

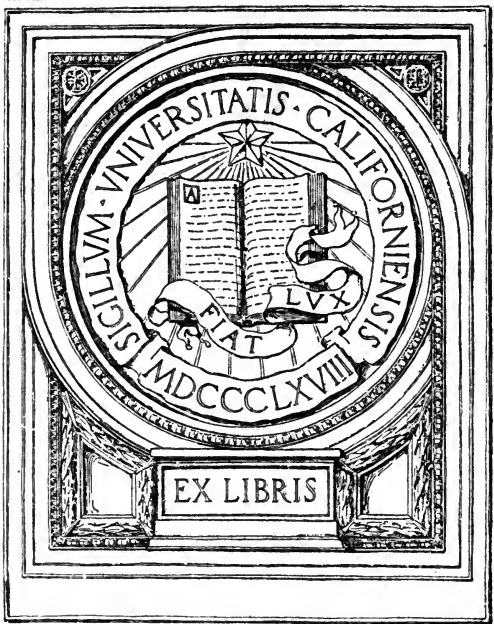
THE  
RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE



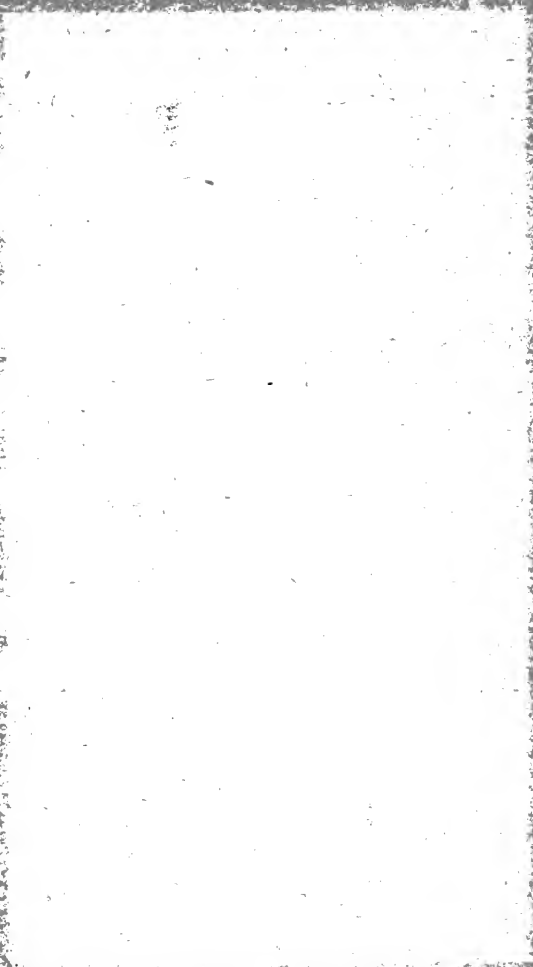
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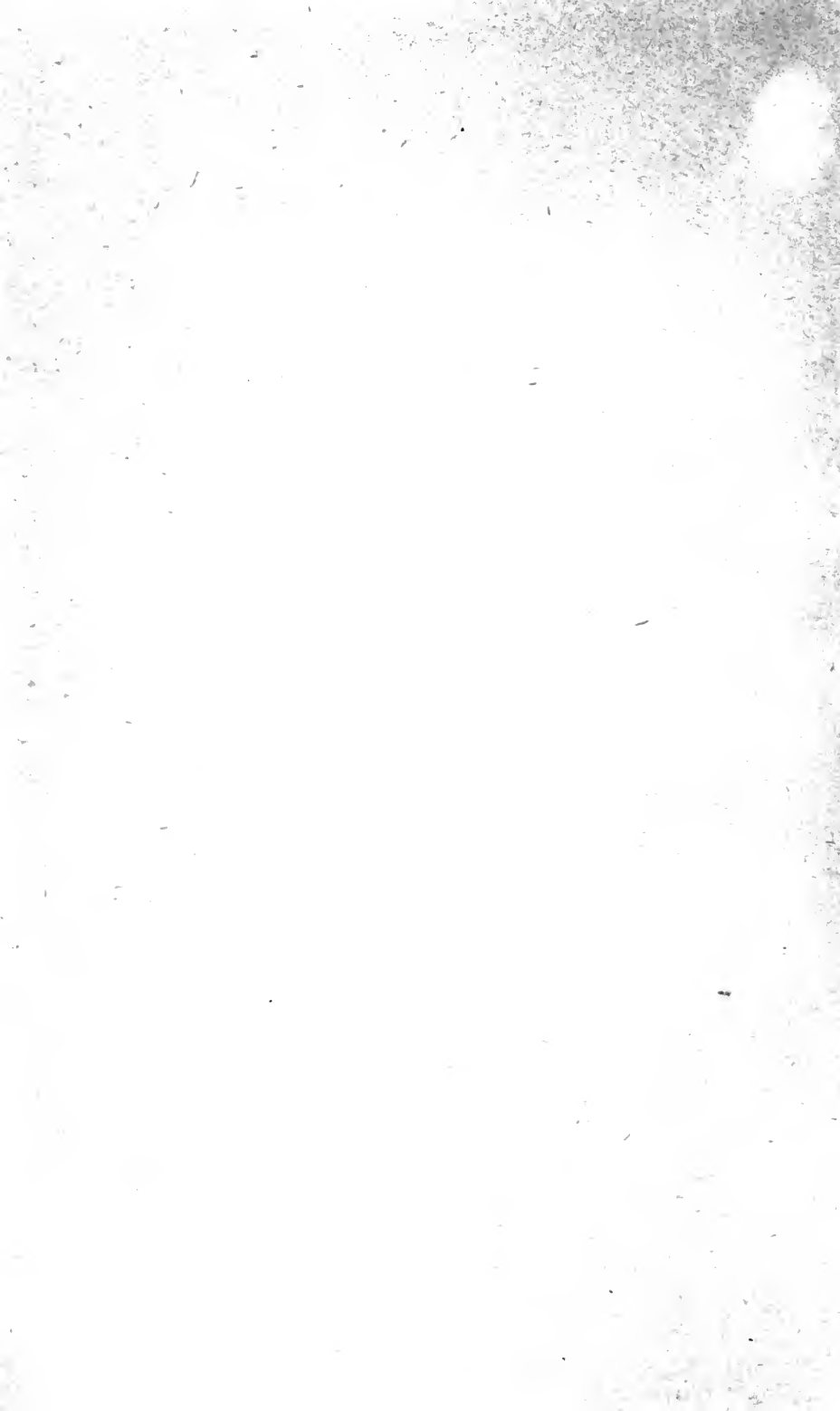
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THE RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE

1916

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GENERAL BRUSSILOV SITS NEXT TO THE CZAR AT A WAR COUNCIL.

The Czar and his generals at a council of war which was held just before the Great Advance.



# THE RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE

BEING THE THIRD VOLUME OF "FIELD NOTES  
FROM THE RUSSIAN FRONT," EMBRACING THE  
PERIOD FROM JUNE 5TH TO SEPT. 1ST, 1916

BY

STANLEY WASHBURN

*(Special Correspondent of the London Times with the Russian Armies)*

AUTHOR OF "FIELD NOTES FROM THE RUSSIAN FRONT"  
"VICTORY IN DEFEAT," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH FIFTY-TWO PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
GEORGE H. MEWES

LONDON  
CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LTD

1917

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*First published*  
1917



CA .

TO  
MY WIFE  
WHOSE PRESENCE WITH ME IN WARSAW AND RUSSIA  
DURING THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1915 AND  
1916 HAS MADE MY WORK  
POSSIBLE

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## FOREWORD

As I wrote a year ago, victory was won potentially when the character of the Russian people was crystallized, no matter whether the actual fighting continues one year longer or five. For in wars, even as in private life, it is character, given only time to adjust itself to circumstances, that wins. Guns wear out, ammunition is shot away, and all material assets disappear, but character is the one enduring value without which neither man nor nation can permanently prosper. The retreat from Warsaw, with the subsequent check to the German invasion a year ago, marked the turning of the tide, for it was the Russian capacity to accept defeat without loss of morale or confidence in ultimate victory that has made possible the renaissance of the army this year.

No one realizes more clearly than the writer the defects of the articles now published in book form. They have been written from the front under conditions which make finished literary production impossible. The greater portions have

been written within the sound of the guns, and all so near in time to the actual events that there is bound to be a lack of perspective as to the whole picture on a front nearly 300 miles long. As the writer has been the only foreign correspondent to have any considerable access to the south-western front during these operations, it has seemed worth while to republish these first-hand impressions of the great offensive just as they were originally written. The movements of General Litchitsky's army corps have been barely touched upon because, in the opinion of the writer, the Kovel front has been the dominant movement, and it has seemed wiser to confine the articles to first-hand observations and information than to attempt to deal accurately with distant operations which were in progress at the same time. In publishing a book such as this, the choice must be made between timeliness and polish. Early production means criticism on account of literary defects, but time taken to polish and rewrite means such delays that the subject-matter has lost much of its interest long before it is published. It has seemed worth while to reproduce these sketches of the Russian achievement while the story is still fresh in the public mind. If the writer can in a measure present intelligently to the West a picture of what the great Power in the East has been doing this summer, and how she has done it, he is willing to accept the criticism of literary

roughness and defects. The author is especially glad at this time to have these articles reproduced for the benefit of his German critics who for a year have been ridiculing his optimism regarding Russia and the Russian armies, attributing it to government inspiration rather than to honest conviction founded on facts.

Most of the articles have already appeared in the London *Times*, and the writer gratefully acknowledges the permission to reproduce in book form. The illustrations are from photographs taken by George H. Mewes, the talented photographic correspondent of the London *Daily Mirror*, which has courteously permitted the reproduction of these unusual pictures. The work of Mr. Mewes is perhaps the most noteworthy of any single photographer in the war. He has been with the author throughout the Russian campaigns of 1914, 1915, and 1916, and has taken between two and three thousand photographs, the excellence of which speak for themselves.

S. W.

БОТЧЕИОКОВ, RUSSIA,  
*September 5th, 1916.*





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# THE RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

IN order fully to appreciate the nature of the achievement of the Russian Army in the first two weeks of its great offensive, it is perhaps worth while to mention briefly the background of previous events, for without the realization of what has gone before it is impossible in full measure to accord the Russians the credit that is their due. The Russians, as indeed is the case of every other country party to this conflict, save Germany, had never prepared for a war on any such scale as the conflict let loose on Europe in August 1914. By May 1st, 1915, the Russians had all but run through the resources which had been deemed sufficient to meet any such crisis as had been foreseen. Just as the realization of this fact began to dawn on the Russians came the great Galician drive of the Germans, followed by the movement resulting in the capture of Warsaw and culminating in the great retreat into

the heart of Russia itself. The period from May to October last year is one which will always, I believe, stand out most conspicuously to the credit of Russia in this war. Morale and endurance are natural in success, no matter how heavy may be the sacrifices, but morale in defeat is the true test of the character of an army and of the people who are the basis from which an army is formed.

The Russians, by July of last year, were short of almost everything that an army needs. We who were with these heroic armies during the Galician campaign, the taking of Warsaw, and the great retreat, know that their only assets were their leadership and the character of the troops themselves. Rifles were lacking, shells had run so short that Warsaw was untenable. Communications were so hacked to pieces by the advancing enemy that such material things as they did have were frequently delayed or unattainable. For nearly six months, day in and day out, they fought their heart-breaking battles, always retiring, never equal in numbers and suffering from almost every material want, and yet after six months they brought to a final standstill, in the barren wastes of their own country, the most efficient army that the world has ever known. By October 1st, 1915, according to every rule of war, the Russians had been overwhelmingly defeated, and it is not

difficult to see why the Germans believed that they had won the war and that Russia would make peace forthwith. From every material point of view Russia had lost. But unfortunately for the enemy, it is not only the material that wins in war, for while by October he had won overwhelmingly from this standpoint, he had, as a matter of fact, barely started the war with Russia and the Russian people, who for the first time were now fully alive as to the issues at stake and finally and wholeheartedly behind the war.

On the basis of a year of disaster was laid the foundation of the great offensive of this year. Alexieff, in supreme command, the Czar alone excepted, began to reorganize the army from one end of his huge line to the other. Hardly a month passed when, in some quarter of the line, offensives of varying degrees of importance were not made to test the working of the rapidly growing and increasingly efficient machine. Each bore its lessons and formed the basis for evolving measures for better success next time. A general movement in the early weeks of the year in the far south, showed that the Russians were already recuperating and improving in their technique and general capacity to adapt themselves to the modern conditions of warfare. Later in the year a more ambitious offensive was put forward on the northern front, which, though yielding little in territory won, may perhaps have paid for itself

in more knowledge gained as to the rules governing success, in this great game which Europe is playing with men's lives as the pawns and the future of the world for the stake. Never discouraged, patient and self-sacrificing, the Russians were learning their lessons and preparing day by day to put their newly learned theories to the test.

On this front the chief command is now in the hands of General Brussilov, a man whose record has been one of almost universal success in this war. It was his army in the first months of the war that swept into Galicia and made possible the taking of Lemberg thirty days after the declaration of hostilities. It was again his army that penetrated the Ducla Pass, and was already pushing into the Hungarian plain, throwing the Dual Monarchy into political chaos and the big cities into panic, when the German drive on the Danajec and the destruction of his neighbour army left his right flank exposed to the attacks of limitless numbers of Germans pouring through the hole in the line like water through a leak in a dyke. In spite of superior forces, lack of ammunition, and difficulties of *terrain*, Brussilov withdrew his army in good order and, with the assistance of reserves hurried up, was able to check the Germans on the San, after which the Russian retirement was definitely a rearguard action and not in any way a precipitous retreat.

Brussilov himself is a man of the very highest



GENERAL BRUSSILOV.



OUTSIDE GENERAL BRUSSILOV'S HEADQUARTERS. LEFT TO RIGHT: STANLEY WASHBURN, RINIE  
OBOLENSKY, CAPTAIN MALTZEFF.

type of intellect and the ideal of a soldier, who is equally good in attack or defence. When one meets him one has that same feeling of what breeding makes in a man that one experiences in looking at a racehorse or any other clean-bred animal. Here, one feels, are all the assets of culture and a long line of ancestors which have bred a specimen that can be relied on to show the last degree of mettle in an emergency. With finely-moulded features, long, tapering fingers, steady grey eyes, Brussilov is a thoroughbred on sight, and the surprise would be if he failed, not in what he has achieved. No man in the Russian army knew Galicia more intimately than he, and no man had a finer record, and when Ivanov became confidential adviser to the Emperor in his personal suite, Brussilov was the logical man to succeed him in the command on this important front. His first act after taking over the command was to make a personal inspection of all his armies at the front, and before this movement began he knew of his own observation exactly what to expect from almost every unit, while an intimate knowledge of the country and of the psychology of the enemy he was facing, both troops and their higher command, gave him the background of understanding for the planning and carrying forward of the whole campaign. Working under Alexieff meant the certainty of a symmetry of action with the other two great groups of armies that lay to the north,

and a confidence in the outcome of the campaign as a whole, which faith in the high command alone can bring to officers who, in their spheres form only details of the greater movement. Of the northern groups or their part in the present action it would be improper to write at this time, and I must therefore confine myself purely to that portion of the operations which pertains to this group of armies which extend from the Pripet swamps to the Rumanian border.

Brussilov himself has his staff in a certain little town amidst the waving wheat-fields of Southern Russia, where he is as detached from the turmoil and confusion of warfare as though he were ten thousand miles away. This particular town was never, I think, noted for its luxuries. In any event, there were here no sumptuous villas or country-houses in which a general might establish himself. Anyway, Brussilov is not that kind of general. In a small white-washed room, furnished only with a table and a few chairs and the inevitable maps spread on walls and work-tables, the General is directing the vast campaign which is raging over a front of hundreds of miles in length. Brussilov himself has changed greatly since I saw him in Brody a year ago this month. His hair has turned perceptibly and he looks at least ten years older. His face is deeply-lined and his mien sober and serious, while his sensitive mouth has grown stern and unyielding in its lines.



Only the twinkle in his deep grey eyes shows the humour and the perpetual youth which are among the dominant characteristics of the man himself. From his map-strewn desk he can look out across the deep wheat-fields which from the window stretch beneath like the expanse of the sea, as the soft southern wind sweeps across their swaying acres. Surrounded by a hand-picked staff, each chosen for his efficiency, Brussilov to-day represents about the best that Russia has yet produced in the way of a strictly fighting soldier.

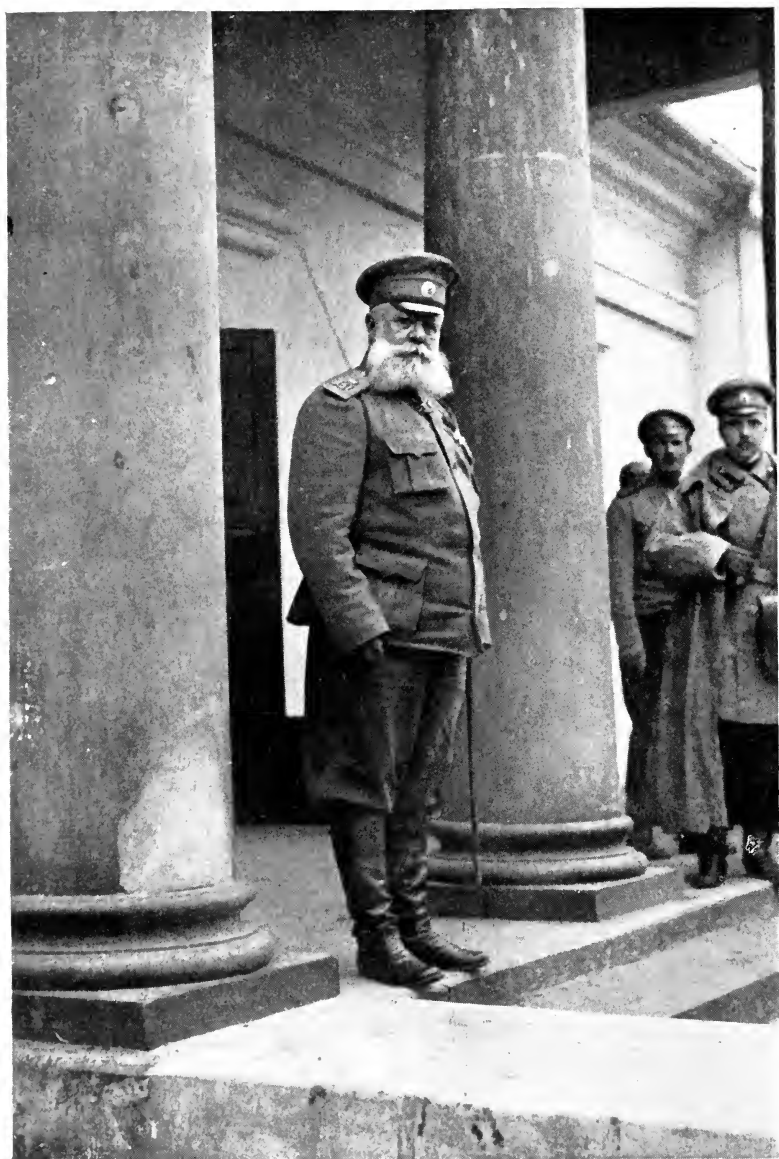
## CHAPTER II

### OUTLINE OF THE OFFENSIVE

GENERAL BRUSILOV was kind enough to detail an officer of his staff to sketch out for me the general features of the movement, and what I write is therefore probably approximately correct as an outline of the general scope as it appeared about a fortnight after its commencement, though weeks and months had to elapse before the perspective necessary for a real analysis of the past two weeks could be entered into. Long before the day set for the attack every detail was worked out. Reserves and stores of ammunition have been coming into this field steadily for months past. Had there been a sudden movement of troops such as characterize the impending German drives, there is no doubt but that the Austrians would have been on their guard and prepared for some such demonstration as took place. But there was no such sudden concentration. There was probably no greater movement of troops on the roads behind the Russian line the day before the attack than the week or even the month preceding it. For many weeks and months,



GRAND DUKE MICHAEL ALEXANDRAVITCH.



GENERAL KASHTALINSKI, WHO HAS TAKEN 20,000 PRISONERS.

moreover, through a thousand channels, small in detail but large in the aggregate, troops and stores had been steadily moving up to the front, but with so little ostentation that the Austrians were probably entirely in ignorance that the blow was about to fall. For months past the Russian guns on the entire front had been unobtrusively learning the ranges of every important point on the enemy line, a lesson no doubt learned from their experience with the Germans on the Dunajec line in May 1915. Over so long a front it was quite impossible to spend the ammunition in the quantities that have been used in the German drives directed against short fronts. Twenty-one months of war had taught the Russians that one of the greatest factors that they had to fight was not the opposing army, but rather the intricate and highly developed system of communications behind the lines, which enabled the enemy to concentrate troops at strategic points in the shortest possible time. Probably there was no position on the Austrian or German front which, if attacked locally, could not have been supported twice as rapidly by the enemy as the Russians could bring up troops to attack. It was resolved therefore to attack at every point on a front extending for about 400 versts.

