

The German Debacle In the Marne Salient

By HILAIRE BELLOC

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LONDON, July 27.—To understand what is going on as a sequel to the allied victory of July 18 one must appreciate that the enemy is trying to "extirpate" himself. We must understand this word extirpate. Take an acre not much more than 25 miles across and less than 20 miles deep. Imagine on that are no less than at least 5 divisions crammed with their materials, their accumulated dumps for shells, their artillery including the heaviest pieces, their stores of food and provisions and all preparations for what, July 15, was the great offensive movement.

One must realize that each of these 35 divisions means at least 9,000 infantrymen and some 6,000 others, less only by the wounded and prisoners; and all this huge mass clamped in so narrow a space is compelled to retire through two points where the roads of the district meet, Fere-en-Tardenois and Ville-en-Tardenois, both of which are under direct fire at a comparatively short range, while the whole arc is under a converging fire from every side. That is the situation at the present moment on the Crown Prince's left. A more expensive one could not be conceived. The mouth of the pocket is not so narrow that the troops within are doomed.

Far from it, the mouth, is as any



THE END OF THE GERMAN DRIVE FOR PARIS

These two maps show how Foch's Franco-American drive between Soissons and Chateau Thierry has ended the German menace to Paris. The left hand map shows how the Germans have advanced, the broken line showing the battle front prior to March 21; the shaded area being the ground won (1), in the drive starting March 21; (2), the Alain battle; (3), the Battle of the Marne, when a little ground was gained by the main object of the attack—the smashing of the Montdidier-Soissons-Chateau Thierry salient—was defeated and (4), the latest drive, just before the counter offensive began. The arrows show (A), the primary purpose of the drive, to swing southwest around Chateau Thierry for Paris, which was blocked by the Americans' counter attack on Monday, July 15, and (B), the attempt to crush the Rheims salient, which was still in the balance when the counter offensive opened.

In the right hand map the broken line shows the front as it stood when Foch launched his counter offensive, and the shaded areas, the ground won from the Germans in the early stages of the battle. The heavy line north of the shaded area shows the place which is believed to be the first where the Germans can halt their retreat. It will be noticed that when they reach this line the "Paris front" will have disappeared and the two salients, east and west, will have been eliminated, making it impossible to renew the attack on Paris.

One can see by looking at a map broader than the depth. But what the defeated enemy is condemned to by his position is enormous losses in proportion to those of his victorious assailants. He has to counter-attack ceaselessly, in order to preserve the centers of supply, and as I have said, he is under converging fire the whole time.

THE BATTLE which has been fought since July 15, though its full effects are not yet apparent, is the most clear cut episode that we have had upon the Western front since the victory of the Marne. I will describe it as best I can.

After a pause of a month, imposed upon them by their heavy losses, especially those on April 29, the Germans effected a very complete surprise and scored a success on May 27 which might have led to the very gravest consequences. They struck at a front about thirty-five miles north of the line uniting the towns of Soissons and Rheims. The very strong position known as the Chemin des Dames, which was in the hands of the Allies, was broken at once. At the first onset the enemy poured through a wide gap, took many thousands of prisoners and hundreds of guns, and in an exceedingly rapid advance in less than three days, reached the Marne at Chateau Thierry.

At one blow he had produced a bulge, pocket or salient, somewhat over thirty miles in length and also about thirty in depth. They had destroyed yet another sector of the old permanent front, and upon yet another new line of over eighty miles (counting the whole of the way around from Rheims to the Marne, near Dormans down to Chateau Thierry and up to Soissons again) they had condemned the defence to the dangerous chance of maintaining itself in rapidly made trenches and to the hurried stemming of the tide of the German attack by putting in everything available in the neighborhood.

Success Puts Allies in a Corner

Furthermore, this great success was probably unexpected upon the enemy's part, at least upon any such a scale. It brought him to within a few miles of Paris, and it further had two strategic results:

First, it put the Allies into a sort of a corner, marked by the towns of Montdidier, Moyen, Soissons and Chateau Thierry.

Second, a nearer approach to Paris, because the enemy's extreme right near Chateau Thierry, when once thrown across the Marne, would, if it broke in the Allied line here, probably get as far as within bombardment range of the capital before the rush could be stopped.

Third and most important in the largest strategical view of this matter, his success would have cut the only remaining good railway system for keeping the Allied center and

north in touch with the south and east. If, for instance, he had broken the line between the Main de Massiges and Rheims, so thoroughly as to get to Cezanne, within forty-eight hours, and to the Seine on the third day, the whole Allied line eastward right down to Nancy would have been impelled. The enemy had some right to anticipate such a result from the great success of his two main blows, and on the morning of July 15 he struck.

