

THE Charlottetown Guardian

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THE WAR

The war news of the past week has been somewhat complicated by the mixing up of German reports and the "opinions" of correspondents, more or less—generally less—reliable, with the official reports. One thing should be borne definitely in mind, that no reliance whatever should be placed upon any report emanating from Germany. The Germans, officially and privately, collectively and individually, have developed the faculty of lying to a degree that places Ananias and Saphira in the obsolete class.

German official reports tell of destructive air raids on Dover, but say nothing of the comparatively harmless raid on the east coast of England which occurred on the same day as the alleged raid on Dover. It is safe to assume, therefore, that the German aviators lost their reckoning and did not know where they dropped their bombs. They did not, however, lose the use of their ruling passion, misrepresentation; hence the tale of destruction.

German official reports gave a glowing account of the victory by the Turks over the British expedition sent to the relief of the British garrison at Kut-el-Amara, in Mesopotamia. They reported that 3,000 British dead were left on the field after a six hours' battle.

The British report, as sent in by Sir Percy Lake, who commanded the relief expedition, says that General Aylmer attacked the Turkish position at Essen; that fierce fighting took place and continued throughout the day with varying success; that the weather was atrocious, a downpour of rain rendering movement of troops extremely difficult. On the following day, Saturday, it was impossible, owing to the nature of the ground, to renew the attack and General Aylmer took up a position 1,300 yards from the trenches. General Townshend reports from Kut-el-Amara that he has sufficient supplies and that his troops have not been further engaged. The position in Mesopotamia, then, although difficult, is well in hand and the garrison at Kut-el-Amara safe.

Our telegrams of a day or two ago gave the German version of affairs in Montenegro, wherein it was stated that the Montenegrins received the Germans and Austrians in a most friendly spirit, were glad to see them coming and laid down their arms even before their supposed enemies put in an appearance. Our despatches of yesterday and to-day give a vastly different version of the situation. The Montenegrins have not laid down their arms—they are still fighting desperately, and even our latest German despatches admit that "some difficulty has been experienced in the matter of disarming the Montenegrins."

That the Austro-Germans have had successes in Montenegro is not denied, but the country is by no means yet a province of Germany.

The defeat of the Turks at Erzerum by the Russians as told in our despatches yesterday was a crippling one for the Turks and a marked advance by the Russians, who have now driven the enemy back from the Caucasus front. That the Russians are coming is certain.

Probably for want of more authentic and more definite information some of the correspondents, this time an American, has promulgated a new story of an intended attack by a new German fleet armed with seventeen-inch guns on the British Navy. Exaggerated descriptions of the powerful and deadly armament of this phantom German fleet are given with all the apparent seriousness of truth. As to the foundation for the report we know nothing, but we do know that the British fleet, which has waited seventeen months for the German fleet to come out in the open, will give the boches a very warm welcome if they come. The regrettable thing is that they are not likely to come.

There has been a marked renewal of air warfare within the past two weeks, our despatches on one occasion telling of nineteen air duels in one day. The British press tells of a new German air machine, the Fokker, which is expected to revolutionise air warfare. The Daily Mail's correspondent at British headquarters says: "The events of the past few weeks make it clear that we have reached a new stage in aerial warfare. A certain change has occurred with the new year. Its herald is the Fokker. This machine is not, as many think, always under control, hovering aloft, to descend like a plummet on any encroacher. The trouble is it can rise so fast as to be able to tower above an enemy after he is sighted. The perfecting of this fast fighting plane, which can manoeuvre easily and quickly for bow end shooting, has not given the enemy the initiative, but it has unquestionably arrested our almost insolent command of the air. The enemy's defensive has improved. That is the position. The

defence has been taken out of the hands of the gunner and put into those of the flier. The airman's chief danger is now in the air, not on the ground. At the beginning of the war no one dreamed of such a development. It has come with an automatically stable machine, which enables a single pilot to manage a gun as easily as if in a trench."