The day was fixed for May 22nd (June 5th), and at exactly five in the morning, along the entire front, the Russian batteries opened fire.

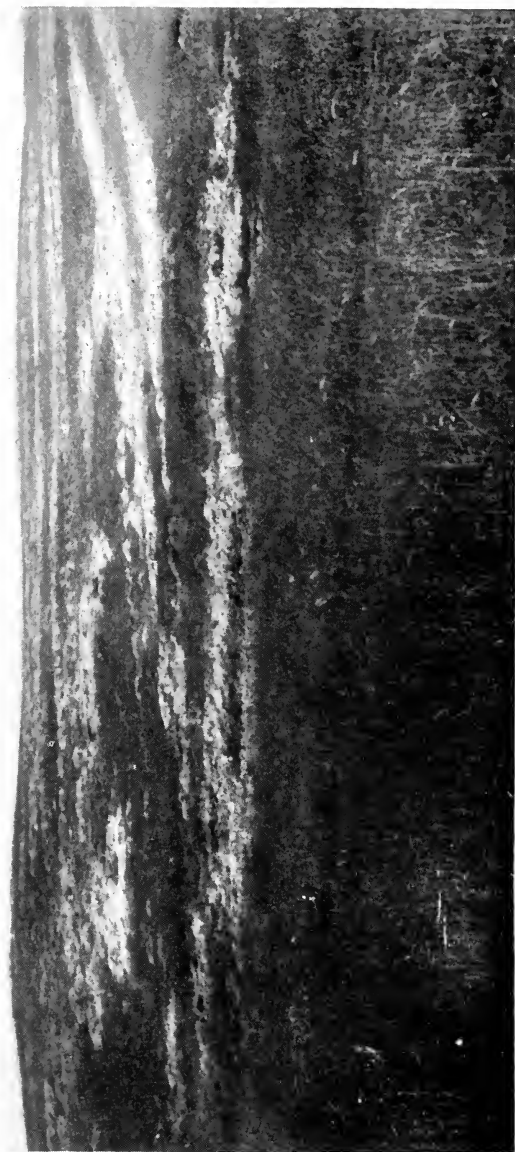
Probably the enemy were again deceived as to the intentions of the Russians from the methods employed, for, contrary to past practice, the fire did not start with the hurricane effect that the Germans have so often used in their operations. The guns, on the contrary, began slowly and methodically to place their shells in previously selected points on the enemy line, each being carefully checked to its target before a second shell followed. As the trenches were in many places not far distant, it was simple for artillery observers in the Russian trenches to report to the yard to the battery commander as to where their projectiles were falling. So slow and systematic was the fire, and so different from the storm of bursting explosives that usually precede attacks, that the various Austrian staffs seem to have felt no apprehension as to what was going on during the first hours of the bombardment. The Russians, however, were watching closely the effect of their fire on the enemy works. It does not appear that any attempt was made to wipe out the enemy trenches themselves, but rather to clear away openings in the barbed wire in order to permit the Russians, in assaulting, to use their favourite weapon, which is the bayonet, on which they place more reliance than on shot and shell.

As soon as satisfactory progress was reported on the enemy's works, there began the Russian bayonet attacks. In some places this was possible



**RUSSIANS UNDER FIRE.**

In an advanced Russian trench, showing shrapnel bursting in the background.



AUSTRIAN TRENCHES TAKEN BY THE RUSSIANS IN THE GREAT ADVANCE.

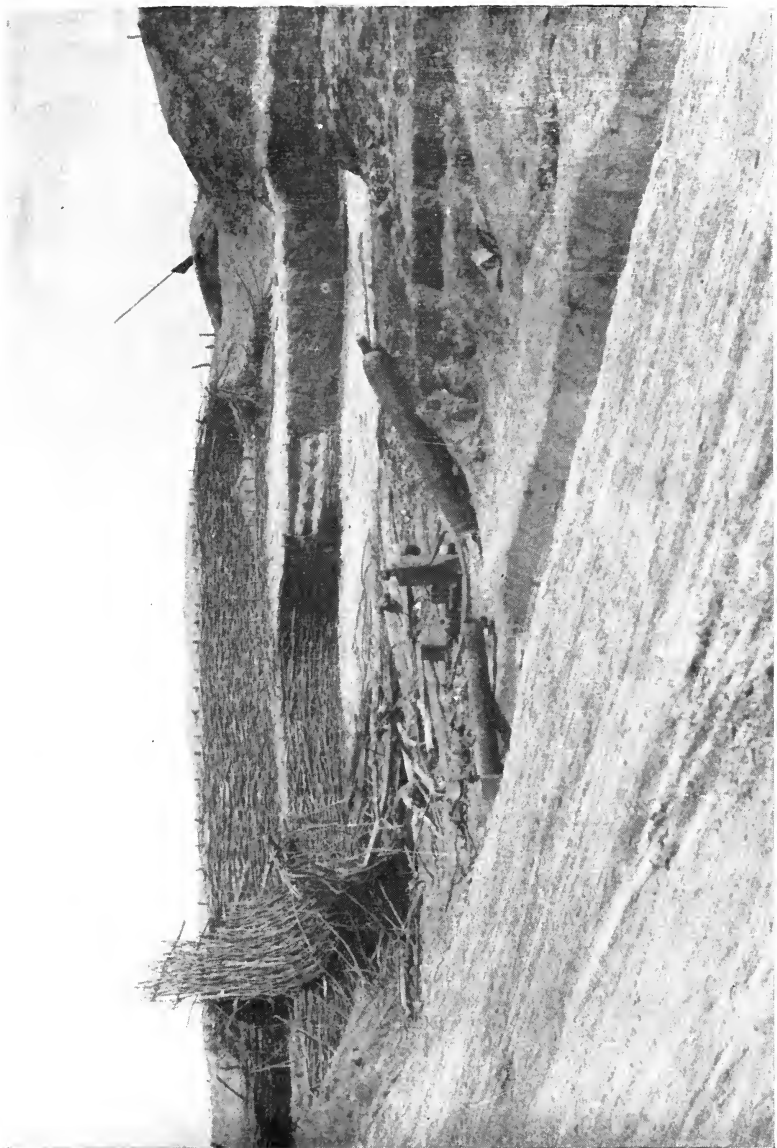


after twelve hours' work of the artillery, while at others thirty hours seem to have been required. In any event, after that length of time had elapsed, practically every Russian unit on the line for 400 versts was storming at the Austrian line. After less than twenty-four hours, innumerable points were already in Russian hands. The fact that this was all going on simultaneously made it impossible for the Austrians to support threatened places, for every place was threatened, and when positions began to be taken, endangered sectors cropped up in every portion of the line, where weak spots had developed. The result was that the Austrian higher command did not know where to send such reserves as they had at their disposal. Before they had time to support any particular place, the line was broken in three or four widely separated areas and the Russians were turning the exposed flanks at each gap they had made. Reports had not yet been received, at the time of which I write, to indicate the expenditure of ammunition, but probably it was very small up to the moment before the infantry began its advance, when deluges of shrapnel broke over the enemy trenches to cover the Russian infantry, which was assaulting through the avenues already cut through the entanglements by the high-explosive shells. The moment the Russians were in the trenches, working hand to hand with bayonet and clubbed

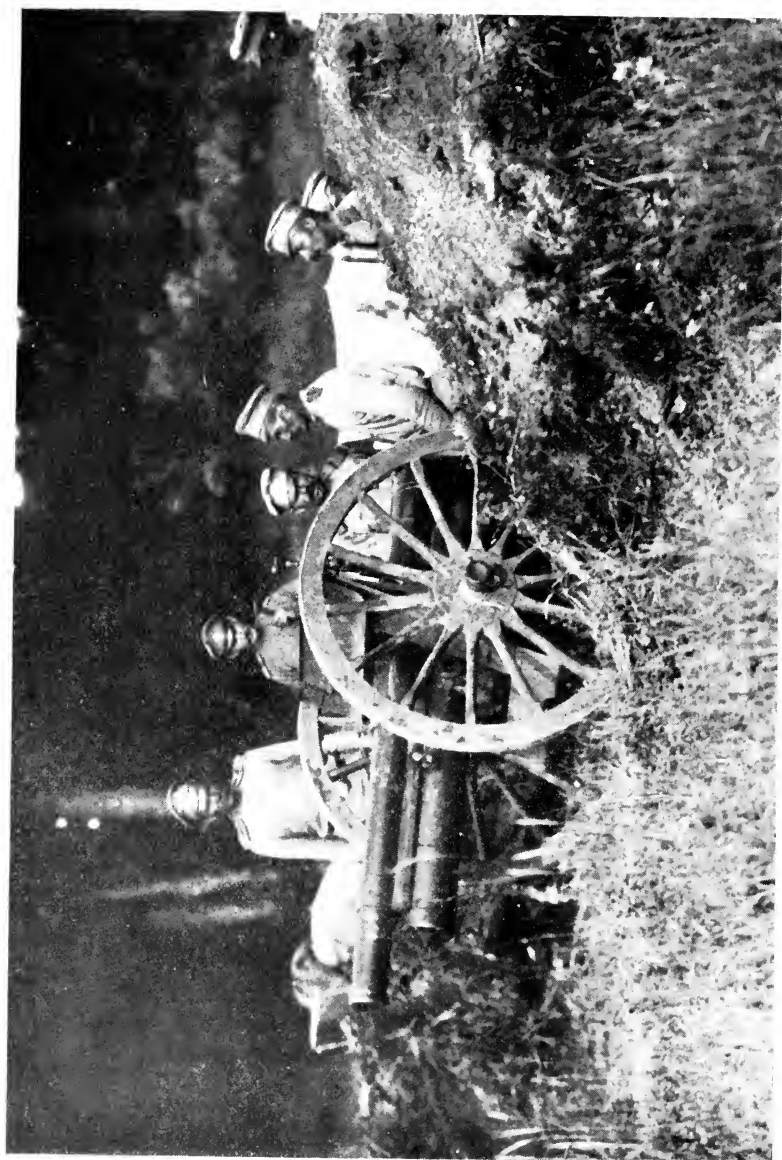
musket, the Russian gunners elevated their sights and dropped behind the Austrian positions a curtain of fire which cut off the retreat of the men caught in the maze of bomb-proof and communication trenches. Machine-guns were hurried into the captured positions, and made to sweep the ground between the Austrian first and second line, with the result that the defenders were caught between the machine-gun fire on one side and the zone of bursting shrapnel on the other.

During the first hours the enemy infantry, especially the Hungarians, are said to have fought furiously before surrender. The fact that four thousand enemy dead were buried by the Russians on a front of a few versts is sufficient evidence that the enemy did not capitulate easily.

The first series of attacks resulted in at least four important breaks in the line. One of these, before Rovno, near the village of Olika, another near Dubno and two more in the south. I shall not here discuss the south except to mention the fact that the most important breach resulted in the capture two weeks later of Czernowitz. The advance in the region in front of Tarnopol was of necessity extremely slow, on account of the series of streams running almost directly south into the Dneister. It will be recalled how the Russians used these streams for their rearguard actions last year during their retreat. Each had to be forced in



CAPTURED AUSTRIAN POSITION SHOWING ABANDONED GAS-CYLINDERS



A RUSSIAN BATTERY IN POSITION ON THE SOUTHERN FRONT.

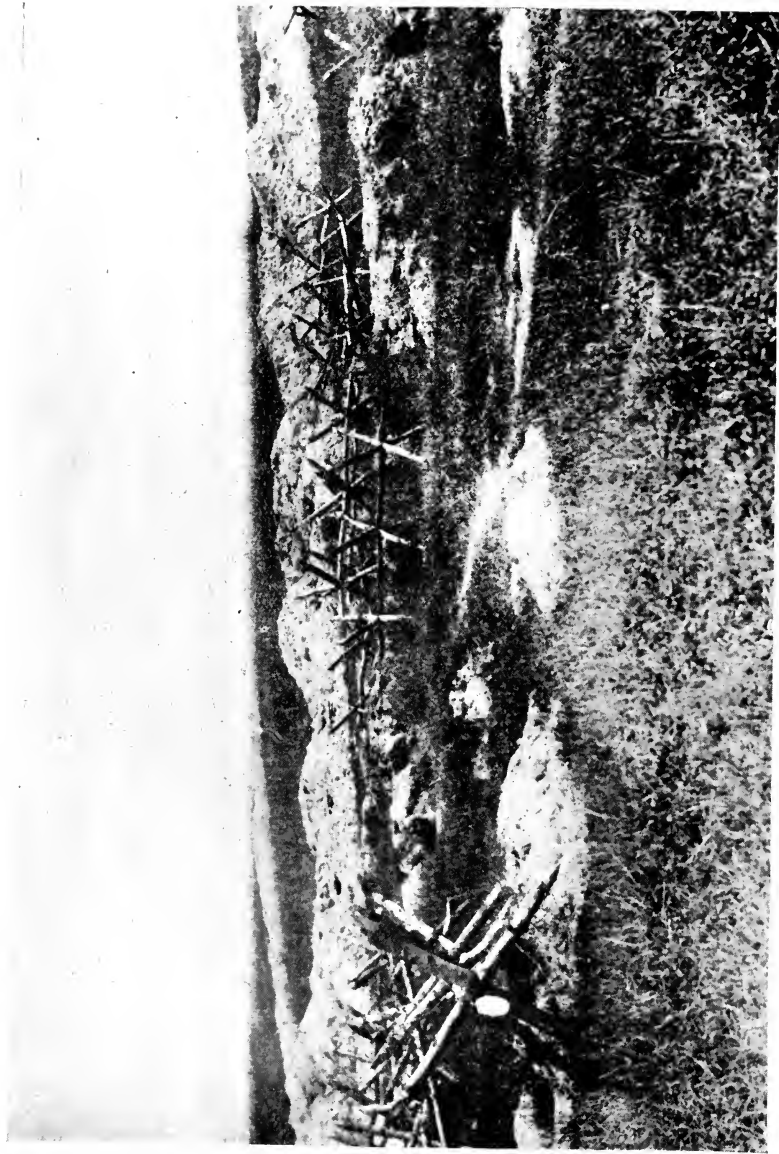
turn by the Austrians before they could follow up their advantage. Now the reverse was taking place while the Austrians were retreating. By far the most important breaks, from the strategic point of view, were those at Dubno and Olika (nine versts south of Rovno-Kovel highway), for in both places *chaussées* lead directly toward Lutsk, which in turn is the junction of the main avenues going to Vladimir Volinski and Kovel respectively. The moment these ruptures in the line were effected, the Russians began to support the units involved and push their advance with the utmost despatch on Lutsk. The result of this operation was that the Russians were miles behind the enemy lines on the Dubno-Lutsk and Lutsk-Rovno highways before the lines in between had actually been carried. The moment the occupants of these isolated trenches were flanked and attempted to get back, their own positions were carried instantly by the Russian troops who had been pressing on them without intermission. The Austrians therefore found themselves with enemies in their rear at many points and others equally ready to jump into their trenches the moment they left them. The result was that, so swift was the action of the Russians in following up their successful breaks in the line, that the troops defending intermediate sectors never had a chance in the world to get away, and at every point they were

captured in droves. The action moved so rapidly that at many places even the guns behind the lines were taken by Russian cavalry before they were aware that their positions were seriously menaced at all. It is reported that one captured battery was taken so much by surprise that the shells were still in the breaches when the Russian cavalry rode through the brush and drove away the gunners, who were still looking out on positions as yet uncarried by the Russians.

These breaks in the line, of course, made the Austrian position utterly untenable, and the whole line started back in a state of confusion probably rarely equalled. It is said that the staff at Lutsk got away only thirty minutes before the Russian cavalry came into the town. Without going into detailed dates and positions, the names of which are mostly unknown, it is interesting to note that the Russian division that broke the line at Olike, advanced exactly 72 versts in ten days, besides fighting half a dozen Austrian rearguard actions on the way up. The main and most important Russian objectives, after the smoke cleared from the first two days' successes, were the towns of Vladimir Volinski and Kovel. The former is a most important Austrian base and the key to an advance on Chelm, which in turn is the key to Lublin and Warsaw. The town of Kovel, however, is perhaps the most essential point on this front to-day, because it is an im-



RUSSIAN TROOPS ENTERING A CONQUERED AUSTRIAN TOWN.



WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS IN FRONT OF THE AUSTRIAN TRENCHES CAPTURED BY THE RUSSIANS IN THEIR ADVANCE.



portant railroad centre and the junction of the German and Austrian lines. To take it meant the severing of the Central Allies, the one from the other, and the destruction of their means of intercommunication. But far more important than this, it meant the turning of the German flank, which, with a Russian advance on Brest-Litowsk, would find its main avenue of supplies and munitions directly menaced, and its entire campaign in the East threatened with collapse.

After a week, then, the campaign fell naturally into three parts. The advance on Kovel-Vladimir Volinski, which threatened the Germans in their most vital spot. The advance on Lemberg from the Tarnopol and Brody directions, which is a vital menace to Austria in regard to morale, though it is to be questioned if the retaking of the Galician capital would have a very far-reaching military significance. Certainly nothing compared to the value of the occupation of Kovel. The third campaign falls in Bukovina, and has been most happily consummated by the capture of Czernowitz, which is the first step towards the invasion of the Hungarian plain. The moral effect of this victory was of course immense, not only upon the enemy, but upon the Balkan States, and Rumania in particular. The advance on the Rovno sector, as I have said, became an instant menace to Germany, and resulted in immediate support from the Germans in this neighbourhood,

who came up in such numbers that the Russian advance was slowly checked and brought to something like a standstill. This marked the termination of what may be called the first phase of the Russian offensive.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CRITICAL SECTOR

MOLTKE I think it was who said, "You can only plan a campaign up to the beginning of the first battle." Certainly it is true that an offensive campaign begins to take on new and perhaps unexpected developments from the first mile of the advance. It is impossible to say exactly what would have happened here had the breakage in the Austrian line occurred elsewhere than before Rovno and Dubno, but this being the case, the focus of the movement instantly fell in this sector, and from relative obscurity in the theatre of operations this bit of country has fallen into the full lime-light.

The first glance at the map shows the vast importance of Kovel, and from the day the first trench was carried this little Russian town has loomed big in the strategy of the war. I recall distinctly just a year ago being in Brest-Litowsk about six in the evening, with a broken motor, on my way to Rovno. It was seven before we were ready to start, and I asked the Russian officer if there was any town on the road to Rovno where

we might spend the night. A careful study of our maps showed Kovel, which the officer had barely heard of, and which to me was utterly unknown. Now, a year later, we were shouting "On to Kovel!" just as though it were as famous as Berlin or Vienna, although, as a matter of fact, it is a sparsely populated Russian town, scattered promiscuously over the landscape, with that curious lack of plan common to towns that have been centuries in growing up. Its extraordinary importance now is due, of course, not to the size or character of the town, but to the fact that it is a junction of a number of lines, and happens to be the point where the German and Austrian armies are in contact with each other.

As Kovel had suddenly emerged from the oblivion of centuries to take its place on the maps and diagrams of the military writers, so had this army become instantly the most conspicuous organization on the Russian front, and so every one was asking, "Who is in command?" This is the army for so many months under the direction of Brussilov himself, and as the new commander had only just taken over the command, he was not widely known in Russia, and probably not at all outside. With the development of this situation there suddenly fell on him the responsibility of directing what promised to be one of the bloodiest, most bitterly-fought and perhaps most important actions that we have yet had on the

Eastern front. The new military figure is General Kaladin, who was at the beginning of the war in command of a division of cavalry in Brussilov's army, and who, with an unblemished record, distinguished himself for competency and intelligence in every action in which that hard-fighting army has been almost continuously engaged. The shrewd eye of Brussilov soon picked out the quiet, earnest cavalry leader, and last year we saw him commanding an army corps with the same success that had made him conspicuous as a divisional leader.

When Brussilov took over the command from Ivanov, Kaladin came into his place as head of the —th Army. Barely had he settled himself in his new post when the offensive took place, and instantly he became the most important army commander on the Eastern front. When one meets and talks to the man one feels that it was no mere chance that it was his front on which the greatest success was achieved. Probably he would have had success in any part of the line where he might have been placed.

Coming to this army from Brussilov himself, with the proper environment already created by a wire sent ahead of us, we were at once welcomed into the staff of the army. Though the fight was raging fiercely at the front, we were at once presented to the commander. He was in his map-strewn office, completely submerged in the study

of a map, elbows on table and head resting on his hands. As we were introduced he cast one lingering and affectionate glance at the problem on the map, and then greeted us. He is a short, thick-set man with close-cropped moustache and sober eyes which look at one through half-closed lids. Without hesitation he accorded to us such facilities as we needed, and referred us to a General of his staff for such legitimate information in regard to the operations as we required. Later in the evening we dined with him and the Generals of his staff. All looked rather tired and pre-occupied, and there was almost no general conversation. The situation at the front was satisfactory, but one evidently requiring unremitting attention. During the meal I suppose not less than twenty telegrams were handed in to various officers at the table, most going to the Quartermaster-General and to the Chief of the Staff. The former is a scholarly-looking man, who, in a frock-coat and high hat could easily pass for Justice Hughes, the candidate of the Republican Party for President of the United States. With hurried, practised eye he scanned the budgets of telegrams that kept coming to him, making notations on some with a red pencil, and on others with a blue. Occasionally he would hand one over the table to his Chief, who would glance over it with a sudden tightening of the lids over his half-closed eyes, murmur a few soft-spoken words, and then

proceed with his dinner. Immediately after shaking hands with us he turned to his officers, and with them returned to his desk and maps, on which this little group of men were working out the problem which meant so much to the campaign now in full swing.

