According to every rule, she should have been in Paris at the time she herself appointed, early in the autumn of 1914. She came very near it. What stopped her? She had left out of her calculation the strategical skill which belongs by nature to the French army, the new French army from behind Paris, and "the contemptible little British army."

It is a remarkable thing that on the Western front the only gains of Germany were achieved in the first few weeks of the war. Those gains were of immense strategical value to her. They included the mining and industrial districts of France and nearly the whole of Belgium, from which she has steadily drawn practical support and advantage and supplies.

*Since this interview was given, Rumania has entered the war on the side of the Allies.

The wonder is not that the Allies have done so well, but that, with all her preparations and her perfect armament, Germany and her obedient colleagues, Austria and Turkey and Bulgaria, have done so badly.

Apparently at the beginning of the war everything was in their hands, everything except one — the British Navy. If Germany could have mastered that as she mastered Belgium and a goodly portion of France, the war long since would have been over; France would have been a third-rate power under practical German control; Russia would have been driven back into her steppes and plains, once more the slave of German influence and control, and the British Empire, as we know it, would have become a thing of the past.

What the British Navy did was to sweep German merchant commerce from the seas, prevent Germany from trading with the rest of the world except by crooked methods, bottle up her fleet to uselessness, drive her South Atlantic fleet to the bottom of the sea, and throttle and

choke German export to an extent that great cities like Hamburg have lost the hum of their activity; and, outside the Baltic Sea, there is no stir of German commerce save in a freakish enterprise like that of the *Deutschland*. Those, however, who count the work of the *Deutschland* as extraordinary should remember that it is not original, since a considerable number of British submarines have crossed the Atlantic during the last year safely and surely. It is not strange that the *Deutschland* accomplished its feat. It will be very strange, however, if that feat is repeated by many sister submarines. German foreign commerce cannot be rehabilitated by the activities of submarines. Since the battle of Jutland it can be safely and surely said that the seas are still controlled overwhelmingly by the British fleet. The German fleet came out and then fled to cover again after a stiff fight.

BRITAIN READY TO HELP AT VERDUN.

But let us now take the field of battle on the Western front. For a whole year or more critics in the United States have

continuously asked why was it Great Britain, which had recruited between three and four millions of men, should be doing nothing on the Western front. They complained that France was left alone at Verdun and elsewhere. They did not realize that France knew she had at her disposal at any moment the British troops, which were holding their own line of the front and steadily extending it. They did not remember that at the beginning of the war Great Britain was armed on a basis of a mere handful of men; that all the machinery of equipment was upon a basis of the handful, and that having men—a million or two millions—she still could not equip them because she had not factories or munitions except upon the scale of the handful.

Men had to be recruited, fed, uniformed, equipped; artillery had to be developed and extended beyond all experience of the past. Rifles had to be supplied. And the one reason why there was such delay in making a move on the Western front by the British was lack of equipment. The push forward at Loos was not final and

effective because there were not sufficient munitions.

But what is the condition of affairs to-day? There are enough munitions; because big men have given their brains and skill to the task of organization; because the manual workers of Britain have roused themselves to a complete sense of duty; because they have given up trades union regulations for the period of the war; because, without murmuring, they have thrown up their holidays; because hundreds and thousands of women have joined the munitions works or have entered into fields of occupation formerly monopolized by men—such as conducting cars on tramlines, driving vans, working upon farms, clerking in offices, doing men's work in scores of small trades; because all Britain is alive to the terrible significance of the world fight, and has given its best blood, mind, strength and craft to the nation's cause.

In spite of criticism and complaint, Britain would not and did not move on the Western front until she was ready. And she was not ready until she could

dominate, as she has done, the German artillery by a greater weight of metal; until, making a move forward over the whole of her line, with France moving forward on the whole of her line, she could make good her successes, mile by mile, and steadily and surely diminish the capacity of resistance upon the part of Germany. This she has done.

What is the position to-day? Every one of the Allies has moved forward and at the same time, and every one has succeeded. Italy, like Russia, France and Britain elsewhere, has succeeded in her field against Austria. Germany cannot put forward her men to help Austria. Austria is harassed by Italy and by Russia. Germany is harassed and hammered by Britain, Russia, France and Belgium. There is no rest for Germany anywhere. She cannot shift her troops from front to front, as she did in the early days of the war, smashing one enemy here and then whisking her troops over to smash another enemy there.

Mistakes? The Allies no doubt made mistakes. But Britain has made no such

mistakes as have been made by Germany, all of whose plans have gone awry. Britain was expected to and promised to furnish 150,000 men for the protection of Belgium in case of a European war—and that was all. She has, in fact, provided an army and navy personnel of nearly five million men and has trebled the personnel of her fleet. Could any other nation in the world furnish more than four million men on a voluntary basis, as Great Britain has done ?

Americans should understand that it is not alone in the field of battle that Great Britain has proved her capacity for organization. She has proved it in the civil field ; she has nationalized the railways of the country and has paid the regular dividends ; she secured the sugar crop of the world at the very beginning of the war, through which sugar is cheaper to-day in Great Britain than it is in the United States, and at the same time has got out of it a revenue of nearly thirty-four million dollars.

EXAMPLES OF ORGANIZATION.

She rescued the British people from being done by meat trusts by seizing all ships which could carry chilled meat, and, having the ships, she could get her meat on fair terms and has done so—50,000 tons a month for Great Britain and France and 10,000 tons for Italy. She has also supplied France with steel, boots, shoes and uniforms. She has made coal mining a public military service, and by act of Parliament has fixed the profit of the coal mines, and she supplies the British, French and Italian navies with coal.

She has organized the purchase of wheat by a small committee, which also buys and ships wheat and oats, fodder, etc., for Italy. She has bought up the fish supply of Norway, and very lately bought up, against German intrigue, the great bulk of food exports of Holland.

She has put a five shilling (\$1.25) income tax which has been paid without protest by the mass of the English people. She has drawn upon her financial

resources till she has loaned her Allies and her overseas Dominions £450,000,000 (\$2,250,000,000), and she has taken as high as 80 per cent. of the war profits of the great manufacturing firms.

The great organization of Great Britain is not ornate or spectacular, but there never was a time when all the people of the country were so occupied in national things ; when so many have given themselves up, without pay or reward, to doing national work. Her power of organization is proved most thoroughly by the work of the Ministry of Munitions, which has increased the three government munition factories before the war to 4,000 establishments, with two million workers ; has arranged canteens for 500,000 persons, and has erected 20 national workshops with, in one case, a population of 50,000 persons.

As for manufacture, in a fortnight as many heavy shells can be made as were made in the first year of the war. Great Britain has shown her ancient skill for organization in a new and successful light.