What happened may be told in sequence day by day.

First Check by American Troops

On the first day, Monday, two things happened. First, on his right, between Chateau Thierry and Dormans, the enemy crossed the Marne and got well on to the wooded heights to the south of the river. But his attempt to enlarge this success, which was upon a front of about eleven miles, and especially of his attempt to enlarge it to the west that is, toward Paris, was checked by American troops. These counter attacked on Monday afternoon with great violence and threw the enemy right back upon the river. The consequence of that brilliant piece of work we shall see in a moment.

Meanwhile on the other limb of the attack—the eastern one, between Rheims and the Main de Massiges—General Gouraud put into practice a new tactic, which proved entirely successful. We all know that the defense has become organized and more and more in depth during the past year; that is, that the main line of resistance has been put farther backward from the front line. But General Gouraud had not only organized his defense system very deeply, he had also determined that on the first shot he would yield ground and retire materially, and by trusting to a comparatively few isolated and strongly de-

fended posts, take the heaviest possible toll of the enemy.

The enemy's attack, therefore, when it came, was something like the thrust of a fencer who over-reaches himself as his enemy withdraws. But the metaphor is incomplete, because we must remember that in this case the thrust was not only a failure but was also murderously expensive. The probability that the fearful losses the Germans suffered on that Monday, east of Rheims, were added to by some bungling on the enemy's part. They were quite exceptionally high, and all that loss was incurred without anything to show for it except a mere piece of ground of little value.

Fought to Standstill

the First Day

Very few prisoners were taken, and what is really extraordinary, no guns were captured, while the enemy's fifteen divisions of shock troops in this region were fought to a standstill before night. The check was a most serious one. Its gravity was recognized at once by the enemy's High Command, which broke the general in charge of these operations and replaced him at once by another. So ended the first day, July 15.

The second day, Tuesday, the enemy's high command, on surveying the situation, decided it might yet be recovered. The enemy probably hardly thought it possible to make good his attack east of Rheims, but he still believed it possible to make good on the western sector between Rheims and Chateau Thierry, and to crush in the salient in that way. To the north of Dormans, and in the northern part of the sector between the Marne and Rheims, is the formidable obstacle called the Mountain and Forest of Rheims—a group of high hills covered with woods. The enemy could hardly hope to force this, but he could turn it by the south or right, and if he

fended and went right on through his defensive system to the very gates of Soissons, on the north, and up both sides of the Ourcq Valley, in the centre. French troops, in the main, performed the first part of this operation and American troops the second.

The use of tanks had a great deal to do with this result; but the main reason, which is most interesting point, was undoubtedly a miscalculation of numbers on the part of the enemy. It is perfectly clear that the enemy did not believe the Allies to be possessed of sufficient forces for a counter-offensive. Nothing else can possibly explain the lack of provision made on this front between Soissons and Chateau Thierry.

Offensive Completely Broken Down

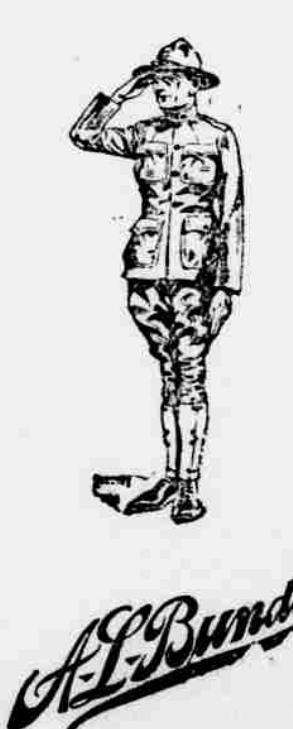
The counter stroke was not intended to do more than it did. The Allies have not yet a superiority in numbers. They could neither prepare for nor expect a full breach in the enemy lines. They are still upon the defensive, but the results reaped by the blow struck just where it was conclusive. That blow put an end to the enemy offensive and turned it into a strategical break-down as complete as that suffered just before by the Austrians on the Piave.

The most advanced enemy units have been thrown back across the Marne and are still retreating. The whole elaborate scheme, planned for five weeks and launched with some two-thirds of the enemy's available free force, has gone to pieces. It is a curious detail in the combined operation, that whereas the number of prisoners taken in the stroke and counter-stroke are about equal on the two sides, the Allies counted over 500 guns and the Germans not a single piece.