Though I have been out here now for nearly two years, and have been in a hundred staffs at least, I can never get used to the new idea of war, where the commander never sees his troops, and plays his game purely from the intellectual standpoint. These men here might, but for their uniforms, pass much more readily for the President and board of directors of a great railroad system than soldiers engineering a great battle where hundreds of men fall while we are eating soup, and perhaps a thousand more before we light our cigarettes and our cigars. Kaladin has, however, seen the other side of the shield, for as a cavalry commander he has himself been in the thick of the fight many times in the early days of the present war. I am told also that, on the day of the first great attack, he went himself, with a few members of his staff, and from beneath a tree on a distant hill through his glasses watched his infantry break the Austrian line near the village of Olike.

Now that the taking of Kovel had developed into the main objective on this front, the army of Kaladin increased rapidly, and he is commanding to-day perhaps the largest single army which

the Russians have had under one army commander since the beginning of the war. To the advance on Kovel the Germans at once replied by sending supports to that point, and for every German formation arriving the Russians were obliged as far as possible to bring up reserves to offset the advent of enemy hordes, with the result that we saw both contending armies growing larger and larger, each day, until we might expect shortly, if indeed it were not already the case, to see more men concentrated on a single sector of the operations than have ever been assembled in one place in the history of the war, with the possible exception of the Somme.



## CHAPTER IV

### WHERE THE AUSTRIANS WERE

ON June 22nd, for the first time since our Galician days, we motored about in a country strewn with relics of a hastily retiring enemy. The Army Corps Headquarters were ten versts from Kolki. For a year now we had been leaving our battlefields for correspondents on the other side to look over, but at last we were getting our turn, while those who have elected to follow the fortunes of the Central Powers could try their hands at writing stories of retreats and villages evacuated. Accompanied by General Kaladin's personal aide, Lieutenant Bobrikov, we left Headquarters early on June 22nd for our first trip into the zone where hundreds of thousands of men were locked in desperate and often hand-to-hand conflict. Turning from the main highway at the little village of Klevan, we struck into the woods on the road toward Kolki, 40 versts away on the Styry River, the last of the towns, be it said, that had just been taken by the Russian advance. After panting for an hour over a sandy road, we suddenly turned northwards and came on to

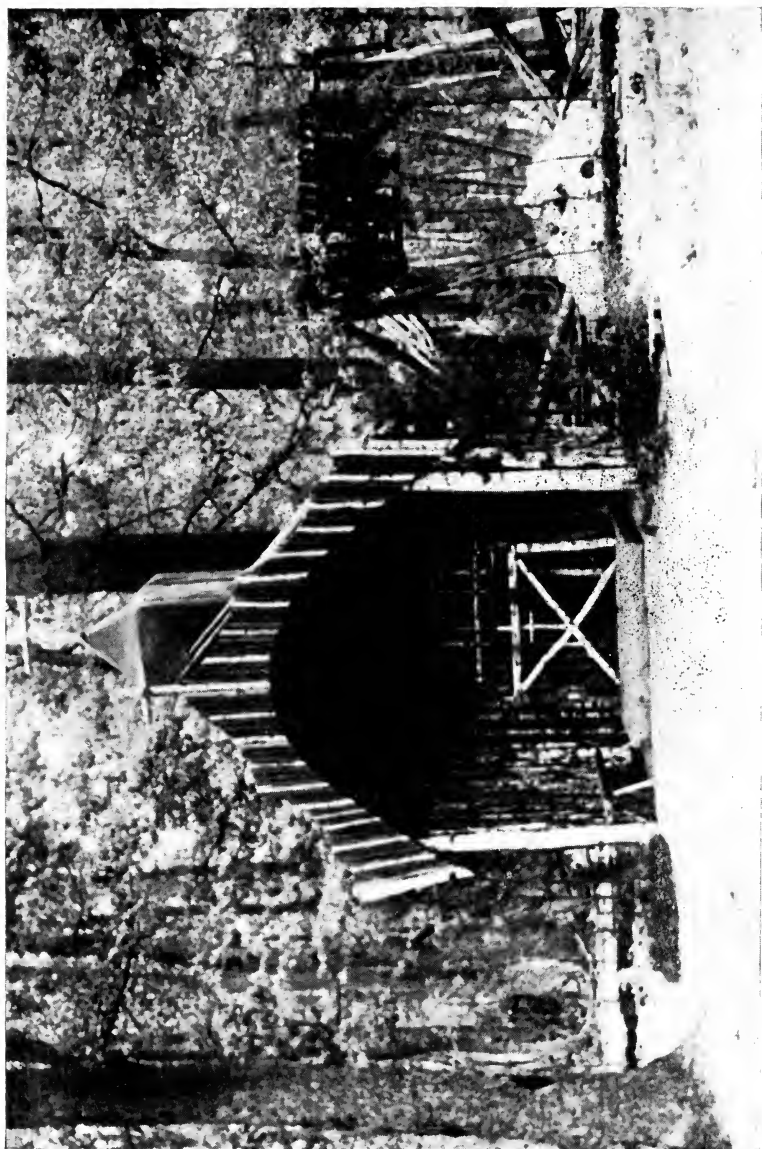
the Russian line of fortifications, where, since last autumn, they had been patiently waiting for the arrival of such ammunition as would justify their advance. After having spent so many months scuttling through trenches under the fire of the enemy, it seemed a strange sensation to walk boldly down the road and out between the lines of opposing barbed wire, where two or three weeks ago one would have met instant death.

The place where we crossed the lines was not one of the points broken in the advance, and hence we found practically no signs of heavy fighting. The defenders here were flanked by the troops that advanced through the Olikea breach, and these were well on their way toward Lutsk before the units here were apparently informed of their precarious plight. In any event, they left in such a hurry that their quarters stood that day much as they must have been the day they left. The Russians evidently travelled even faster, however, for I understand that over 10,000 prisoners were picked up in the woods here before they had the chance to join the main retreating column. One glance at the line suggests that the Austrians never dreamed of being turned out of these positions, while ten minutes behind the line confirms that conclusion.

At this point their works ran along the edge of a wood, and their trenches were constructed most elaborately from great unhewn logs, heavily



AUSTRIAN TRENCH CAPTURED BY THE RUSSIANS AFTER A BOMBARDMENT.



AN AUSTRIAN VILLAGE A LITTLE BEHIND THE LINE, SHOWING AN ALTAR OF BIRCH TRIMMED  
WITH RUSTIC TRACERIES.

covered over, and so connected up with reserve and supporting trenches winding in every direction through the woodland, that the occupants must have considered themselves absolutely safe. At a safe distance from rifle fire behind the lines one came on the officers' quarters, with elaborate provisions for comfort and what seemed like a veritable park in the heart of the forest. Here one found a beer-garden, with buildings beautifully constructed from logs and decorated with rustic tracery, while chairs and tables made of birch still stood in lonely groups about the garden, just as they were left when the occupants of the place suddenly found they had business elsewhere. In a sylvan bower was erected a beautiful altar of birch trimmed with rustic tracteries, while the whole was surrounded by a fence through which one passed under an arch neatly made of birch branches, above which were the words "Honved Tabor," which I believe means Honved Regiment. The Austrians must have had an extremely comfortable time here.

In looking over their quarters, one came to feel that they are probably a very pleasant people, for everything was clean and neat, and no matter how humble the work it was always in excellent good taste. One of the advancing corps captured a trench with a piano in it, and if the stories of large quantities of miscellaneous *lingerie* (not included in the official list of trophies) that fell into

Russian hands are to be believed, one feels that the Austrians did not spend a desolate or lonely winter on this front. Certainly one sees the contrast between the stern reality of war suggested in looking over Russian quarters, and that lighter touch of luxury which Austrian quarters always suggest. However, the people are temperamentally different, and probably there is no good reason why the Austrians should not have made themselves as comfortable as possible.

At the first contact with the country behind the enemy lines one begins to see the signs of their extremely intelligent and efficient lines of communications. Everywhere are the lines of the field railroads, and I have never in war seen such beautifully laid tracks as one finds here. Save for the smallness of the gauge and lightness of the rail, each might be the main line of a railroad. Now we found hundreds of blue-coated Austrian prisoners pulling up the rails on one side of the grade to re-spike them to suit the Russian gauge. Surely this must be a distasteful task to the very same men who have spiked them down six months ago for their own use in the war against the Russians.

Emerging from the belt of woods, we crossed an open bit of country, and everywhere we went were signs of the Austrian intention to make his stay as comfortable as possible. In fact, the Russians can make no complaint as to how the enemy



AUSTRIAN PRISONERS RELAYING THE NARROW GAUGE RAILWAYS.



AUSTRIAN PRISONERS.



has left the territory which he has been occupying. Nothing has been destroyed that belonged to the Russian peasantry, and indeed but very little of the works the Austrians themselves created. Every village has been carefully cleaned up, each house neatly white-washed, and numbers have been painted on the front. Ditches have been cut along the sides of the streets, and most of the houses have been tastefully fenced in by the rustic birch-work which one sees everywhere here. In several villages parks have been constructed, with rustic bandstands, from which no doubt a few weeks ago one might have listened to the strains of the Austrian military bands. Vegetable gardens have been planted everywhere, and, as one travels about, one comes to feel very friendly indeed to the Austrians, against whom even the Russians do not, as far as I can see, entertain the slightest bitterness. Had Germany conducted a war along the lines that the Austrians have for the most part, we should never have seen this conflict plunged into the maelstrom of bitterness which is felt on every front where the Allies are fighting German troops. One likes to feel that the Austrians left the country in such good condition because it was their natural instinct so to do, but one also hears that when leaving they expected to return, and this perhaps induced them to leave the country in such extremely good order.

Nowhere that I went that day did I hear the

slightest complaint about the Austrians, and it must be admitted that it was a great relief, after having been on fronts where the whole countryside is damning the Germans. That the bitterness between Russians and Austrians is relatively *nil* is clear from the relations between prisoners and guards. I visited many places that day, where Austrians were working in droves, and where one had to look closely for any Russians at all, and then probably discovered the guard sitting under a tree smoking a cigarette with an Austrian. Great is the contrast between this picture and that of the small columns of the heavily guarded German captives, of sullen, lowering countenance, and sulky expression, whom one passes on the highways. The longer the war lasts the sorrier one feels for these blue-coated droves of Austrians who pay such an extravagant price in their efforts to pull the Teutonic chestnut out of the fire.

## CHAPTER V

### FIGHTING ON THE STYR

THE division that I was visiting is one of those that had particularly distinguished itself in the recent advance by the huge number of prisoners taken (nearly 10,000), and had, within the two or three days prior to June 23rd, reaped new laurels by forcing the crossing of the Styr River at the point of the bayonet, and driving the Austrians back up the slopes, to take shelter in the woods that lie just west of the murky stream that sluggishly oozes through the marshes.

All the day before it had been trying to force the enemy farther back, but reinforcements came up and the lines on June 23rd remained unaltered. After lunching with the staff of the corps, we were directed to visit this division on the scene of the heaviest fighting now in progress.

One noticed daily the great difference between an advance and a retreat. All during last summer we were politely advised to go to places that were inactive, and even our best friends looked as though they had received bad news from home when we appeared. But now it was quite

different. The General of the Corps showed me his maps and advised me to go to this division, not because it was inactive, but because it was fighting fiercely. No one had anything to conceal now, and each visit we paid to a staff was a pleasure, for each seemed glad to welcome us and to explain the achievements recorded and the price that had been paid for them.

Motoring from the staff of the corps to the staff of the division, we learnt that there had been a big battle in progress since daylight. This time it was the Austrians who had been trying to check the Russian advance by fierce counter-attacks. Encouraged by receipt of supports, they launched during the morning three impetuous infantry attacks, which were beaten off, each in turn, leaving the hill-sides strewn with the blue-coated dead. What we lost in our attacks on June 22nd have been paid for twice over in the crushing reverses we delivered to the enemy next day.

As the roads are bad here, we took carriages, and drove to the village of —, which is on the Styr itself. We had to cross an open plain for a verst or two before entering the village, and the road we must traverse was said to be under fire of the enemy. At the fringe of the wood we halted near a peasant's cottage where a dozen of his neighbours were gathered, watching with frightened eyes the unaccustomed sight of bursting shells.



AT A RUSSIAN DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS.



RUSSIAN OFFICERS AND PEASANTS WATCHING THE AUSTRIAN SHRAPNEL BURSTING.

From our cottage we could, with our glasses, trace vaguely the enemy line, and as he seemed to be firing only with field-guns, at a range which must have been well up to 6,000 yards, it seemed safe to drive across the opening. A carriage, however, is not to be recommended for these excursions, as the slow, plodding pace of weary horses does not provide the same exhilaration as travelling in a swift motor over shell-swept zones. As a matter of fact, the way proved safe enough, for the only two shells that burst fell fully a mile short of our course.

Entering the town, or rather village, we found that curious subdued atmosphere always experienced in villages under fire. Peasants were standing under the eaves of their houses in little groups, talking in low voices, as though the enemy might hear and direct his attention toward them in consequence. Though it was a beautiful summer afternoon, no one was on the streets save the soldiers, who walked casually about performing their various duties. A battery was not far away, and the caissons were drawn up in groups of twos in the back yards of the cottages, the horses dozing in the sunshine, and the men gossiping in the shade of near-by apple-trees. As we walked down the main street there came the melancholy whistle of an approaching shell. Certainly the period between the time one hears a shell approaching until it bursts is one of the most unpleasant

that our modern life provides. This one broke almost over our heads, but far, far too high to occasion any danger, though the shrapnel case fell near our waiting carriage, causing the driver to wake up his horses and make off to a more suitable retreat.

There was, we were told, a very interesting observation station in a near-by villa, which we were invited to inspect, though the announcement was casually made that the enemy had spotted it and was shelling it. However, having come so far, we did want to have a look at the country and see what the enemy were about. The villa itself was occupied by the battery commander, who had his guns neatly hidden close by behind a hedge. Whoever lived in the place had had sufficient judgment to take his departure, for which I am sure his foresight was greatly to be commended. I know exactly how he felt when he left.

Heavy-footed artillerymen were loafing about in the downstairs rooms, while the Captain in charge, emerging from his retreat in the cellar, cordially invited us up into the attic, where he said we could get an excellent view. Filing up a narrow staircase, we came into the low-roofed garret with a chaos of family effects hurriedly piled up in one corner. Through the centre of the garret had been a chimney, which the gunners' picks had quickly demolished, as the heap of



bricks and cement underfoot clearly evidenced. The kitchen table had been called into service, and on this stood the hyposcope, with its wicked little eye just peeping out of the chimney-hole. In the front of the garret was a little round window, through which peered a high-power telescope on a tripod.

The view beneath us was extremely beautiful. In the immediate foreground was the still river, while to the west stretched the meadows over which the Russians had driven the Austrians a few days earlier; just beyond were the slopes on which the battle had been raging in the morning. Now it was all over, save for the occasional belated report of a gun, and the howl of a shell which came like the last dying echoes of a thunderstorm after the fury of the elements has spent itself. Without, all was bathed in summer sunshine, whose golden rays glinted through the hole in the roof, lighting up the whole garret. In a corner of the eaves a sedate old spider was sitting in the midst of his web, meditating, no doubt, on the sudden alterations that war had forced on his accustomed habits of life.

Every few minutes a shell screamed over our heads. When its first wail was heard conversation ceased and every one looked at every one else with an expectant smile, and when it burst every one laughed a little. It is always in such places and on such occasions that the Russians

like to have a good long chat about things in general. After a bit we descended from our dusty nook and walked out into the garden, which evidently was a spot under the careful observation of the distant gunner, for immediately came three shells, each of which sounded like a distinct hit to us who were most interested in its line of travel. But each one in succession fell with a swish and plump into the rather muddy embankment just below us, and by a fortunate coincidence each in turn failed to explode. On each occasion the officer with us congratulated us on our luck.

In looking out over this country it is almost impossible to realize how on this front the Russians, in the face of heavy gun and machine-gun fire, could have crossed the river and driven the enemy into the woods. But after a week one ceases to marvel at the capacity of the Russian soldier when he is attacking.

## CHAPTER VI

### A TYPICAL MAN "HIGHER UP"

ONE hears a lot in war about the "man behind the gun," but there is another individual just as important, and that is the "man behind" the "man behind the gun," or, more briefly stated, the one higher up. I have known scores of Russian Generals since the beginning of the war, and have written a good deal about the men at the greater staffs who play the intellectual end of the game in their distant offices; but, I think, so far, too little of the Generals who sit in rough peasant cottages at the front, just behind the lines, where the roar of the artillery and the rattle of the machine-gun tell them of their troops in action even before the field telephone buzzes its raucous message through from the trenches. I spent June 23rd with a divisional commander who may be taken as the type of scores of others who are directing the tactics of the war to-day. And when I write of General Monkevitch I write, I think, of many more who are almost identical in character and mould. This General I call my "Russian godfather,"

because he was the first one I met when I came to Russia, and it was he who, sitting in a luxurious office in Petrograd in September 1914, arranged the first permits that enabled me to join the army in the field. In those days he was an important member of the Petrograd General Staff, and, in his smart uniform and silver aiguillettes, with his resplendent shoulder-straps, he was the very picture of a general officer. Even in those early days he bemoaned his fate at being detained on staff work at the distant capital when the real work was going on at the front. When I came back from my first trip I was told that my friend had gone to the front "somewhere in Bukovina," and gradually the recollection of his kindly features drifted away among the memories of the past.

That afternoon I was ushered into the low-ceilinged room of a humble peasant's cottage, where a tired-looking man in war-worn uniform, tarnished shoulder-straps, and muddy boots was leaning over a hand-hewn table strewn with maps. He looked up as we entered, and I discovered in the commander of the division my erstwhile friend of Petrograd. Half of the house was still occupied by the peasants, while the General's sleeping apartment was in a rough shed outside, where he slept on a camp bed, with hardly any furniture, save a low bench on which was placed a battered old tin basin.

"The luxurious establishment of a Russian General of Division," he told me laughingly, as he showed me over his place of residence. In the trellised vestibule of the cottage were the telephones and telegraphs, while from all directions came the field-wires from the positions six versts beyond.

Sitting round the rough table, we listened to the General's account of his division's fighting against the advance, an achievement to which I have already alluded, and then, at his advice, we paid a visit to the front. The Generals higher up still are so far away that it is only by chance that they see their men or come in actual contact with their wounded. These divisional commanders are the ones that stand between the intellectual end of the game and the men in the trenches. The moment a shot is fired unexpectedly their telephone from the trenches tells them the reason. An hour after a fight starts the wounded (if the positions be near) begin to drift back. In this headquarters the General could look out of the window and see the price in human suffering that the plans he made on the map before him were costing Russia.

These Generals must be men of action as well as thinkers, for it is on them that falls the necessity for quick decision and prompt action, for a disaster in the line may mean the enemy cavalry on them in an hour or two. It is on these head-

quarters that the wear and tear and shock of war fall first, gradually absorbed and digested into an intellectual problem as it drifts back and back, to be considered by the greater perspective of the staffs that deal in the strategies and not the tactics of war. These, then, are the old-time soldiers whose life is filled with the tumult and turmoil which one associates with Generals in the days before "modern warfare."

After dinner I accompanied General Monkevitch on a walk about the town. With a long, swinging gait he paced down the primitive little street, with a nod and a word for every soldier that he passed. With scrupulous courtesy he returned the bows of the peasants who smilingly greeted him, and it was easy to see that he was a favourite in the village. Even the little children came in for a pleasant word and a bit of chaff, and several times he stopped with his officers about him to joke with the kiddies, and the younger they were the more happily they responded to his pleasant words.

A little way down the street we turned into the great shed where came the first wounded from the smaller units of the divisions. Yesterday, the General told us, his face suddenly going very sad, had resulted in heavy losses. For a moment he stood in a reverie, and then, throwing off his mood of melancholy, shrugged his shoulders and said, "Well, let us look at those within."

The great wooden shed was divided into a series of rooms where clean, sweet-smelling hay and new-cut clover were piled deeply on the floor, and here lay those too heavily wounded to be moved immediately to the rear. All told, there remained but a few hundred, the great bulk, as the General told me, having been cleared within eight hours after their arrival, to be sent to the greater base hospitals where more comfort awaited them. Between the double rows of haggard creatures slowly strode the General, stopping every few paces to speak to the wounded. The relation of the Russian peasant to his superiors is extraordinary. Never is there the slightest degree of self-consciousness or embarrassment on the part of the soldier, no matter how exalted be the rank of the officer who addresses him. Again and again soldiers whose haggard features and glazing eyes denoted the serious nature of their wounds, called to him in faltering voices, "How goes the fight, Excellency?" or "Did we take the trench, my General?" And always he would stop and reply, "All goes well, my children. You have done superbly. I am proud of you. Go back now to the rear and get well. You have behaved like heroes."