And Britain's answer to the German Fokker is given by Reuter's correspondent, also at British headquarters in France, who describes a visit he made to the aerial headquarters. He says that the Germans must be well aware that Great Britain possesses a battle plane which is a very effective answer to the German Fokker machine, although only a limited number of them is yet in actual service. The correspondent describes a single day's fighting against the Fokker machine in illustrating the effective manner in which the British are able to deal with these German aircraft which, he says, although extremely valuable as fighting machines, are believed to have a radius of only 150 miles.

GOD AND THE WAR

A Scottish writer by the name of Forson, in the British Journal, discussing the question, "Is God in this war?" says perhaps the best way to answer the question is to start by asking another question, namely, "Is God ever in any war?" and then he continues:

"Was God, for example, in the American Civil War? The great historian, Mommsen, said of the greatest conflict in the annals of history. The battlefield was a thousand miles in length; there were two million men in arms; and more than two thousand battles were fought. The greatest battle was waged at Gettysburg, when 90,000 men in blue stood over against 50,000 men in grey; the battle lasted three days, fifty thousand men were left upon the battlefield.

"Every hillside in the South was billowy with the graves of its dead; an army of crippled heroes came home, and another army of widows and orphans went comfortless through the land. Was God in that war? Look at the main issues involved—nothing less than the slave question; it was a war to vindicate the worth of the individual freedom. Was God in the American Civil War? How could it be otherwise in a war that produced such beneficent results to the whole human race as the emancipation of the slave?"

"Charles Martel broke once and for ever the power of the Saracens at Poitiers. Was God in that war? Surely. But for the victory of Martel, it has been truly said, Mohammedan doctors might have been teaching the Koran in Oxford to-day.

"But could God not attain His end by other means if He is omnipotent? The same question has been asked many times before, and will be asked many times in days to come. It arises from a wrong conception of God. As long as people think of God as an individual, as a Being separate and distinct from the universe, as a kind of invisible king, people will continue to ask this question and all manner of doubts will be bred in the mind as to the Divine character.

"The real question, however, is not whether or not God could attain His end by other means than war. The real question is, after all, the nature of life itself. We ask, Why all this sacrifice of precious life? Because sacrifice is the law of life. What does this mean? It means that there can be no progress without sacrifice. If you wish the better you have to sacrifice the good; if you wish the best you have to sacrifice the better. You sacrifice one thing when you choose another. Every choice of one thing involves the sacrifice of something else.

"If life is to be continued on the upward direction, then the lower has to be sacrificed. If life is not to be continued in the upward direction then the higher has to be sacrificed for the sake of the lower. That is the law of the good, or the law of God, or the law of life. The law of sacrifice is not something arbitrarily imposed upon us by someone outside of life; it is inherent in the nature of life itself:

"All through life I see a cross
"Where Sons of God yield up their breath;
"There is no gain except by loss,
"There is no life except by death.

"Wherever sacrifice is made for the higher there God is. God is in the war, and behind it, and Britain is the right arm of omnipotence in the world at this moment. She is the great Messiah nation of the modern world, giving her life for the life of the world, and her greatest heritage to coming generations will be her moral passion and her spiritual idealism."

THE POLITICAL TRUCE

The "truce" does not appear to be very rigidly observed in Ottawa, where some of the most notorious of the Liberal agitators are bespattering the whole dominion with mud in the hope that some of it may fall on the Government. Mr Pugsley and Mr F. B. Carvell, both of New Brunswick and neither of them noted for any superabundance of patriotic or other strictly honourable characteristics, have had their say in Parliament, and their virtuous indignation has been heaped on all the real and imaginary dishonesties of the whole dominion except their own. Mr Carvell's five hours of mud throwing was briefly reported in yesterday's Ottawa despatches in the Guardian. This morning we publish the reply of the Ministers who are in a position to know whereof they speak. There are a few men in Canada whom, in a time of national disturbance like the present, Canada could well spare. It is most regrettable that for the sake of party advantage a nation should have its name dragged through the mire of political controversy such as has been precipitated by Mr Pugsley and Mr Carvell.

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