A letter from home gives cheer

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A. L. Bundy

U. S. Churches to Observe 4th War Anniversary as Serbian Day

WASHINGTON, July 27.—The churches of America were called upon today by Secretary Lansing to observe tomorrow, the fourth anniversary of Serbia's refusal to meet the demands made by Austria, as "Serbia Day," and to give expression of their sympathy with their wronged people and their oppressed and dominated kindred in other lands and to invoke the blessing of Almighty God upon them and the cause to which they are pledged.

High tribute was paid to the heroism of Serbians by Secretary Lansing, in the following words:

"On Sunday, the 28th of the present month will occur the fourth anniversary of the day when the gallant peoples of Serbia, rather than submit to the studied and ignoble exactions of Austria-Hungary, to defend their homes against an enemy bent upon

their destruction. Nobly did they respond.

"So valiantly and courageously did they oppose the forces of a country ten times greater in population and resources that it was only after they had three driven the Austrians back and Germany and Bulgaria had come to the aid of Austria that their arms were compelled to retreat into Albania. While their territory has been devastated, and their homes despoiled, the spirit of the Serbian people has not been broken.

"Though overwhelmed by superior forces, their love of freedom remains unabated. Brutal force has left unaffected their firm determination to sacrifice everything for liberty and independence."

In giving expression to sympathy to Serbia, Secretary Lansing urged the American people not to forget "the kindred people of the great Slavic race who now dominate and opposed

by alien races, yearn for independence and national unity."

KAISER REFUSES TO RECEIVE LUXBURG

LONDON, July 27.—Emperor William has refused to receive Count Luxburg so that the former German minister to Argentina might justify himself, says an Exchange Telegraph dispatch from Amsterdam. The count handed in his report on his mission to Argentina to the foreign office Thursday. After the emperor had refused to see him he conferred with Admiral Von Hintze, the foreign secretary.

Count Luxburg, it is added, has withdrawn from the diplomatic service.

South Sea Islanders in the remotest days got their fire by the friction of dry wood.

When Columbus came to America he found Indian fires burning. The Indians rubbed dry sticks together and quickly got a spark.



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There are on the market Starting Batteries that are cheaper than "Exide" Starting Batteries and customers will naturally wish to know why they should buy an "Exide" Battery when they may be able to buy for less money a battery of the same rated capacity of some other make.

Perhaps the best evidence that "Exide" Batteries are actually worth their price is the fact that they are bought by automobile manufacturers in spite of the fact that the automobile manufacturer, like the ordinary user, has to pay more for them. The automobile manufacturer is much better able than the ordinary user, to judge of the relative merits of batteries, and if, after careful investigation, an automobile manufacturer decides to use "Exide" Batteries on his car, in spite of the fact that he has to pay more for them, it is pretty fair to assume that "Exide" Batteries are more than enough better to justify the difference in price.

What a man wants from a storage battery is service and "Exide" Batteries have a reputation for service which is unapproached. The ability of "Exide" Batteries to give better service under average condition, is due to a great many different things. Some of these, like the non-flooding filling plug and vent and the sealing arrangements can be appreciated by anyone. There are many other things, some of which are even more important, which are not so self-evident.

A starting battery must be able to deliver electric current at a very high rate and at an effective voltage or pressure or it will not be able to successfully crank the automobile engine. It must be able to deliver electric current at lower rates of discharge for many hours to properly supply the automobile lamps. It must be as light and as small as possible consistent with ruggedness and durability. The most satisfactory starting battery will naturally be one in which each of these characteristics is developed to the fullest possible degree. It is easy to design a battery with high starting ability if one is willing to sacrifice durability and vice versa, but it takes a skillful and experienced battery engineer to produce a battery which will be not only powerful for its weight and size, but also long lived and sturdy.

When you dismantle an "Exide" Starting Battery and compare it with batteries of other makes, you will find that "Exide" design and construction is in a class by itself. You will find that the "Exide" covers and sealing arrangement save a great deal of space that in other batteries is occupied by troublesome sealing compound.

You will find that in the "Exide" Batteries, the space saved by doing away with this mass of sealing compound makes it possible to use plates of larger area, and it is largely due to this that "Exide" Starting Batteries are able to crank the automobile engine more powerfully than other batteries of equal weight and size.

You will find that in the "Exide" Batteries, the space thinner and larger than other starting battery plates. Plate surface in a storage battery is something like grate surface under a boiler. The more square inches of plate surface in a battery the higher the rate at which it can deliver current. It is not easy to build thin plates that will stand up in service, but twenty-nine years of experience in battery manufacture have taught the engineers who designed the "Exide" Starting Battery how to build durable thin plates.

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