Another groaned audibly as he raised himself to ask, "Have more of my brothers fallen than of the Austrians?" The General replied quickly, raising his voice that all might hear, "For each

one of you here, my children, there are five Austrians to pay for it ; so rest contented that you have done your duty well." One mere stripling, shot through the stomach, called to his Chief, " I did my best, Excellency. I killed all I could," and then sank back, groaning, on his bed of straw. And thus it was as we entered building after building, where lay the price of victory. One heavily wounded lad called to the General, who immediately went to his side and listened to the high feverish voice telling of the assault, of capture, escape, and a bullet through the abdomen. With the quick compassion characteristic of the Russians, the General reached for his cigarette-case and emptied its contents out into the hands of the soldier.

Among the wounded were numbers of Austrians, with pallid features, lying side by side with the Russians, receiving the same kind words and gentle treatment that are accorded to the Russians themselves.

During these assaults many of the wounds are from machine-gun bullets, and a large proportion of these are through the stomach or abdomen. Many such must, I think, die on the battle-field, for of those that die in the hospitals later the bulk are wounded in that way. Certainly they are in hideous pain, and the little murmuring sobs of these soldiers trying to stifle their anguish are sad indeed to hear.



Outside under the trees was a row of stretchers, each reverently covered with a white sheet. The General halted for a moment as he uncovered his head. "Our Dead," he murmured reverently; then briskly, "Shall we move on?"

And thus, in the wonderful after-glow of a hot summer day, we strolled with him and beheld the man in his changing moods—General, father of his soldiers, mourner for his dead, each phase merging and emerging from the other at the different sights we saw.

As we wandered homeward toward his quarters we passed a house before which stood a sentry. It appeared that he was guarding an Austrian captive officer. Instantly the General turned in and, entering the tiny peasant room, greeted the officer, who proved to be a mere boy, in the uniform of the lowest grade of commissioned officer. The General shook him by the hand, chatted with him for a minute or two, and then, again shaking hands and saluting, said in German, "Wohl, auf wiedersehen, mein Freund. Glücklicher Reise," and left the Austrian standing in the dim twilight, with a look of wonder on his face. I dare say the Germans never told him that the Russian officers were like this.

## CHAPTER VII

### LUTSK FROM MY BALCONY

PICTURE a small, sluggish stream winding through the meadow, curving in a great elbow around a hill on which is perched a mediæval castle, around which a straggling little Russian town has been growing up these last five hundred years, and you have a picture of Lutsk. On a branch line of a railroad, it was before the war as quiet and isolated as though it were on the banks of the Amur in far-off Siberia. I suppose, in July 1914, there was hardly an individual here who dreamed of war, ever heard of the balance of power, knew of the ultimatum to Servia, or any other of those extraordinary happenings in that historic week that now seems centuries ago. For more than a year Lutsk basked in the sunshine of peace and remoteness, even after the war was well on its course. A strange and distant phenomenon it seemed, no doubt, to the inhabitants, who knew it only as something that took away their healthy men-folk and returned them as cripples or pallid invalids, or, alas! too often, never sent them back at all.

Thus was Lutsk when I first knew it, just a

year ago this June. Peasants, questioned, spoke vaguely of the conflict as something apart from them, no doubt much as they did of the Manchurian campaign twelve years ago. When next I visited there the Germans were already driving through Galicia with their Teuton hordes, and I saw the peasants digging trenches and laughing as they did it, for none believed the enemy would ever reach them. But since those days the cloud of war has swept above their western horizon, beyond which many of them had never travelled, and because their little city was on the main *chaussée* from Rovno to Brest-Litowsk, as well as the junction of roads going to Dubno and Vladimir Volinski, it became suddenly engulfed in the maelstrom of fury which never for a day has left it since the Russians retired sullenly in August, blowing up the bridge over the Styr. Since then Lutsk has changed hands four times, and on each occasion such of the inhabitants as could left it, with the result that, when we re-entered it, its streets were almost as denuded of civilian life as were the streets of Verdun during the bombardment. Many of the houses were boarded up and had their shutters closed when we came, but the Russian gendarmerie quickly had them opened, for a town recently evacuated by an enemy is no place for sealed doors and shuttered windows,—who knows what mischief may be lurking in the darkness within?

Thanks to the courtesy of a genial and obliging commandant, we were given a room in a hotel on the main street. Everything belongs to the military now, and when you want quarters you go to the commandant, and he allots you a vacant place to spend the night in. An orderly roused an ancient man, who, with sulky footsteps, lamp in hand, lighted us down a dusty hall into a room with a balcony facing the great *chaussée*, which is also the main thoroughfare of the town. My room had previously been occupied by the Austrians, and but three scant weeks ago it had been the chamber set apart for the military courts-martial at the enemy headquarters. One wondered, as one sleepily rolled into a bed comfortable beyond expectations, how many poor devils of Austrians had received their death-warrants within these dusty walls.

The weather was warm and sunny by day and clear and cool by night, which makes an admirable climate. All night long there was the constant roar of traffic beneath our window. Again and again we were awakened by the sound of military music crashing out the superb strains of the Russian marching-songs as the regimental bands, fifty strong, went swinging down the street at the head of the dusty columns pressing onwards to take up in turn their burden at the front.

As sleep was impossible, we were out on the



RUSSIAN INFANTRY ON THEIR WAY TO THE TRENCHES.



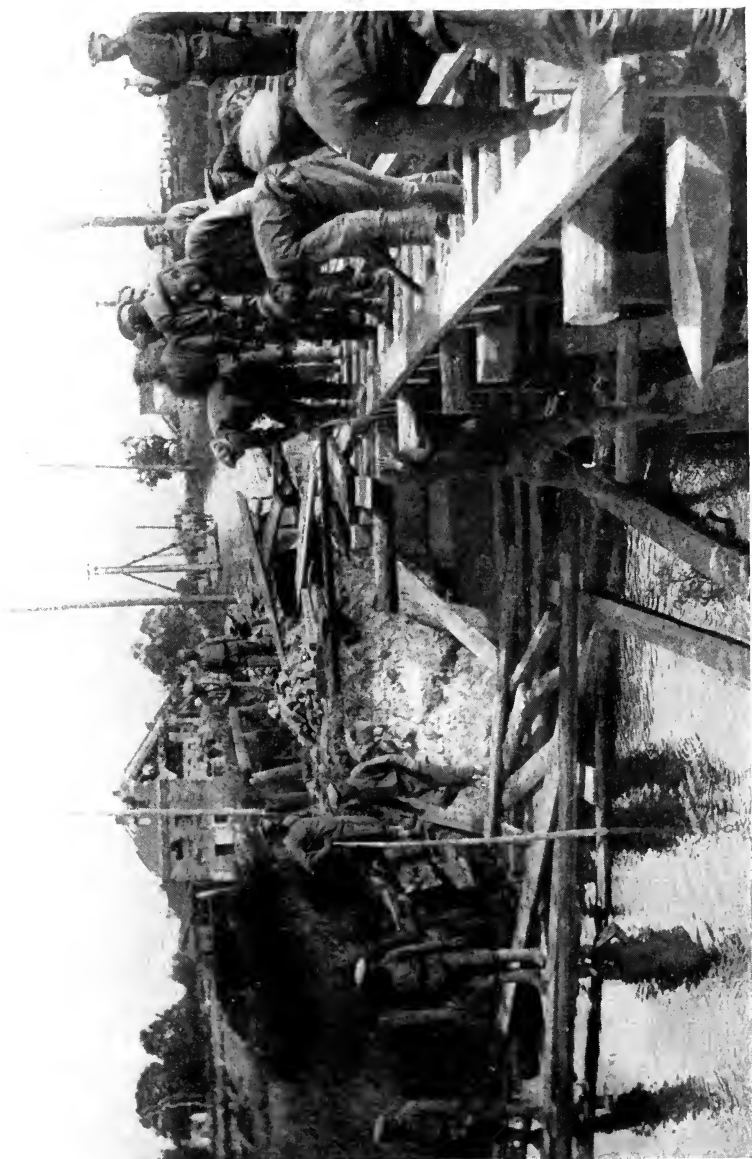
AMMUNITION CAISSONS ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT.

balcony early, and truly the view from this post, for any single hour of the day, would well repay a trip to Russia such as ours. As one sat on the road at Novaminsk in Poland last year and watched the review of the Russian army in defeat, so now one sat and saw the spectacle of a great army advancing after victory ; but now it was to the crash of music, while then the only sound was the shuffle of weary feet plodding through the dust. In a single hour here one may see almost everything that pertains to war passing in an ever-changing panorama before one's eye. With creaking limbers and jingling chains, with the six sturdy little horses' necks straining in their collars, the loaded ammunition caissons pass in columns a mile long. Then, for half an hour, one may watch the odds and ends of transport. Miles and miles of peasants' carts bearing food, provender, huge loaves of bread, were succeeded by four-horse wagons piled high with regimental and staff baggage. These in turn turned aside to let the field-telegraph pass, with its innumerable little two-wheeled carts loaded with poles and coils of wire, for the communications. Perhaps behind them a long column of the two-wheeled two-horse carts holding the small-arm ammunition for the infantry would pass tumultuously over the rough cobbled stones. Huge motor-lorries filled with benzine for advance bases demanded a way through the surging crowd,

with bellowings of their horns, while motors from the various staffs passed and repassed each other, more insistent still for the right of way. Thickly sprinkled with the throng were the two-horse carriages of the town, now commandeered by officers who had local business to attend to in the city itself. Wagons loaded with barbed wire wound on great spools were conspicuous in the procession. Evidently some one at the front had a hard position to hold, and was shouting aloud for barbed wire to help him protect his hastily occupied trenches. A dozen times a day the traffic must pull aside to permit the passage of troops going to the front. These come through, battalion after battalion, their copper-tinged faces now grey with the fine white dust of the road.

Below us were the quarters of a General who had just come to this front, and he stood bareheaded on his balcony and called out greetings to his men as they passed beneath the window. As far as one could see, both up and down the street the surging mass of khaki figures, with fixed bayonets, swung along with their long stride, roaring out their marching-songs at the top of their lungs—those wonderful songs to the cadence of which hundreds of thousands of men have died these past two years. The side-walks, too, were crowded with those who have their part in war. Sisters of Mercy, tired, dishevelled, and covered with dust, leant wearily against doorways,





RUSSIAN ENGINEERS REPAIRING BRIDGES DESTROYED BY THE AUSTRIANS IN THEIR RETREAT.



WOUNDED RUSSIAN SOLDIER TRANSPORTED ON A NOVEL FORM OF STRETCHER.

watching with us their Empire in review, for, humanly speaking, every quarter of Russia was represented in Lutsk.

And these devoted Sisters! Surely nothing is too good for such as they who have left homes of luxury and comfort to serve the humble mujik soldier in the hour of his greatest sacrifice for his Emperor and Holy Russia. Again and again I have seen these splendid women on the road, in dressing-stations, and at bases, and one never fails to feel the thrill of veneration for them. Their faces peeling from the blistering sun, their hair filled with dust, and their gowns too often, alas! deep-stained with blood, they go about their daily tasks of service to those who are paying the price of the advance to-day. These women, too, represent the nobility and aristocracy of Russia, who never before in their lives have known what hardship means. Thus is the war bringing together closer than ever before the extremes in Russian life.

So far I have but mentioned the flood that is pouring front-wards, but the picture is not complete without your filling it in with the backwash from the battle-fields which day by day is creaking eastward. It is true that we rejoice at news of an advance, and cry aloud for offensives, that the war may end. But when one sees the price that it means to advance, it dims the romance of conquest. At Lutsk we saw the price hour after

hour, in cart-load after cart-load. Patient, dirty, uncomplaining, they go jolting through the town, those of the wounded that are well enough to travel at all. In fifteen minutes one saw every sort of wound imaginable. Some with bandaged arms or bulging white-clad feet, sat with feet hanging over the ends of the cart, chatting gaily of the victory. Others with bandaged heads surveyed the crowds without enthusiasm or emotion, while cart after cart creaked by under the load of those too severely wounded to sit up at all. Many of their faces twitched with anguish at the jolting of the springless carts over the heavy pavement. Some were crying softly to themselves, unable to endure the agony dry-eyed. Others lay as dead, with passionless faces looking straight up into the sky. Many of these had been wounded two and three days' journey from the railroad, and had jolted all this way to a point where they could be loaded into box cars. It seems terrible, but, alas! it cannot be helped. This is what war means, and without these sacrifices we should have to face other things more serious—such for example as the yoke of German Kultur. The Russians, however, now have this branch of their service better organized than I have ever seen it since the beginning of the war. There are few delays, and nowhere have I seen any signs whatever of congestion or unnecessary hardship for the wounded. Compared with those dreadful early



WOUNDED RUSSIAN SOLDIERS WAITING TO BE SENT TO THE PASE HOSPITAL.



LADY MURIEL PAGET, WHO HAS TAKEN A FIELD HOSPITAL TO THE FRONT.

days when we first took Lemberg, and had all the Austrian wounded as well as the Russian at the same time, what one saw now was trifling. The greatest need here is motor ambulances. Lady Muriel Paget has one on this front which is doing heroic work, saving lives each day. English appreciation of Russian sacrifice might well express itself by sending yet more of these life-saving motors.

At Lutsk, as elsewhere within the recently occupied lines of the Austrians, one hears small complaint. They left in a great hurry, but without the slightest rancour towards the population, and nothing whatever seems to have been destroyed, with the exception of the bridge over the Styr, which indeed they had every right to destroy, as it was the one they built themselves last year to replace the one the Russians blew up.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE AUSTRIAN WORKS

THE first great rupture of the Austrian line, the attacks of June 5th and 6th, were near the little village of Olika, which nestles in a hollow about three miles from the present battle-field. It is nine versts from the main Rovno-Lutsk highway, with which it is itself connected by a madacam road. Inasmuch as the breaking of the line there proved to be the leak in the dyke of the Austrian defence, I spent a good portion of two days in looking over the nature and strength of the defences, which, I was informed, were typical of the line as a whole. The country there is rolling, with very little timber. One can, in consequence, stand on ground higher than the rest and look for miles in every direction and see the maze of trench and communication-ways stretching on hill-sides in every direction. In many places the two lines were very close together, with the result that it required detailed investigation to note from any distance which line was the Russian and which the Austrian. The Russian line stopped in the autumn where it was con-



venient by reason of its entrenchments, constructed, of course, long in advance of the actual arrival of the enemy. The Russian line was therefore much the best located, as the Austrians, when they came up, were obliged to adjust their own defences to those facing them. The Russians chose their position with especial care as to communication-ways behind them and clear fields of fire in front of them, even though some details of their line were salients and others deep indentations. This gave them the advantage of being able to bring their troops into the positions much quicker than the Austrians could. I examined many of the enemy communication trenches, and there were numerous places where it was necessary for them to dig up in zig-zags over an almost treeless country for distances exceeding a mile in length. This is certainly one of the disadvantages of having your adversary choose your position for you, which is exactly what the Russians seem to have been able to do. Probably this distance between the front line and the entrance to the approaches was one of the important factors resulting in so many prisoners being taken. It is perfectly clear that men trying to escape in masses through those narrow, winding ways could make but slow progress. To get above ground brought them in the zone of the machine-guns that the Russians promptly mounted on the captured positions, and to remain

in the communication-ways meant inevitable capture, while those who did reach the outlets were confronted with the curtain of fire dropped by the artillery to cut off such fugitives.

The front line trenches are in two or three series, close together, though so complicated is the labyrinth that it is rather difficult to see exactly what the system is. In general there are two reserve lines behind the first; but, as far as I was able to ascertain, these were never defended seriously, because in many instances the Russians got to the second positions ahead of the occupants for whom they were destined. The front line taken by itself, at all the points I examined it, was extremely strong. Little overhead cover seems to have been used, save a few feet overhanging the shooting-galleries. The trenches were very deep—10 or 15 feet in places—with steps on which the soldiers might stand when firing. At frequent intervals were strongly constructed redoubts for the machine-guns. Many of these were made with steel, and some were of concrete construction. On the reverse side of the trench were innumerable winding exits to a rear line, perhaps averaging 30 or 40 feet from the front, in which many dug-outs and bomb-proofs had been dug, and it was here, no doubt, that the inactive troops spent most of their time. Behind this were quarters for the officers which, for depth and shelter afforded, I did not see surpassed in



AUSTRIAN TRENCHES, DUG-OUTS, AND ENTANGLEMENTS DESTROYED BY RUSSIAN SHELL FIRE.



AN AUSTRIAN SHELTER NEARLY THIRTY FEET BELOW GROUND SHOWING  
ENTRANCE TO AN UNDERGROUND CAVERN PROVIDED FOR OFFICERS.

France. Many of these were very deep excavations, cut 20 or 30 feet below the floor of the trench, with steps dug out of the earth leading down to them. At the foot of the steps was a roofed vestibule with two feet of earth on it. From this vestibule a tunnel had been driven at right angles into the earth, and a huge chamber constructed for the officers. Here, apparently they must have been safe from the heaviest kind of high explosive shells. I believe that this same type is in general use on their Eastern line, for I have seen many myself, while the Russian photographs illustrated the same construction. Where the nature of the soil was sandy most elaborate fascine work had been extensively used. Such portions of the line as had not been damaged by the Russian guns impressed one greatly. For neatness and exactness of construction it might have been a model made by an expert engineer from the most approved military text-book on modern field fortifications. Advance saps leading to listening-posts between the lines were very frequent, occurring at intervals of about every 400 yards. The barbed wire is the most intricate that I have seen. There are always two or three series, and sometimes more. The last series represented from 5 to 10 strands deep, though it is not arranged in regular rows to the same extent that the Russian is.

The Austrians also seem to have conducted

extensive mining operations in front of the trenches, and we were especially warned to avoid wires leading to buried explosives, as a number of soldiers clearing up the field were killed by detonating them. Walking between the lines, and especially on the slopes of the Austrian position, one was constantly coming across loops of wire in the long grass. I can only take the word of the officer accompanying me that their nature was as described, for I carefully avoided tripping over them. As I have written before, the Russians did not attempt to destroy the entire front of the Austrian positions, but contented themselves with cutting avenues by shell-fire at more or less regular intervals, and then shelling the trenches themselves with shrapnel, while the troops assaulted through the spaces cut in the wire entanglement. I walked through many of these, and tried to make an estimate as to the number of shells required to do the job, but there was such a confusion of holes that it was hard to estimate. I should think 75 to 100 shells on a front of 25 to 40 yards would not be excessive. In any event, it seems to have been done thoroughly, for in these avenues there remained hardly an obstacle in the path of the Russians. The Russians had far the best of it in gun positions, and no doubt this was also an important factor in picking the position. The Austrians had little cover for the most part, and were

obliged to dig in behind hills, on exposed slopes where they must have been easily spotted by the Russian aeroplanes. The Russians' positions, on the contrary, were most frequently in woods, where their detection must have been much more difficult. The town of Olika itself, though only a few versts from the line, seems to have been spared the ravages of war, which suggests again the marked difference between the Germans and the Austrians in their methods of conducting war. I think I have never seen a village near the lines that the Germans did not shell every day, if they could reach it. This little town lay four or five versts inside the zone of fire of the Austrian heavy artillery, and hardly a shell fell here until the few days preceding the attack.

## CHAPTER IX

### A FIGHTING REGIMENT

“ I AM the fifth Colonel of this regiment,” the commander told me one day towards the end of June, as we sat in the dingy front room of a peasant cottage a few versts from the front, our conversation punctuated by the never-ending rumble of big guns, whose sullen growls drifted in at the open window. “ There are with me, out of seventy-six, but two officers who have served through from the beginning, and I suppose there are not above fifty soldiers who have come through these past two years unscathed.” I asked him what had been the total losses of the regiment since August 1914, but he was too tired to figure it up. Lest I offend the censor, I will omit the name of the regiment, other than to say that it is one that was organized for the Crimean War, and that every Emperor of Russia since then has been enrolled in the regiment.

As the Colonel told me this he pointed to the corner of the dingy room where, in the shadow, stood the regimental standard, and beside it a well-worn rifle. The Colonel brought it over and



gently laid it on the table. On the stock was a silver plate on which was inscribed the fact that this rifle had been carried by the Emperor Nicholas II. In fact, it is the one in which he had his picture taken in the uniform of his peasant soldiery, a picture which is to be seen in peasants' huts all over Russia. This rifle is carried by the colour-guard, and always goes with the standard. Several times it has been with a battalion surrounded by the enemy, but has always come through the ordeal with the remnant of the regiment, which has cut its way through to safety. We had been directed to this regiment from higher headquarters as being one of the hardest fighting units in the whole Russian Army.

The Colonel himself was a young man, not over thirty-five, with quiet, gentle bearing and deep blue eyes. His whole manner was tinged with melancholy as he talked with us and told us the story of his regiment during this advance. Starting in the reserve at the first attacks near Olike, he had missed the first day's fighting, but came into action on the morning of the second day of the advance, and he and his men had been in continuous action for the sixteen days following. It was this regiment that took the outer defences of Lutsk with the bayonet a few days after the first line was carried, and who in a total of ten days fought three heavy actions and advanced 72 versts from its point of departure. The Colonel

smiled a little sadly as he added: "And we should have been in Vladimir Volinski before this had we not had orders to suspend our advance." As a matter of fact, within a day of the time that the forward movement was halted, the Germans began to arrive in thousands on this front, and from attack the regiment was thrown on to the defensive which, to keep in touch with more harried parts of the line, became a retirement of eight or ten versts to the point it now held.

The day before I talked with the Colonel was the fourth on which his men had been sitting in hurriedly made trenches, throwing back attack after attack of the Germans, who, regardless of their losses, were assaulting it again and again each day. Though the regiment never faltered or gave back a verst, its numbers dwindled so rapidly that it had been ordered into reserve by the higher command, and had come back into this little village—what there was left of it—to recuperate from the devastating ordeal of the preceding fortnight. The Colonel himself, worn and exhausted, spoke lightly of the achievements of his regiment, though his pride in his men was obvious; but he took it for granted that such a regiment could not fail to do great things. As one looked into his handsome, rather sad face, one could not help thinking of what lay before him. What chance, indeed, had he to come

through the war, when four predecessors had already paid the supreme price for the honour of commanding this historic regiment ?

The Colonel had little desire, however, to talk of himself, and in a few minutes wanted us to see his men ; and with him we left the cottage, to find a company drawn up with the regimental band, in a near-by orchard, to greet the representatives of the Allied Press. As we emerged from the cottage the band played the British national air, and the soldiers presented arms, while the Colonel spoke to them of their Allies and called for three cheers for the King of England. After that the men passed in review. When one sees these soldiers that are now fighting in the Russian Army, one cannot but compare them with the prisoners that are gathered from the latest German formations.

I suppose in the group of men that I inspected here in the orchard, there were not a dozen that were at the beginning in the first line of the Russian Army, or, for that matter, had been in training up to the time the war broke out. Certainly there was not a single reservist. These men, then, were those called up since the beginning of the war. They have proven again and again that in every respect they are quite the equal of the first line. When one adds to this the fact that their officers are men who have had experience of war which the early leaders lacked,

one feels that these regiments are far superior in every respect to those that turned out in 1914.

The Germans that one sees now are for the most part either very young men or men who have obviously been called from among old reservists, or else younger men who have never seen military service before the war at all, and who are now turning out for the first time to fight in the Army. Mechanics, artisans, professional men and the like are the men that form the matrix of the German Army in the field to-day, if the prisoners that I saw in June could be taken as typical of what were coming into the field for this summer's operations. On this particular front at Rovno the fighting was intensely bitter between the Germans and this regiment. The persistent report that explosive bullets were being used by the enemy greatly inflamed the soldiers, and during the last week of June very few prisoners were taken on either side, the contending troops fighting out their differences hand-to-hand when they came in touch with each other, until there were almost no prisoners and few wounded left of either side after each attack; only the heaped-up bodies of corpses to tell where Russians and Germans had met.

## CHAPTER X

### THE INTERIM SITUATION

THE week ending June 29th was the most critical of any during the entire period of the Russian operations, and it is perhaps not too much to say that by that date we had safely passed one of the crises, not only of this particular operation, but of the greater situation in the whole vast theatre of the war. As I have pointed out in an earlier chapter, the collapse of the Austrian line and the rapid advance of the Russians on Kovel and Vladimir Volinski at once became a vital menace to the whole strategy of the Germans in the Eastern theatre of war. Kovel is the centre of their great web of communications here, and its loss means the necessity of a sweeping withdrawal and alteration of their whole line in Russia. The instant this menace was realized the Germans, in their characteristic way, began to mass troops on this front. A glance at the railroad map clearly indicates the great advantage in arrangement of communications which they have, not to speak of the intricate network of new lines they have built since they have been in Russia. The

result of their efforts was that they were able to concentrate troops to defend Kovel probably at least twice as fast as the Russians. Their first concentration stopped the Russians from advancing further, and then came the dangerous moment, for the Russians, exhausted after two weeks of practically unintermittent fighting and marching, were called upon to face corps after corps of fresh troops that were poured in with extraordinary rapidity. It was impossible at the time to make an exact estimate of the number of troops the Germans had, but probably to the original defenders of Kovel were added the 10th Prussian Corps, said to have been brought over from Rheims, and the 5th Bavarian Corps, which is stated to have been taken from in front of Arras. There is reason to believe that a portion, if not the entire strength of a corps, came from the Verdun front, while certainly one more German corps came from some other quarter.

With these heavy supports brought up in a few days came the great German opportunity. Had they been able to break through the Russian line, retaken Lutsk, and forced the shattered fragments of a defeated army back to the old line, they might have restored the prestige which had been so badly damaged in the month of June. With fortitude and patient obedience to their officers, they began their assaults on the Russians, who were hurriedly dug in in the best

positions they could locate for themselves. But now the Germans were learning for the first time that it is quite a different proposition fighting the Russians when they have arms in their hands and shells to support them than it was last summer, when they had neither. The Germans were very complacent all last summer in their boasted superiority over the soldiers of the Czar, all seeming to think that it lay in their individual prowess. As I wrote at the time, the miracle was, not that the Germans pushed back the Russians, but that they did not annihilate them. We who were there knew that the superiority of the enemy was not in men but in munitions, which the Germans had been stealthily accumulating during the years of peace, when the rest of the world was asleep. In the fighting of this June it was shown that tired and exhausted Russian troops, when prepared, even when outnumbered at strategic points by two to one, are quite a match for the German infantry even when it comes relatively fresh to the conflict. During these four or five days, when the Russian supports were coming in only in dribbles, these worn veterans of the Russian advance stuck to their positions, though they died by thousands, and, as far as I can ascertain, by June 29th we had not lost a single position of importance during that time.

Now the German storm had passed for the

moment, and it must have been clear to the enemy that what he could not accomplish by the sudden fury of his attack, before the Russians had adjusted themselves to the blow, could probably not be effected at all when this front had been reorganized against him. It is always hazardous to venture prophecies, but one almost dares begin to hope now that this last rebuff of the Germans has cost them the final loss of the initiative in this theatre of operations. For a year past they have had it, and the Russians have been obliged to make their plans accordingly. Now the Germans, completely thrown out by the Austrian collapse, made a colossal effort to regain the offensive, and, as the situation stood at the end of June, had failed to achieve it, and we who were there, were optimistic enough to hope that from then on the Russian High Command would at last be obliging the Germans to make their plans and programmes to suit Russian strategy. Incidentally, we have not seen the Germans appear to any great advantage except in situations which had been carefully prepared for them by their leaders. The retirement from the Marne, which was never dreamed of, does not indicate any extraordinary adaptability in meeting the unexpected, neither did the Germans display any great originality in their first attempt on Warsaw. When it failed, they retired to



Germany at full speed to wait until a brand-new plan could be worked out in detail before they did anything at all. All during the retreat from Warsaw, when they were facing changing situations which could not have been foreseen in detail, they failed to score off the retreating enemy. The same is true of the Galician campaign, and again true of their slowness of conception of rapidly changing situations when they let Alexieff pull seven corps out of surrounded Vilna last autumn. We saw over there a sudden change in the situation, and beheld the Germans attempting to make a sudden move to meet the unexpected. This move had failed by the end of June, and now it remained to be seen what was to follow the absolute lull that had fallen on this front.

The Germans were too busily occupied with their own troubles to give a hand to Austria, whose plight was increasing in misery by a process of geometrical progression. Exactly what political effect is going to be the outcome in the Dual Monarchy remains to be seen ; but, knowing the weakness of the Austrian morale before this offensive, one could feel rather cheerful as to what must be going on in the south, with the Russians pouring into the Bukovina day by day, sweeping in towns and masses of prisoners with every mile of their advance. The situation for them is more critical than a year ago last May, when Russian incursions on the Hungarian plain forced Germany to take

cognisance of her Ally's plight or face the possibility of a political crisis there. Now a year of war has passed. Austria has another enemy in the West. The chance of the Germans snatching from the Russians the fruits of their great advance now seems gone, and it remains to be seen whether or not we can take Kovel in the face of what will be a desperate resistance on which the future of their campaign against Russia depends.

The lull before the battle was in the air. The only prophecy that I cared to venture was that the Russians would fight as they had never fought before, and, win or lose, their Allies would know that they had done all that flesh and blood can do in war.

I cannot, of course, discuss Russian strength or Russian numbers, but it is proper to summarize some of the aspects of the situation, before that battle broke in earnest, which placed Russia in the best position she has ever occupied since the beginning of the war. I think the brightest spot on this front is the Higher Command and the confidence which it inspires in all alike. Alexieff, presiding over the greater strategy of the three great army groups, is known for his past achievements both in offence and defence. As Ivanov's Chief of Staff at the beginning of the war, he is given credit by many for one of the most sweepingly successful offences in the whole war. When he went to the Warsaw front he became equally



GENERAL ALEXIEFF, NEW RUSSIAN CHIEF OF STAFF.



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR JOHN HANBURY WILLIAMS, BRITISH MILITARY ATTACHÉ AT RUSSIAN HEADQUARTERS.

efficient in defence, and his conduct of the great retreat and the Vilna movement, have shown him to be a past-master of defensive tactics. He then, at the great general staff, is presiding over the co-ordinated operations of all the armies, with the result that each lesser general knows that there is to be no bungling in high quarters in this campaign, for Alexieff, in victory or defeat, has always got the limit of value out of every situation offered him. When we consider Brussilov, the group commander in charge of the offensive at Rovno, we have but to look back at his record. No campaign was ever conducted with more dash and efficiency than that of his army in Galicia during the first part of the war, and no general ever pulled an army out of a critical situation with such consummate skill as did Brussilov last autumn during the great retreat. Here, again, we have a man tried in both defensive and offensive operations, as well as one who knows every foot of the country he has to deal with in this campaign. The commander of this army is in a lesser degree a duplicate in experience of his commander. Thus we may feel reasonable confidence as to the working of the Higher Command during the next month's operations.

The next consideration is the morale of the troops. I was writing all last summer (1915) of the extraordinary tenacity and psychology of an army in defeat, so it may be imagined what it

is when that army is advancing. The past few days show that even German shells and German numbers could not blast or bayonet them out of positions this year, when they had something to shoot and could at last listen to the music of their own shells bursting over the enemies' line. Brussilov himself directed my attention to the "will to conquer" of the troops. Now, as he said, it is a hundred times more vital and deep-rooted than during the early successes in Galicia in 1914. Then the soldiers fought through discipline and with meagre realization of what it was all about. This year it is quite different. What was at the beginning a war between Governments, has now become a war between peoples, and there is not a soldier in the army who does not understand now that he is fighting a hated enemy, and is willing to die if need be to dislodge the Germans from the soil of Holy Russia. It is this which is urging the troops forward now, singing at the top of their lungs and longing to get at the Germans. The feeling against the Austrians is quite different. Merely a perfunctory sense of hostility I should call it.

In addition, one now notes an improvement in technique in every branch of the Russian service. Our trenches are as good as, if not better than, those of the enemy. Our transport is infinitely better organized, with the result that there is a saving of time which has certainly increased its

efficiency by 50 per cent. The same is true of the ammunition columns, of the sanitary and Red Cross work, and of every other branch of the Russian service I have had a chance to see since I have been with the army this summer.

And, last but not least, we have—shells and rifles.

## CHAPTER XI

### PRISONERS

THOUGH the Austrian prisoners, from the beginning of the war, have always suffered from chronic melancholia, their psychology a year ago was relatively cheerful compared with the woe-begone mental frame of mind that one finds in them to-day. The numbers that the Russians took during the first thirty days of this offensive were now creeping up toward the quarter of a million mark, and one had plenty of opportunity to study them. During the two weeks after I left Kiev, there was not a day when I did not see them in numbers up to 5,000, and never on the road or elsewhere, when the chance occurred, did I miss an opportunity of talking with them. These poor devils always seemed to me to be bearing the worst burden of the entire war. Here they had been sitting in a country for months which not one of them wants for Austria, fighting for a greater objective which they do not in the least understand, and against a people whom for the most part they not only have no bitterness against but actually like. Their enthusiasm was



not extraordinary last year, when they were advancing, but their frame of mind now is pitiful. One of the most extraordinary phases of the war, as it seems to me, is how the Austrians have held out so long with an army that cared so little for the war, and which for more than a year has been obviously anxious to quit. Just before the last movement, as I am told by men who had been in Vienna within a few days of the Russian advance, every one was expecting peace within a few weeks, and the army generally seems to have been told that, after two years of victories for the Central Powers, the Allies were ready to come to some compromise and patch up a peace. The new offensive, which seems to have been utterly unexpected, absolutely blasted these hopes, and now the depression is profound. As one soldier said to me, "We are absolutely finished. Nothing but old men and young boys. We can do nothing more unless the Germans come to our relief, and that quickly. The Russians are not the same troops as we fought last year at all. We cannot in the least understand it. We have been told again and again that Russia was beaten and could do nothing more this year, if at all during the war. When the attacks first began we thought they must have received French artillery and either English or Japanese soldiers, for we have never seen the Russians fight as they fight now, even in the beginning of the war." As this was

a particularly intelligent individual, I stopped on the road and chatted with him for nearly half an hour. His regiment, he told me, had been practically wiped out in a single day in the fighting near Vladimir Volinski. Eight hundred were killed outright, hundreds more wounded, and the balance captured, with nearly all the officers. "Our greatest surprise since the beginning of the war," this man told me, "is the treatment we have received since we have been prisoners. Our officers have told us repeatedly that if we fell into the hands of the Russians we should be bayoneted, and that, if any were spared, it would only be to be maltreated and beaten until the end of the war. It was all untrue. We have never had such treatment. Splendid food, cigarettes, and nothing but kindness, from the day we were taken."

That this is perfectly true I can confirm without reservation, for I have seen every step of the route that these prisoners travelled, and inspected their stations on the road, and partaken of the meals prepared for them, which are exactly as good as those received by the Russian soldiers, which are considerably better than we ourselves were able to get at the small hotels where we were usually obliged to put up for the night. As nearly as I can estimate, one Russian guard is allotted to about a hundred Austrian prisoners, and these serve rather as guides than keepers. An amusing story which a colonel told me illustrates



AUSTRIAN PRISONERS AT SOUP KITCHEN.



AUSTRIAN PRISONERS

the docility of the Austrians. This incident happened in Galicia, and dated back some months, but is none the less typical of what is happening to-day. At a certain staff headquarters one day, five huge carts loaded with Austrians, all armed, drove up to the cottage where the General was encamped with his staff. A hussar with rifle slung over his back, with sword and revolver at his belt, came to the door and saluted respectfully. "Is this the Staff of the —th Cavalry Division?" he inquired. The officer who was addressed hesitated for a moment, for there were not above a dozen soldiers within call, while in the carts were above fifty armed enemy soldiers. "What do you want?" he asked, before committing himself. The soldier, still standing at the salute, replied, "We are prisoners, sir, and have been told to report at the headquarters of the division. I hope we have come to the right place." It appeared that, after being made prisoners, their captors had been attacked and had merely directed the prisoners where to go, themselves riding off into a new action.

As a matter of fact, the more one sees of the Austrians these days the better opinion one forms of their characters. These men, once captured, may be absolutely safely treated with consideration, for they never take advantage of their captors, no matter how bitterly they may have fought before being taken. In strong contrast are

the Germans, who sulk from the moment of their capture and take advantage of the least opportunity to turn on their hosts. An incident occurred on this front which illustrates why the Germans get fewer privileges, and why also there is less enthusiasm in taking any German prisoners at all. Out near —— the Russians made a small bag of about four hundred, which included eighty or ninety Germans with three officers, the balance being Austrians. These were sent to the rear under an escort of six Cossacks. While passing through a wood the Germans, at the word of command from their officers, attacked their guards and killed one of the Russian soldiers. The others appealed to the Austrian officers, who ordered the Austrians to protect the guards from the Germans. In the meantime a mounted Cossack made off on horseback, and in a few minutes there came whirling back in a cloud of dust a whole sotnia of Cossack cavalry who happened to be quartered near by. The Austrians were left to come on by themselves, while the Germans were driven ahead of the cavalry like a flock of sheep.

The whole front is filled with stories of German treachery, abuse of the white flag, etc. I cannot vouch for the truth of these innumerable anecdotes that one hears everywhere, but I can state without reserve that they are believed by practically every Russian soldier, with the result that there is a degree of bitterness between them and the

Germans which is one answer to the question one hears so frequently, why it is that there are not more German prisoners on this front. The Austrians are perfectly tame once behind the lines, and one sees them doing every kind of work. In Kiev, Rovno, and dozens of other towns, they walk about the streets as freely as the Russian soldiers themselves. One day in July I noticed an Austrian prisoner driving a carriage for a Russian officer. But since I have been in Russia, I think I have never seen a single German who was not an object of suspicion among the people, and certainly not one who went about unwatched.

If the weakening of Austria is indicated by the prisoners from her army, there is very little to suggest that the morale of the Germans has been greatly affected on this front. To give the enemy his due, one must admit that he has the most extraordinary fortitude and morale. We have a number of prisoners taken from a Bavarian division. None of these seem greatly distressed, though they admit quite frankly that their losses have been extraordinary and their units cut to pieces. "We have heaps of reserves on the West front," one of them remarked, "and shall be all right as soon as we can get them over here. We shall bring enough to retake Lutsk and push the Russians back to their old line." He admitted, however, that the Russians were the surprise of the war. His particular division had

fought the greater part of last summer in Galicia, and he expressed absolute amazement at the new energy and strength of the Russians this year. "They were not so a year ago," he remarked sadly, just as though some miscreant had been maliciously robbing him of a cherished illusion. It is difficult for these people to admit that their superiority of last year was due entirely to Russian shortage of munitions and rifles; but probably the truth is beginning to dawn on them at last. It certainly has on the Austrians, if not yet upon their more obstinate brothers in the German Army.

My own observations among prisoners over here lead me to believe that Austria must crumble long, long before Germany. Much as one hopes to find signs of weakening among the German troops, one still searches in vain, though it is perfectly true that they are far below what they were a year ago. But it is a great mistake to believe that the Germans are on the point of collapse, for if the prisoners I see on the East front are any basis for judgment, there is another year of fight left in the Teuton soldier, and perhaps more than that.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE SECRECY OF MODERN STRATEGY

So vast have become the operations on the Eastern front and so innumerable and complex are the objectives, that with each day that passes there are fewer and fewer persons in Russia who know what really is the strategy of the campaign which is being worked out so successfully on the Kovel front. Since Alexieff has been Chief of the Staff, under the Czar who is supreme head of the army, less and less is known as to what the programme is. If there are half a dozen men in all Russia who know what it is, beyond a week or two in advance, there are more than I think there are. In the early part of the war, before Russia was aroused to the real danger of the German spy system, everybody knew more or less what was going to happen for days and often weeks in advance. The strategy was all obvious, and so it was relatively easy to guess what was to be the next move. Now it is all different. The Army on the Russian fronts, as everybody knows, is divided into three great groups: the Northern front, the Western or Central front, and the Brussilov group,

or South-western front. Each of these forms an air-tight compartment by itself, so far as information is concerned, probably the only man in each group knowing the plans of Alexieff as to the whole front being the commander of the group himself, and it is perhaps doubtful if these know more than the scheme for a few weeks in advance. It is this secrecy as to the real aims of the great brain at General Headquarters which has to a great extent been responsible for the chaos which the Russian offensive has brought to the strategy of the whole enemy line from the Baltic to the Bukovina. Within an army group itself there is now as much mystery about the movements of the various armies comprising the groups as there is uncertainty as to what relation the movements of the groups have to each other. For the most part, generals commanding adjacent armies have the vaguest ideas as to what their neighbours are about to do, unless they are operating against the same objective, which rarely happens. The identical system is found within the armies themselves, only to a far greater extent. Perhaps a corps commander knows what his next neighbour is doing, but beyond that he is as much in the dark as a commander in an entirely different group. When we come to the lower units, such as divisions, brigades, and regiments we can dismiss them with the unreserved statement that they know nothing at all except the situation which they themselves

have to do with on their own front. As for the staff officers, from the Great Staff down to the lowest brigade staff officer, practically all alike get their information from the official *communiqués*. The most isolated place in all Russia, as far as news is concerned, is the staff headquarters of Alexieff. Everybody sees him every day, and many talk with him. If anybody gets out of him what is in his mind that person yet remains to be discovered. His most intimate associates, after spending hours in routine business with him, go down to the mess to get the official *communiqué*, to find out what has been doing two days before. I believe that there was more genuine secrecy as to what was the strategic plan of this summer's campaign than exists on any other front.

It was known generally, of course, that the Russians planned a great offensive, but other than orders for all fronts to be in readiness by a certain date, I question if many men over here knew exactly which would move first or what it would do when it did move. Brussilov probably got general orders to start an offensive and press forward through the weaknesses he developed. Beyond that, probably, the Great Staff did nothing more in regard to the details of Brussilov's movements, which I think must be credited to himself from the time he started his advance. In turn he no doubt handed on similar orders to each army.

which transmitted them to the corps, none of the smaller units in all probability knowing whether their movement was a feint, a mere reconnaissance in force, or part of a general assault. After the avalanche moved forward, any possible idea among the small units as to what they were doing, save from day to day, was lost. The man commanding a regiment or a battalion at the front knows about as much of the situation as a locomotive engineer on a branch line of a trans-continental railroad does of the financial policy to be adopted by the board of directors several thousand miles away. The regimental commander may get a telegram in the evening simply ordering him to take the trench before him at daylight. What this represents in the campaign is an absolute enigma to him. Every other regiment on the whole front may have received identical orders, or his may be the only one in the entire line. So vast have become the numbers of units engaged, that even division commanders can form but a very small conception of the importance of their own doings. A division may be making great headway, carrying villages and losing thousands of men, with every member engaged in the entire action convinced that they are making the great decisive move of the whole war, only to learn, weeks afterwards, that their great battle was only a feint to mislead the enemy as to the real intention.

For these reasons it became more and more

difficult over on the particular sector where I was at the time, to form an estimate or get any perspective as to what part we were actually playing in the combined scheme. It seemed to us that the capture of Kovel represented one of the major objectives on the whole front, even to a greater extent than Baronivichi, because, with Kovel lost to the enemy, the latter important junction would be nearly certain to go as a by-product of the Russian more southerly advance. It was simple, then, to keep one's eye on Kovel as the most important aim we had on that front, but it was not simple at all to estimate the effect of each day's fighting in its bearing on our chances of taking the town itself. If one goes to the extreme front, as I aimed to do, once or twice a week, one loses all sense of values whatever. Where the fighting is in progress there is the chaos of noise and the confusion that always attends the back-yard of a big action, with wounded pouring back and munitions going forward. There is the unbroken roar of guns of all calibres, and the wounded are there to tell stories of desperate hand-to-hand fighting, and perhaps of a trench or village captured. It seems as though something very important were going on. If we dine that night at division headquarters, the General alludes to it as a brisk affair, while the commander of the corps mentions casually that some of his units have been engaged during the day. Back at the

army headquarters they will tell you that nothing of importance has happened, barring a demonstration against a certain position. At the group headquarters it is mentioned as a skirmish, and back at General Headquarters they have probably never heard of it at all. Yet at the front there is nothing to distinguish one of these local actions from an attack which may have for its motives consequences of the most far-reaching importance for the entire front.

One may realize, then, how extremely difficult it is for the observer with the Russian forces to judge anything from actual visits to the front, other than changes in tactics and methods of fighting, or questions of morale. These, however, are of sufficiently great importance to take one up into the maelstrom at least once a week. The nearer one gets to the front the more communicative one finds the officers; but, unfortunately, they know only the least important things. They will tell you every detail of their operations, and marshal their soldiers in review for you if they are not actually fighting or in the trenches. But when they have told you all, you find that you know no more about the situation as a whole than you did before you came. The farther back you get the more the staffs know and the less communicative do they become. One may say that the line of demarcation between tactics and strategy lies between the corps and

the army. After you have left the corps, where one gets quite a lot of information about local tactics, you get strictly into the strategic considerations. At the staff of an army, a single battalion lost at the front, is not of sufficient importance, if it be night, to necessitate the wakening up of the commander of the army. Not until losses or reverses begin to affect the strategy of his army does the situation become acute at the big staff headquarters. I do not know what it takes to arouse excitement at the Group Headquarters, but Brussilov is so calm and collected that nothing less than an army in retreat would alter his expression, and I dare say you would have to look closely to see any emotion even then. As for the Grand Headquarters and Alexieff, I think that nothing short of the end of the world would disturb the even tenor of his ways.

I have said that information gets scarcer and more difficult to obtain as one goes back up the succession of the staffs. At Grand Headquarters it is absolutely *nil*, and, other than the favoured handful in the inner circle, as much is known in England, I verily believe, of the Russian perspective strategy as there. As an illustration of this extraordinary well of secrecy, I recall an incident that occurred last year. When Warsaw fell, I motored at once to the staff of Alexieff, and then by easy stages to Baronivichi, where I arrived several days later. I met there an officer who

had been living there for months. "Well," he remarked cheerfully, "where did you fellows come from?" We replied that we had just come from Warsaw. "Really," he said. "That is indeed interesting. What is the situation there now? Do you think we shall be able to hold it?"

And when we told him gently that Warsaw had fallen three days before, I am not exaggerating when I say that his face was one of the most interesting studies that I have seen since I have been in Russia.



## CHAPTER XIII

### EARLY JULY FIGHTING, KOVEL FRONT

EVEN so near the front as an Army Headquarters, and as early as the second week in July, it was possible to trace very broadly for oneself the various phases in the operations through which we were passing.

The first phase, which I have described in a previous chapter, can perhaps be called that of the original offensive, which formed a practically uninterrupted movement of the Russian army in this sector from its winter lines to and beyond Lutsk and, in a general way, to the line of the Styr. Here the movement began to slow down, from several causes. In the first place, after such continuous fighting there was perhaps need of a second wind for the Russians, and, in the second place, the redistribution of enemy troops was resulting in the accumulation of men and material before the Russians faster than they could bring up their own. There can be no doubt but that the attacks of the Germans, which began with such fury in the latter days of June, were

never planned as a mere check for the Russians. From the evidence of prisoners from all quarters on this front, it is moderately clear that the retirement up to this point was viewed by the Germans as an unfortunate setback which would be quickly corrected by the retaking of Lutsk and the throwing of the Russians back on to their original line, and perhaps, in the confusion which it was assumed would ensue, even farther. Even the badly beaten and confused Austrians seem to have felt that, as soon as the Germans had time to get together and bring up reinforcements, they would, after a few weeks of vigorous efforts, hand them back the positions which had been lost, and that the war would continue along the same lines as before the Russian advance. The rapid concentration of German troops with many heavy guns in front of Kovel, made it perfectly clear what they intended to do over here. For days on end they attacked the Russian lines with the greatest desperation imaginable, their main point of attack being along the railroad and in the region of Roshistshe. The advance of the Kaladin army had left a salient on our north, due to the fact that this army had advanced rapidly while the army of Loesche, next us, had not yet become seriously engaged. When the Germans failed to gain results in the direction of Roshistshe, after extremely heavy losses, their attacks in that quarter gradually evaporated and they began to hammer

viciously at the line farther to the north. After many days of failure here this attempt also began slowly to evaporate. I think it fair to assume that what happens on this front these days in our strategy, may be set down as preconceived and fully planned operations. The fact that Loesche did not begin his advance simultaneously with Kaladin, was not because he was unprepared, but was undoubtedly due to a definite plan on the part of the higher command. No doubt it was felt, with reasonable confidence, that Kaladin's army was strong enough to hold its ground, and that the time for Loesche's advance was after the Germans had made their distributions and wasted themselves as much as possible against the stubborn corps of the army on what we have been calling the Kovel front, because heretofore it has been the one which has been more directly menacing that important junction than its northern neighbour.

By July 1st or 2nd the German hope to regain Lutsk and bring about a disaster was gone, and their attacks, which still kept up, must be considered as a distinct defensive move on their part rather than operations based on any genuine hope of driving the Russians back. I think the worst blow the Austrians have had in this war, as far as their morale is concerned, may be charged to this period, when it began gradually to dawn upon them that their German Allies, whom they had

come to regard as super-men, in every way superior to the Russians, could not, with all their massing of troops and preponderance of heavy artillery, make a dent on the Russian line, which was hurriedly dug in on a position which one might say had been barely selected overnight. With the coming of the Allied offensive in the West, with the increasing probability that it would be no longer possible to shift blocks of corps back and forth across Germany, came the real opportunity on this front. This was perhaps what Loesche had been waiting for. In any event, about this time his whole superb army, now transferred to the command of Brussilov, began to attack the enemy in front of him, and almost from the first day the salient formed by our exposed northern wing began to be eaten away by the advance of his army. Though this was our neighbour army, we got the barest information as to the nature of its operations, other than the names of the towns which it was taking from day to day, and that not directly.

In the early days of July Loesche's cavalry gobbled up the railway station of Manevitch, which is on the line of the railway that runs from Kiev to Kovel *viâ* the junction town of Sarney. It is absolutely impossible for any one to realize the difficulties of these operations unless one can look over a large-scale map of the country, whereon the marshes and forests are shown. Then one

appreciates the lack of roads through this region. How the cavalry ever got there is not at all clear, and probably it was as unexpected to the Germans as the arrival of the Russian infantry at Erzerum, where some units literally came out of the clouds on an avalanche of snow from the tops of the mountains. At Manevitch there is a road running nearly due north and south. In the northern direction it reaches Leshmouka, whilst towards the south it extends to Kolki, and thence joins the Kovel-Rovno *chaussée*, 21 versts north-west of Rovno. On the maps it is marked with a double line indicating a first-class road, but as a matter of fact it is little more than an avenue of sand cut through the woods, as I know to my sorrow, having spent hours trying to wallow through it in a motor-car. On reaching Manevitch this road gave the Russians instant means of consolidating their front in a solid line with fair communications. In any event, they began to advance instantly in the direction of the Stochod, that lies just to the west. In the meantime, wherever one could find a town on a road anywhere near Manevitch, one could mark it with a red pencil as being in Russian hands.

Next, we were suddenly advised that Loesche had taken the town of Nobel, some 40 versts south-west of Pinsk. It was impossible to get any information at the time as to how the Russians had been able to get with such suddenness to

these places tucked away amidst the marshes and lakes hidden in the Russian wilderness. This, however, we do know from the inventory which came back to us from the staff of the commander of the group, and that is that from July 4th to 7th the armies of Loesche and Kaladin, operating together in this region, bagged 40,524 private soldiers, 1,099 officers, 63 guns, and an interminable list of military odds and ends that would almost fill a dictionary. As most of these prisoners were nearest to the northern line of railroad, they were going back *via* Sarney, and hence I was unable to see them or to learn the details of the disaster that brought so many of them into Russian hands. It has been likewise impossible to ascertain what proportion of these were Austrian and what were German, but the opinion at Headquarters was that about half were soldiers of the Dual Monarchy, while the remaining portion was about equally divided between Bavarians and Prussians. These actions were described by the Russians as being intensely furious, and there is no doubt but that the enemy fought like lions before they surrendered. The weather was intensely hot, with the rays of the sun beating down from a cloudless sky, and it is said that the enemy were so exhausted after their efforts to hang on to their positions, that they had not the strength or heart left in them to make any effort to escape.

By July 9th the Russians were holding practically the entire eastern bank of the Stochod, between the Sarney-Kovel and the Kovel-Rovno railways, with here and there a foothold on the western slopes of the river, while north of the Kovel-Sarney line the troops of Loesche were emerging on to the river at various points. We find now that, from attack with intention to retake Lutsk, the Germans were thrown on to the defensive, and, after hotly contesting their positions, we saw them thrown back on to what will probably come to be called the line of the Stochod. From where we were, with the information that we had available, which I admit was extremely meagre, it looked as though the Germans had been outmanœuvred, outfought, and outwitted throughout this entire movement, which represents one of the neatest and best co-ordinated operations which the war has produced on any front. Such advances as the Russians made in the vicinity of Roshistshe must probably be credited to the advance of Loesche in the north, though the advances around Kolki turned the Germans out of their trenches at the point of the bayonet. It would seem from these operations that the Germans on this front have lost their imagined superiority over the Russians and have simply been out-classed.

About July 10th we were very evidently working into another distinct phase of this offensive

movement, which was to be the German-Austrian defence of the Stochod. This river seems to be an ideal defensive position, and I learn that the enemy did a great deal of preliminary work on it late last autumn, and there is no question but that the last few weeks had witnessed German zeal and intelligence working overtime to put this line into the strongest condition which it lay within his capacity to do.

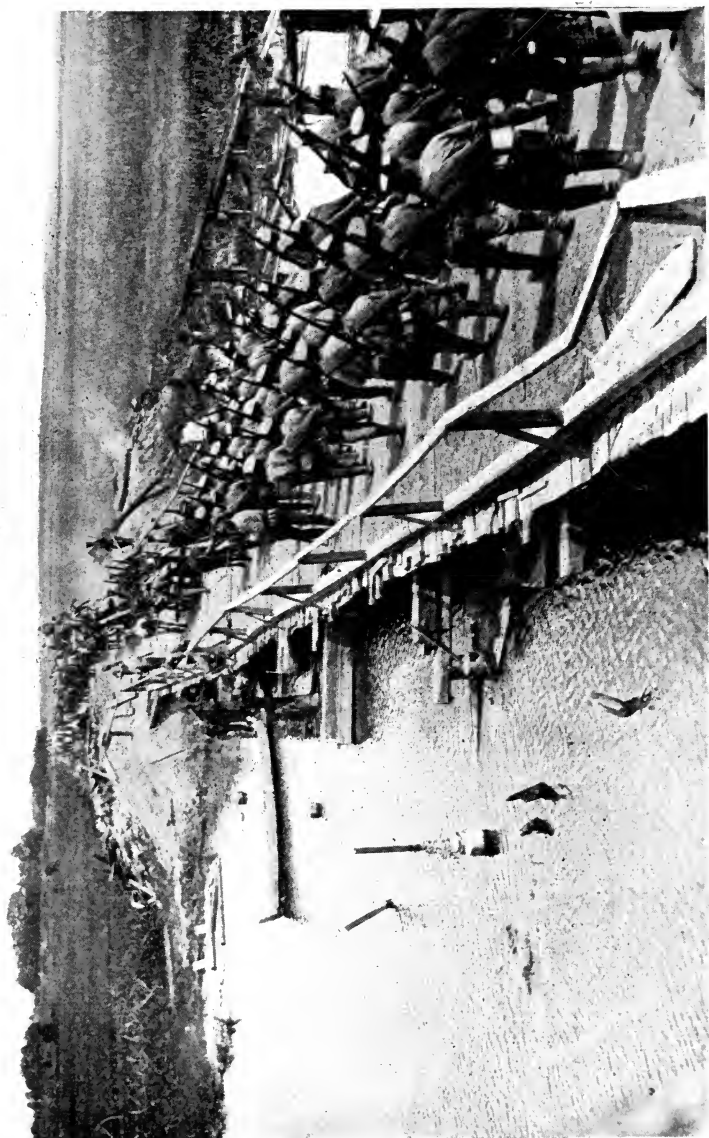
At that date the Russians were heroically attacking on this line, and, as I have said, had gained a foothold in several places west of the river, but the line as a whole was not as yet seriously dented. The river, winding through marshes with occasional bluffs on the western bank, seems an extremely strong position, and one could not expect the Russians to do the impossible and overcome this defence in a day. At the time it was futile to make any estimate as to how long it would delay them, but it was certain that the crossing was not going to be an easy task.

Because the Germans have come croppers over here and in the West must not mislead us into the belief that they are about to collapse suddenly. From the experience of the past one can trust the Germans to make twice the resistance expected and to develop twice the number of reserves which one supposed was physically possible. In addition to the Stochod

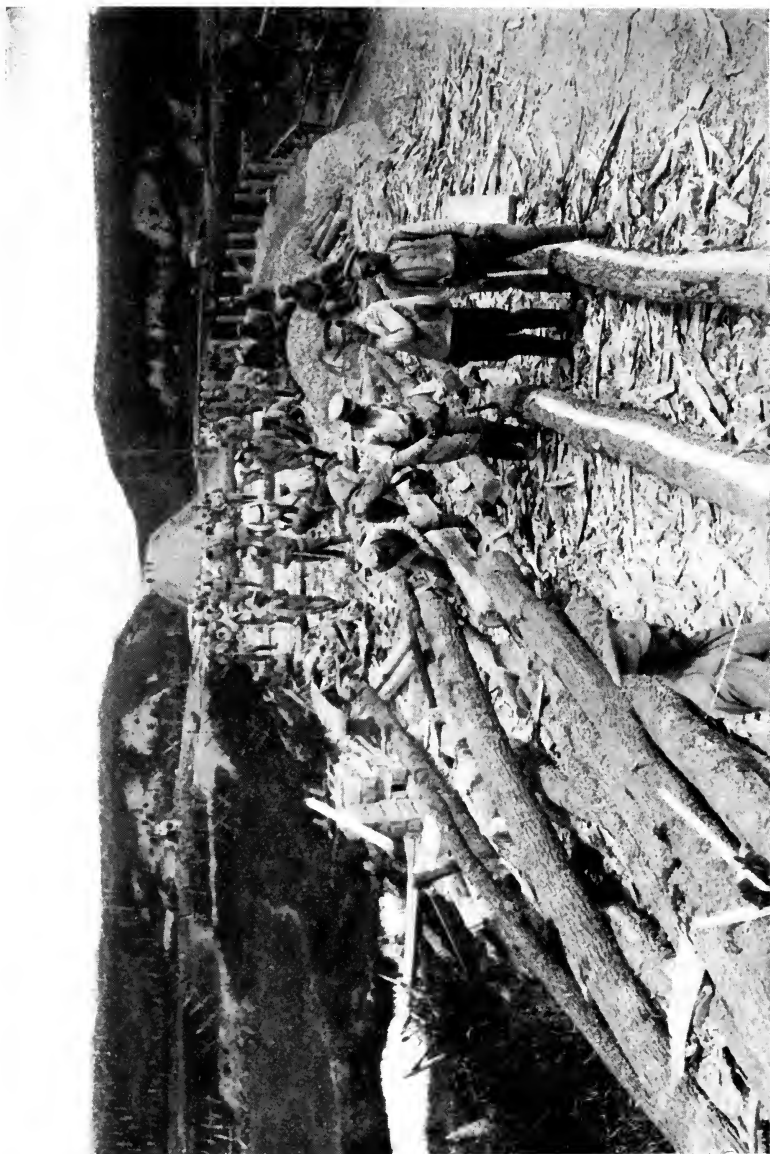


line, the Germans were making a frantic, and no doubt extremely intelligent, effort to put Kovel in a state of defence. It was uncertain at the time whether their main stand was to be on the Stochod, with Kovel as merely a check to enable them to get out without undue haste, or whether the Stochod was to be merely a check and their Kovel position to be their final stand. I am inclined to believe that the fate of Kovel hinges on the Stochod line, however, and that if they lose that we shall see Kovel evacuated and the German armies moving to a new line of defence elsewhere. Operations north of the Pinsk-Brest-Litowsk line are entirely too far afield for me to write about from this point of view. The capture of Baronivichi is of course tremendously important, though Kovel seems to be more vital, inasmuch as it not only severs the Germans from the Austrians but threatens Brest-Litowsk, which once involved would mean the instant retirement of the German line east of it. Many believed that Kovel taken would produce the same effect, but one is apt to believe unduly in the importance of the particular situation to which one is for the moment committed. The movements in our centre, however, have affected us to the extent of hindering German shifting of reserves along the eastern front of their army, and if any have come here it is probably from the north front. We were still getting against us reinforcements of

guns and munitions, but there seemed to be a dearth of the human material coming here, and probably none at all has come from the Western theatre of operations since the beginning of the Allied offensive.



RUSSIAN INFANTRY AND CONVOY ON THE LINE OF ADVANCE.



RUSSIAN ENGINEERS REPAIRING BRIDGE DESTROYED BY AUSTRIANS.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE LEMBERG FRONT

THESE huge military movements seem to ebb and flow like the tides of the sea, and after one has watched them closely for a long time one gets to sense, as though from the atmosphere on the roads and in the various headquarters, which way the current is setting. So it is not very difficult to time one's visits to the different armies and various sectors engaged. A short visit, above described, to one of the corps that is pushing on to the Stochod line led me to believe that we would have what in this campaign one calls a lull, though in reality these periods represent intensive activity, and at the front itself suggest what in any other war would look like a serious action. The pushing of the Germans back on to the Stochod had not been easy, and once they had withdrawn into their prepared line, it was clear that a period of some days, if not weeks, would elapse before there was a radical change in our lines. As we were across the river in a number of places, it was certain that the

next phase would be the desperate German counter-attacks which always follow our advances. After these have evaporated one usually sees the Russians begin again, with patient heroism, to attack once more.

The Stochod front is at best an impossible place for an observer, because there are practically no observation points on our side of the river, save the extremely meagre outlook one gets from a front trench through a periscope. Along the front hang the sausage-shaped observation balloons which serve as the substitute for ridges and hills for the direction of artillery fire. One can spend days on this front within a few miles of a fierce action and see nothing but bad roads, stretches of marsh, and blocks of heavy timber. It is very difficult to get about, and I defy any one to draw any conclusions as to what is going on save from the various staffs which are directing operations. It is true one hears the constant roar of guns and the rattle of machine-guns, and occasionally one has the pleasure of witnessing a shell explode in a near-by field, coming from some battery miles away which has, no doubt, been advised from that wretched balloon, hanging in the blue miles away, that there is movement on the road.

The day of serenely watching war with any sense of security has gone for ever. At the front one gets long-range shells from the most un-

expected quarters, and in the rear one always has the pleasant diversion of the air-raids. The new German corps that had come over from the West brought plenty of flyers, apparently, and there was not a fair day for weeks when we did not have, even in Rovno, from two to three bomb-dropping expeditions a day. In Rovno the first flyer was due about six in the morning, while the second was scheduled for about 8.30, number three making his trip between five and six in the afternoon. Their movements seemed to be as regular as though they were travelling over a prescribed course on schedule time, and on nearly every occasion they dropped their bombs in about the same place. Fortunately, their route took them 400 yards from my hotel, and nearer than that we have had no bombs. This particular one fell on a house occupied by Sisters of the Red Cross, not one of whom was injured, though the house was badly wrecked. Since the Germans have been driven back to the Stochod they have been very active at the front with their aeroplanes, adding to their bombing activities the new departure of firing into the towns with machine-guns. I cannot learn that this course of action had any result other than to increase the already bitter feeling against them felt by the entire army.

As the Kovel front seemed for the moment profitless, and as air-raids had ceased to divert,

I moved over to our neighbour army, the —th, which was holding the northern end of what I suppose one may call the Lwow (Lemberg) front. There had been an extended lull on this front for several weeks. This was in no way due to any lack of capacity to advance here, but under Alexieff there is perfect symmetry in the movements of all armies.

Fortunately, there are some good roads in this part of the country, and so I was able to spend a day or two in cruising around in a motor-car behind the lines, in the vicinity of Potchaief, where stands one of the most famous monasteries in Russia. All during this winter the huge pile, which stands on a hill and can be seen for fifteen miles in every direction, was in the hands of our friends the Austrians. This monastery, with its huge cathedral, innumerable chapels, and its 250 cells for the monks, is one of the biggest piles in Europe, and naturally it was an ideal place for a winter's base. The church itself has not been molested, except to the extent that copper was taken from the decorations, while the only sacrilege apparent was the use of one of the chapels for the exhibition of moving pictures. Some extremely clever artist has painted pictures all over the walls of the Archbishop's dining-room, but otherwise that has not been seriously harmed. From the tower of the cathedral one gets a wonderful view, stretching in the west to Galicia and to the eastward





DUBNO : COMMUNICATION TRENCHES RUNNING THROUGH A HOUSE.

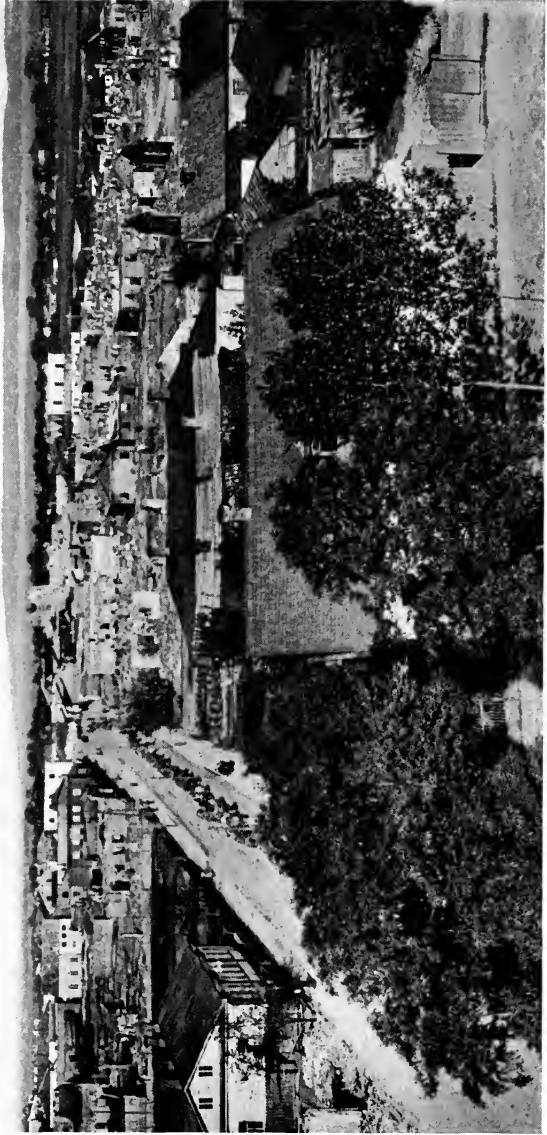


AUSTRIAN TRENCH DUG IN DUBNO CHURCH.

over the positions held during the winter by the Russians. These positions I inspected, and found superior in every way to the Austrian. Here, as elsewhere, one finds the Russians had picked their position, forcing the Austrians to dig up communication trenches for enormous distances. These particular ones were nearly two miles long from the point where they left cover near Potchaief to their front line trenches a few hundred yards away from the Russian line. There was not, however, very serious fighting here, for, with the big break in the line near Dubno, these units "folded their tents like the Arabs, and silently stole away." They were then in a position to the west, almost exactly on the line that separates Galicia from Russia.

Dubno itself, where I was staying, was an extraordinary spectacle. As far as I know, it is almost the only town in the war zone where the lines were in the town itself, or practically so. There was one place where only thirty paces separated the Russian line from the Austrian, which were divided by a small river that cuts off one part of the town from another. Everywhere along this stream the houses on both sides were fortified with trenches running through the cellars and loopholes cut through the masonry at frequent intervals. The old historic fortress of Dubno, around which cling the romantic traditions of the wars between the Poles and Cossacks, has been honeycombed with

trenches and its parapets loopholed for modern rifle-fire. The Austrians are not, as far as I could observe, particularly destructive in their inclinations, and, as the town is a Russian one, both sides seem to have made every effort to spare it during the greater part of the period of its occupation by the Austrians. When the big offensive started, however, one of the strongest of the Russian blows fell just north of the town, and inasmuch as the Austrians, relying on their defences, put up a hard resistance, the forces lying so near each other in the town became involved in a fierce action and the greater portion of the town lying between the two armies has been wiped out by artillery fire, whole blocks represented by heaps of crumbled ruins, with only here and there a chimney standing to show where had been a building. The population wisely retired to the woods west of the town until the fighting was over. Now they were back again, picking over the ruins and clearing areas on which to rebuild. One hears that the Russian Government is planning to assist in this work of repair by advancing 25 per cent. of the cost, to give the owner a chance to get started in life once more. No one here seems to have felt any grievance against the Austrians, who appear to have conducted themselves decently and given no cause of offence to the civilian population. Such bitterness as may have flared up in the first days of the war is finished. The general feeling



VIEW OF DUBNO, PARTLY DESTROYED BY SHELL FIRE.



DUBNO IN FLAMES.

is that the Austrians play the game, and are a chivalrous enemy, certainly compared to the Germans. I saw one place near the town where the Austrians had erected a cross with the inscription, "Here lie five brave Russians who fell on the Field of Honour on the 17th of September, 1915." I suppose every Russian who has seen it has been softened by it. When this war is over there will be, I am convinced, a far greater friendship between the two countries than any one ever dreamed of before.

In Dubno, as in Rovno, we have the constant aeroplane visitations. I am inclined to believe that Dubno is, in fact, the first station on the route of the airmen who come to Rovno, for their visitations here seem to be timed about thirty minutes earlier, which is about the time it would take to reach Rovno. The last few days they have been shooting into the town with machine-guns. These planes are from the Austrian front, and the Russians explain to you that probably they are manned by German flyers who are responsible for the bombs and the machine-gun practice.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE PRELIMINARIES OF VICTORY

It is quite worth while enduring a year of retreats and evacuations to be with this glorious army during the days and weeks of success. From May until October of last year was not a golden period for correspondents, and toward the latter end of that dismal summer, when faith in the Russian character was the only enduring asset to justify optimism, operations for a newspaper man were extremely difficult. Even one's best friends looked as though they had received bad news from home when one motored up to the staff, usually in the process of evacuation, with requests for petrol, inner tubes, or new tyres. But, having stuck out that most distressing period of the war and having shared with nearly all these armies the worst of their fortunes, made our return this year, in the moments of success, an extremely happy one for us. Go where one would those days, one found a hearty welcome and a cordial reception, no matter how busy were the staff nor how critical the situation. The army of General Sakharoff I was with last year, during



the retreat from Galicia, and returning to it this year, when our prospects were so different, was a most delightful occasion. I lunched with the General and his staff at his headquarters on July 13th. After a consultation with his Chief of Staff (whom I had also known in certain dismal operations a year ago), he at once directed me where to go to witness the beginning of new and sweeping operations. With Colonel von Wohl of the General Staff, and an extra motor-car, we left the headquarters and motored to Lutsk, where we arrived about eight in the evening. Owing to tyre troubles, I left the second car there and started at nine for the positions. As we stepped into our motor there came the first peal of thunder, and rain began to fall in torrents. I have rarely seen such lightning, nor experienced such a down-pour as lasted for hours. I was at a place about twenty odd versts south-west of Lutsk. There is a fair *chaussée* for ten versts, a rotten road for five more, and after that nothing in particular except mud. With our head-lights showing dimly the way ahead, we left Lutsk and managed fairly well until we got off the *chaussée*, which was like jumping off a side-walk into the mud, and in two minutes we were wallowing through mud six inches deep, with wheels spinning and smoking tyres filling the air with the smell of super-heated rubber. One instant the entire landscape would be thrown into vivid relief by

the flash of the lightning, and the next, with eyes half blinded by the glare, we would be staring into a blackness which the tiny ray of our lamps in the rainy atmosphere seemed only to accentuate. After each flash we were so isolated in the velvet blanket of the night that one seemed as detached from one's fellows as a ship in mid-ocean or a marooned mariner on a desert island. With the coming of the flashing lightning, with its illumination of the country for miles about, we could see that we were in the midst of the seething life of the army, for, dragging through the fields, where the mud was less deep, were mile after mile the endless columns of the Russian munition and transport trains. Caisson after caisson, each with its six sturdy little horses straining against their collars, dragging their loads of shells forward, the riders on the teams dripping with the rain, their necks pulled in between their shoulders (even as a turtle pulls his head into his shell) to keep the water from running down their necks. For one instant one sees them stretching away ahead and behind on the road as far as the eye can reach, and then the return of the darkness shuts them out as utterly as the putting of a cap on the lens of a camera.

Thus for an hour we plunged and wallowed through the mud, which each moment threatened to bring us to a standstill for the night. Now there creeps into the background of the turmoil of

sound made by the thunder and the roar of the wind and rain upon the canvas of the motors another sound, which is so unbroken that at first we take it for the rumbling of the storm, but quick white flashes on the distant horizon, first here and then there, indicate clearly enough where the Russian guns are laying the foundation for tomorrow's attacks. After a bit our road enters a wood, and for several miles we are as if in a tunnel of darkness, save when the flash of Nature's searchlight reveals that teeming life still travelling by our side along the fringes of the road. While still in the wood there glows upon the western sky a tiny spot of rosy hue, such a gentle radiance as from one's hearth at home. Even as we look it grows until, before we emerge from the wood the sky is alight with the reflected crimson of the flames from a burning village. Even as we watch it, there blossoms and flowers another and another illumination of the western heavens which brings the trees on the ridge we are approaching into a silhouette where every branch stands out vividly against the lighted background.

As we cross the ridge we discover that we are bearing directly down on the positions which lie some versts ahead, the line clearly marked out by the flashes of the guns and the flares and rockets which the enemy is continually sending up to check what is going on within the Russian trenches. The burning villages are within our

lines and have been set alight by Austrian shells, and they burn like tinder, a whole village burning itself out in half an hour. It is very difficult at night to estimate the distance of bursting shells, and when the jagged flashes, like a tiny splash of molten steel in the heavens, began to dot the darkness on the road ahead of us, we stopped the motor, questioning the men moving forward at our sides. We could ascertain nothing. They knew the road to a certain battery or a certain brigade headquarters, and had indeed been there many times before, but the name of the village was a matter of entire indifference.

The rain had now ceased, and our headlights cut through the moisture-freed air like shafts of light in a darkened room, and must have been as clearly visible to the Austrian observers as a lighthouse on the seashore. We put them out. It is extraordinary how rapidly one's point of view changes in time of war. An hour before, we had been cursing the lamps because they were too weak to show the way through the mud, and now we hastily extinguished them entirely because they seemed to us like two 2,500 candle-power searchlights whose rays must illuminate even the gun-positions of the enemy. It being perfectly clear that our headquarters were not in our trenches, we turned at right angles in what we believed must be the general direction of —, though not until we were within a few versts of the place did we

find any one who had ever heard of ——. It is incredible how little interest the soldiers take in the names of places. They may live in a village for a month and never have heard its name. To them it is the place of a certain unit, and it is immaterial whether it be called Paris, London, or——.

Slipping and sliding over wet fields, we ran parallel to the line of the front for an hour. Personally I had about as much idea of reaching headquarters during this night of blackness and bad roads as of reaching ——, when suddenly we emerged on an excellent road and found ourselves in a small village. The first man (he happened to live there) announced with great dignity that of course it was ——. No doubt he felt as an Englishman stopped in London would if you asked him how far it was to Piccadilly. The tiniest aggregation of houses in Russia is to the peasants, many of whom have not journeyed in their lives a score of miles away, of far greater importance than all the capitals of Europe, and they never appear to understand how it is that the stranger does not know such an important place at sight.

In ten minutes more we were in the little cottage, which was staff headquarters of the army corps. A few rooms cleared of all furniture but tables and chairs, was the centre of the web from which radiated the nerve-fibres that controlled the

fortunes of some 40,000 men crouching in their trenches not far away, waiting for the decision of the quiet little man who greeted us at the door, inquiring if we would have tea. The commander I had known before, and his corps long before he had himself commanded it. It was one of those heroic units that stood on the Bzura line before Warsaw, and as I had left Warsaw with one of these very divisions that Wednesday night nearly a year ago, I felt a certain exultation at being with them again in the hour of the rising of their star. With his maps spread out on the tables, my friend the commander explained to me what he proposed to do. With extra detailed sketched maps of every important point on his front, he knew his terrain as well as the peasants who had lived their lives there. The artillery preparation, he told me, had begun in four corps simultaneously at exactly four in the afternoon. "I have destroyed the barbed wire in ten places on my front, each to a width of fifty feet, and shall attack in two hours," and he looked at his watch as casually as though an attack was of no more importance than the drinking of a cup of tea. Our neighbour corps, he also mentioned, had had equal success, and already avenues were cut in the enemy's entanglements in a dozen places. War, to these generals, has become in these days an exact science, and they take their battles with as much unconcern as they do their meals. One might

well imagine that the staff of a corps which formed the centre of a zone in which 160,000 men would in a few hours be engaged, would be a place of the most intense excitement. Far from it. The entire programme had been worked out to the minutest detail, and, save for one officer receiving the reports over the field telephone, the day's work was in fact finished. It reminded me in atmosphere very much of an election headquarters on election day. The work finished, the ardent political workers sit about waiting for the returns from the balloting-places that will indicate whether their efforts have been fruitful or in vain.

"At five o'clock in the morning," the General told me, "I shall go to a certain observation point I have had prepared, where we may view the battle-field. I expect to have carried all the positions on my front by that time, in which case we will have an interesting day, for I shall move forward at once. I shall be very happy if you will accompany me." I thankfully consented, and with our Colonel guide we were shown to a neighbouring cottage, where a room had been reserved for our arrival. Clean straw brought in by some soldiers makes an excellent substitute for beds, and here I guessed we should spend a most comfortable night. Before we rolled into our overcoats we glanced out of the window of our cottage. The rain had stopped, and the atmosphere was slowly clearing. Along the sky-line to the

west of us was the constant play as of sheet lightning, but the dull reverberations and crashes which came ever on our ears, told us that it was the flashes of our guns still hammering away at the line of the enemy's trenches which we were to attack within a few hours. How different our lot, as we stretched out on the clean-smelling straw, to that of the men a few versts away, waiting in their trenches for the word to advance! "How many will die within a few miles of us before we wake again?" was the thought that passed through my sleepy mind as I closed this day.



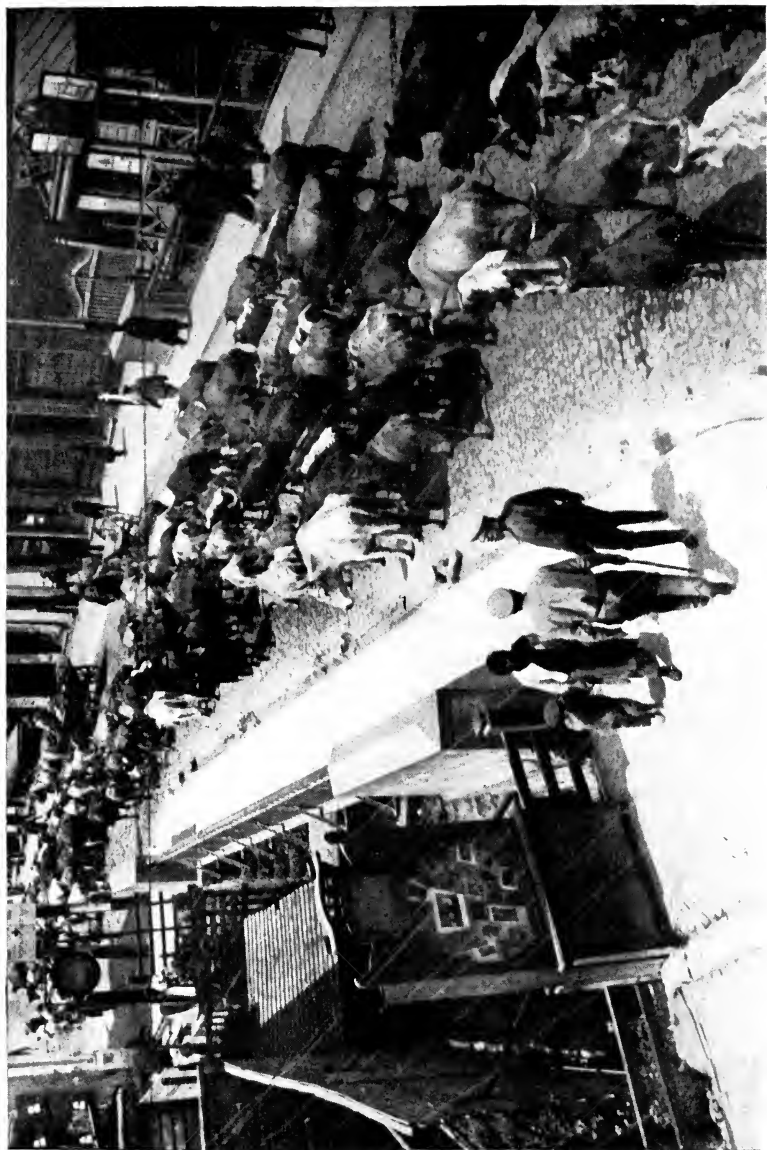
## CHAPTER XVI

### WITH THE VICTORIOUS

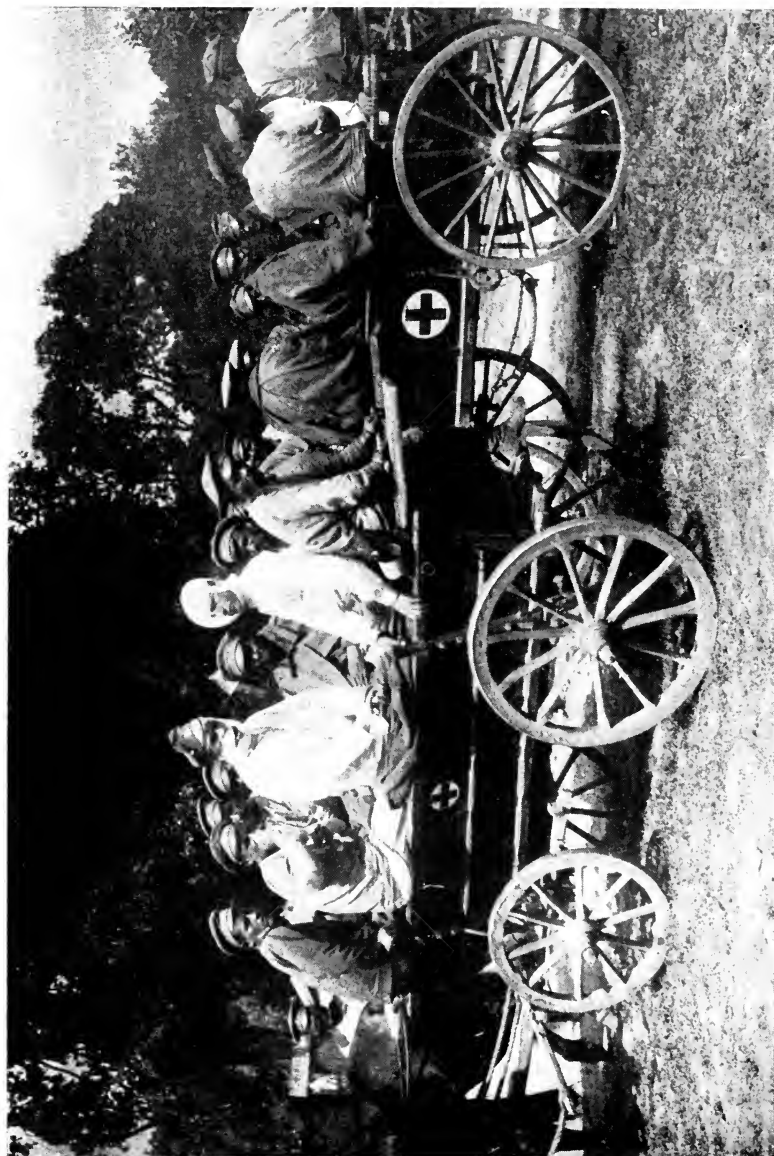
THE first dull grey tinge of a misty morning stole in our cottage room when we rolled out of our straw beds next day. A soldier sleepily rubbing his eyes, gave us a bit of bread and some hot soup, and we were ready for the day's work. Around at the staff of the corps we met the Chief of Staff in slippers and without a collar, standing in the door looking dreamily across the hazy landscape. He smiled genially when he saw us as he announced that our infantry had already attacked and carried the first line of the Austrian trenches on the front of his corps. Away to the west came the heavy booming of guns, muffled as by cotton in the moisture that still hung in the air. As we talked, the General in command stepped out of his room as brisk and dapper as though he had had a night's sleep (which he hadn't). His face was wreathed in smiles as he pulled on his gloves, and, lighting a cigarette, stepped out on to the verandah before which stood his motor. A moment later we started, and, winding our way out of the little muddy village, we were soon in among the rolling

hills that stretch in great sweeps throughout this section of the country. On the ridge of each crest one may look across a wonderful vista of undulating country sown with wheat and barley, with here and there patches of pine. Though the hour was early the whole countryside, now completely given up to the army, was beginning to move. In every grove artillery ammunition parks were packing up, and already caissons were pulling out on to the roads to overtake their parent batteries which had already left their positions of the night before, and were pushing closer to the retiring Austrians, who had succeeded in escaping from their first line of trenches. Every village through which we passed was crowded with reserves getting on the march to be within easy call of the front, in case the enemy made a counter-attack against the troops that had been fighting their way on during the night. With each mile of our advance the signs of life and activity became more numerous. But as we pushed with our motors through the mud we soon began to encounter the back-wash from the battle-field.

First one met a weary, mud-stained soldier with a red dripping bandage around one hand which he nursed tenderly with his other. He was the vanguard of the column that from now on we passed for an hour. Next came groups of others wounded so slightly that they could still walk to



CATTLE FOR THE ARMY.



THE FIGHT FOR KOVEL: WOUNDED WAITING TO BE SENT TO THE REAR.

the rear. That is, those with minor head and arm hits, which represent but a few weeks or even days out of the firing-line. Behind these came the creaking peasant carts, each with its pair of tiny horses tugging along through the mud and ruts of the roads, and each loaded with wounded. Some held six or eight men who were able to sit up. All had on only the first-aid bandages and most of them were deep-stained with the blood that oozed through the hastily bound dressing. The attack had been made in the pouring rain, through a marsh, and the soldiers were saturated with mud, and their faces, what with dirt and the pain of their wounds, looked to us in the early morning light the colour of putty. Next, one began to encounter the carts of severely wounded, two in a cart lying on the straw, their eyes staring up into the misty morning sky, their expressions indifferent, stolid, and unemotional. Some clung to the sides of the carts to ease the jolting caused by the roughness of the roads. Others lay as though dead, with blankets thrown over their faces. These sights, however, have become as common now as the mud of the road itself, and hardly warrant description.

Next, intermingled among the carts, began to appear a sprinkling of the blue-coated Austrians, wandering aimlessly along in the general direction of the flow of traffic. Sometimes a Russian guard plodded along behind them, but more often

they came quite alone. Some that were slightly wounded sat beside the road, looking at us with stupid, heavy eyes as we passed in the motor. All, even as the Russian soldiers, were plastered with mud and many were saturated with blood, either their own or that of comrades they had tried to help. With every verst we moved forward the denser became the traffic, and now the flow to the rear was as heavy in volume as that going forward. Caissons that had stood beside their guns all night feeding them, with shells that had breached the Austrian lines, came toiling back through the deep-cut roads, the horses steaming and sweating with their exertions and the mud-plastered drivers giving them the lash and forcing them into a trot whenever it was possible to get the empty caissons over the road more speedily.

I had never realized what a number of characters it takes to make up the great drama behind a battlefield. It would be possible to sit beside the way for hours and write a volume of the strange and curious things one sees. Here comes a cart-load of peasants still pushing to the rear, unconscious, perhaps, that the battle has already gone in the opposite direction. Just beyond lie the smoking embers of the village we saw blazing last night. There is hardly a chimney left standing. I noticed in the throng a Russian soldier leading a pack-horse still in the Austrian harness, with the quaint blinkers that the enemy use on many of their

transport horses. The poor, patient beast had been shot through the nose, and little rivulets of blood streamed down its velvety cheek as, with plodding steps, it followed the soldier who was leading it. No doubt it would be patched up again. Certainly that was the intention of the kindly peasant who now and anon looked back with a gently murmured word of encouragement to his dumb and stricken friend and prisoner. The road is narrow at that part, and we slowed down or took the side again and again to let ambulances or carts of wounded pass us. The General called out to the passers-by, wishing them good morning, or occasionally stopped to inquire of a soldier where he was during the night or how he received his wound. There is an extraordinary spirit of comradeship between them, all these Russians, as I have mentioned many times in my records of this front.

After an hour we reached the observation-point from which the General had intended to watch the operations, but we were too late here, for already our troops were pushing on, and the line of bursting shells which but a few hours earlier would have been around us, was now dotting a crest of hills five or six versts away. The General gave a glance at the beautifully prepared observation-point neatly dug out of the side of the hill, and smiled as he said, "We shall not need it this time. Let us push on." Again we took to the motors

and pressed forward through the crowd. Just outside a village we came across a field-telephone section, working like demons stringing wires. The General stopped his car, and in a few minutes was receiving news of the action from his Chief of Staff, whom we left back at —. He listened intently, and then snapped back some directions, and we pushed on out of the village on to another crest. Here we met a General of Cavalry with an orderly at his heels, both incrustated with mud and dripping with wet from the brush through which they had been riding across country. Spurring his reluctant horse up to the side of the motor, he shook hands with his commander and told him gleefully that the prisoners would run into the thousands and that already six guns were in our hands. As he backed away, saluting, he narrowly escaped collision with four stolid soldiers carrying a dead man on a stretcher elevated above their shoulders. "Why this pains with a dead man?" one wondered. "War is for the living, and not the dead. Most of them lie where they fall until buried."

But we were on the move again, coming nearer and ever nearer to the guns which, from their advanced positions, were hurling shell after shell over into that next hollow in the landscape, into which the retiring Austrians had disappeared. But somewhere off to the west and north of us some one is discontented with the outcome, for there comes to our ears the heavy drumming of





GENERAL SAKHAROFF, SEATED ON THE GROUND, CONDUCTS THE ATTACK BY FIELD-TELEPHONE.



AUSTRIAN PRISONERS

field-guns, and not far away we see bursting shells from German guns bitterly contesting the advance of the Russians through the failure of the Austrians to hold their line. We are now surrounded by columns of unwounded Austrian prisoners winding back in droves that take up a mile at a stretch on the road. Turning a bit off the narrow ribbon we have been following, we motor up on to another crest, where the commander of the division and his staff are. Here is the observation-point of a battalion, neatly dug out of the ridge, and men now stroll about casually in the place where it would have been instant death to show one's head four hours ago. In the dip below us lies a marshy region with a meandering stream winding through it.

Our first-line trenches were on one side, and the Austrians just across the way. Between us and the trench was an old road, abandoned for weeks past, but now alive with troops, caissons, and transport pushing on after the victorious divisions which they served. Here we learned that the number of prisoners was above 3,000, and already twelve guns were reported. The commander of the division, whom I knew last year at Warsaw, told gleefully of the prowess of his troops, and indicated with his riding-crop the point beneath us where his men forced the river and broke the Austrian line. Everybody was in high spirits, and congratulations were exchanged between the

General and his officers. In a near-by wheat-field were a couple of hundred blue-coated prisoners, waiting for guides to take them to the rear, while a hundred yards away were fifty sour-looking Germans, also awaiting developments. A battalion of reserves were strung along the road, waiting for orders, while our crest was dotted with officers chatting over the doings of the night.

I, for my part, was studying the country through my glasses and thinking what a blessing it was to see things without getting shot at, when that subtle whining hum of an approaching shell sang through the air, and a big six-inch German shell landed in the field a few hundred yards away, throwing up clouds of dirt and heavy volumes of the greasy black smoke of the German high-explosive shell. Every one was surprised, but no one even mentioned it. I suppose it is bad taste to allude to such things. I think everybody quietly hoped that it was a stray shot and not aimed at us in particular. Personally, I had no idea that we were within range of the enemy, and, studying the terrain with my glasses as I stood on the crest, it was quite impossible to form any idea from where the intruder came. That some malevolent individual wished us ill, however, became speedily apparent when another shell burst in a group of houses just beyond us, and then others began to fall at regular intervals in neighbouring fields. I must say, however, that these events do not

bother the Russians in the least. Nowadays generals in high command constantly go to the advanced positions and study out the situation personally, regardless of risks. Nobody said anything, and obviously a visiting stranger can put up with what his hosts choose for themselves. It was a bit of relief, however, when the block of prisoners were sent to the rear and the reserve battalion lay down in the wheat-field.

On the road below us the shells had awakened more acute interest than they had with the officers of the staff, for the transport began to scuttle for the woods, and even the usually placid and phlegmatic drivers of the caissons whipped up their horses to get out of sight under an intervening ridge. After a dozen shells the firing ceased, but suddenly broke out again on a farther ridge where I suppose some observer thought he saw something moving. The General himself sat quietly down on the crest of the trench, and, with map spread out on his lap, began to dictate orders to an orderly, who, crouching at his feet, transmitted them through the field-telephone. Here one saw the real control of a battle. Over the ridge there our infantry were pushing forward, each regiment unrolling behind it its field-wire, and every unit constantly in touch with this man lying in the wheat-field, who, with finger on map, was directing the following up of the retreating enemy. Wherever one could see a road it was

black with traffic moving forward, and wherever one looked over the ridges beyond us one saw the puff of shrapnel and heard the boom and reverberations of our heavy guns, and the sullen report of bursting German shells. The map, with its many blue and red lines, was the key to the puzzle of sound and to the streams of men and horses moving in every direction. This one individual quietly smoking his cigarette on the hill-top, quite unperturbed by bursting shells, could, by a single word, divert or halt all of those endless columns that we saw. Truly war is a great and fascinating game for those whose post is not in the trenches. As for them—well, war is war.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE FRONT AT CLOSE RANGE

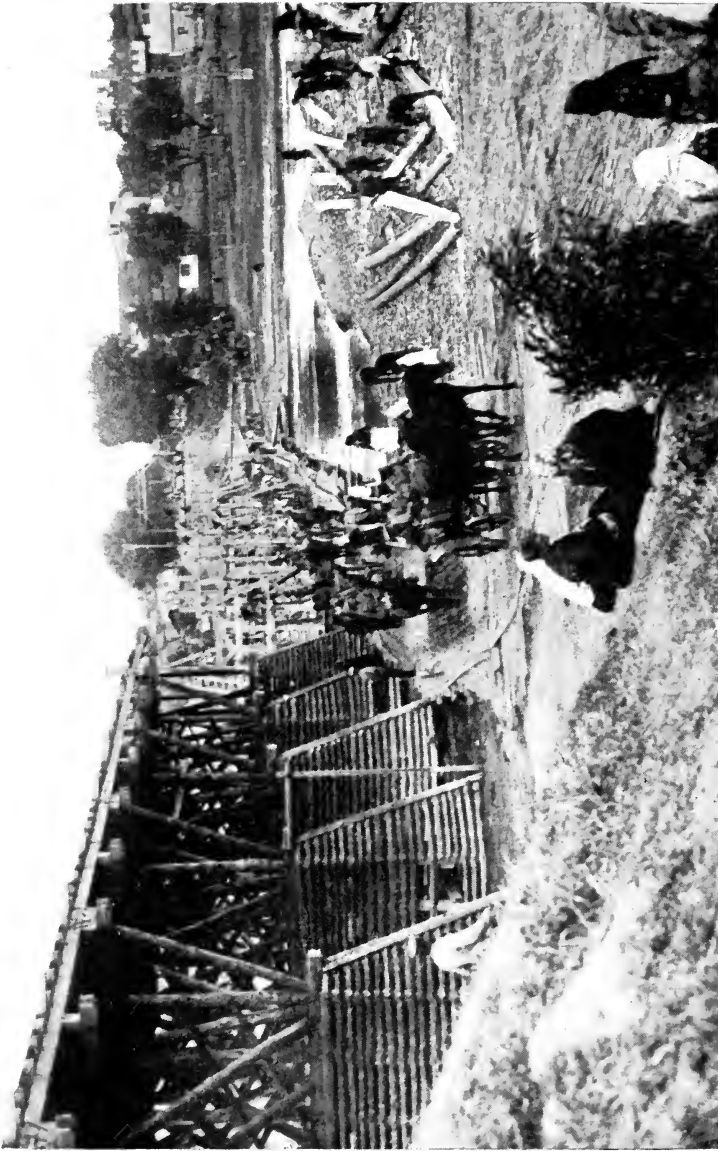
“THERE is still an interesting scene down at the bridge yonder,” the General commanding the corps said to us, looking up from his maps spread on his knees, as he sat on the edge of a trench in the observation-post. For the moment his interest that we should see all that was to be seen while with him, caused him to suspend the uninterrupted dictation of orders governing the direction of his advancing troops which he had been giving to the orderly beside him, who in turn was transmitting them through the field-telephone still established in the trench. “You can go most of the way in your motor,” he added as he got on to his feet and pointed out the way we might most easily reach the point where he had broken the enemy lines, and around which, as we could see even from our hill, some sort of seething activity was in progress.

Thanking him, we got into the motor, and, snorting over a wheat-field and skidding down a muddy hillside, we soon came out on the narrow ribbon of mud on which we had seen the transport

and caissons scuttling out of range of German shells half an hour before. One automobile, however, in a time when the whole country-side was dotted with advancing troops, was not a sufficiently tempting target to draw even a single shell, and we passed the strip and motored up to the line of the trenches which our troops had occupied a few hours before. Here began the maze of communication ways and barbed-wire entanglements which made it impossible for a motor to advance. So, leaving the car behind a rise in the ground, which with its waving wheat must from an aeroplane resemble a wave of the sea, we went forward on foot over the crest and looked down into the little valley where our blow had fallen this morning. A marsh with a stream oozing through it separated the two lines of trenches. In one place dry bluffs squeezing in from both sides brought the rivulet into a single channel, and across this gap of perhaps 50 yards, our engineers were putting the finishing touches on a rough-and-ready bridge, built upon the burned stumps of what a month ago had been the piling of the original structure. The sight around this bridge, when we came up to it, was something that I shall never forget.

On our side of the river was a congested mass of troops waiting to cross. Drawn up in the cut that ran down to the crossing were half a dozen of the two-wheeled Red Cross carts waiting for





RUSSIANS FINISHING A BRIDGE WHICH THE AUSTRIANS HAD STARTED TO BUILD



RUSSIAN CAVALRY SCOUTS.

the troops to pass first, when they might pass and bring back the wounded that lay on the far side. As we stood in the cut there appeared, trotting along the ridge, four squadrons of Russian Lancers which, for a hundred yards, stood silhouetted against the sky-line, and then turned and rode down our road to the end of the bridge. Just to the west shrapnel was breaking with monotonous regularity, now an Austrian shell with its heart of copper-coloured smoke, and then the pure white puffs of the German projectiles. Where they were coming from I could not gather, as we were down in a bit of a hollow. In the shelter of the cutting were the Red Cross carts, whom occasion did not prompt to go to the more exposed bridge-head until they could get across. Already the bridge was roughly completed, and the cavalry with their long lances were riding over in single file at a walk. The slowness of their progress seemed hardly to reduce the mass that still waited. On the far bank they were assembling in groups and then went off at a gallop up and away over the far crest. A number of wounded had been brought over before it had been judged safe for the cavalry to trust itself on the swaying plank structure, and these were being placed in carts on our side. Here I saw a group of five or six German medical officers working feverishly on the Austrian wounded, a small number of whom came over before the tide of the advance filled

the bridge going west. Apparently there were no stretchers on the other side of the river (the Austrian bank), and the unfortunate creatures had been brought over in blankets, a soldier holding each corner. Somehow, a stretcher conveys an idea of comfort to the wounded, but the men in the blankets were a most distressing sight. Looking at them, one got the impression of a confused mass of clothing soaked in blood and covered with mud. It seemed as though the whole had been hastily shovelled in, and it seemed quite incredible that human life existed in the huddled heap in the blanket through which oozed the drops of blood.

I was greatly impressed by the gentleness of the German medical officers, who had elected to stay with the Austrian wounded and fall into Russian hands rather than effect their own escape. Nobody was guarding them, and they were working away as though within their own lines. One of them in particular was a thick-set man of about fifty, with a grey moustache and kindly blue eyes. I am sure he must have a family of at least six at home. He looked that sort of a man. He was directing four other Germans in transferring the huddled heap from the blanket to the Red Cross cart. From the unrecognizable object came a steady whimper of sound, broken by occasional animal-like yelps, and all the while the large German murmured soothing sounds as to a child,

and occasionally patted the muddle of clothing, each time withdrawing a hand smeared with blood. At last they got it in the cart, where already lay one motionless object and sat a vacant-faced Austrian with purple blood oozing through the bandage hastily wrapped around his head. A little stream ran out from the linen down the side of his nose and dripped on to his uniform, but he made no effort to stop the flow. The cart started up the hill, yelps of pain now taking the place of the steady whimper of a few minutes ago.

Up the road now came another blanket with its load, but I had had enough, and walked on toward the bridge, where I met a cart containing Russian wounded. It was stuck in a rut, and I stopped and helped the driver get it out, and then moved on to the bridge, stopping a moment to wait for the burst of a shell whose shrill whistle announced its approach. But it was a long way off. I think the enemy must have been losing observation, and was firing for general effect. The cavalry now were crowding over the bridge, but I was able to squeeze across, stepping out on the side a dozen times to let them pass. The end of the bridge was perhaps one of the worst places that I have ever seen in war. A sweating officer informed us that they had been at work on it since daylight, the bulk of it being completed under a devastating shrapnel fire. "It is better now," he murmured, "as we only get an occasional

shot." As a matter of fact, there were but two or three more while I remained, and none of these came within yards of the work.

At the end of the structure the wounded had been accumulating for I know not how long. There was no place to take them, and the enemy shell-fire had been hitting them faster than it was possible even to dress them, for every effort had to be given to repairing the bridge. Troops, too, must pass before ambulances and doctors. After all, the dead and the wounded are faded military assets, and a live soldier with a gun must be hurried on his way before one bothers about those whose work is done. Later, every effort will be made to soothe their misery and cure their wounds if possible, but in the middle of a battle they must bear their fate as well as they may, for such is war. The result was that dead and wounded alike had been placed hurriedly by the side of the road.

Have you ever, reader, looked into a can of red worms that have been prepared for bait? Have you then seen that tangled, seething, apparently meaningless mass that twists and squirms beneath your eye? Imagine that mass as a heap of blood-soaked men lying in every position, with every imaginable kind of wound, and you can form a vague idea of what the heap at the bridge-end resembled. Here lay one Austrian, with a saffron face, looking straight up into the



DEAD, WOUNDED, AND PRISONERS : RUSSIAN, AUSTRIAN, AND GERMAN.



RUSSIAN CAVALRY ON THE LINE OF ADVANCE.



sky, whose long-drawn breaths drawn at rare intervals were the only sign of life. His head rested against a stained and torn object in blue who was obviously dead. The pools of stiffening purple indicated that his life had run out in a few heart-spasms through a hole made by a shell-fragment. Probably he never suspected, when he left Vienna, filled with the pride of self and his blood thrilling to martial music, that he would some day lie like this on the fringe of a marsh, and the work done, too, by a shell-fragment from one of those very Austrian guns that we are told the girls of Austria crowned with roses as they left for the front. Probably if the maidens had seen shell-wounds fresh from the making, a rose-wreath would be the last thing that would occur to them as fitting ornament for a field-gun.

Near by, sitting at the roadside, was a great Russian peasant soldier, with his leg ripped open from thigh to knee, the whole bound up with a piece of a sack. Why he had not bled to death long before this I can't think. As a matter of fact, he was sitting up cheerfully smoking a cigarette, informing the landscape at regular intervals that he was badly wounded and wanted a stretcher. The fact that it had been impossible to hurry them up depressed him not at all, and like all these patient, stoical soldiers, he accepted his lot without a complaint.

But now the stretcher-bearers began to come,

and among the first he was taken over the bridge, still sucking contentedly at his cigarette-stump, long since burned out. Beyond were heaped the already dead—— But why continue? The details one sees are but the every-day occurrence of an offensive and are merely war as it is fought, and as it must be fought. In two hours the scene here will be normal. By noon the dead will be buried, and by to-morrow, if you come this way with another officer, he may be asking the peasants whether or not this was the place the Russians broke the line. Death is ephemeral in war, and suffering a necessary by-product. The cheering thing, when one is close up, is to remember that in a few hours these unhappy objects will be back in a decent hospital, washed and fed and experiencing comforts that heretofore they have probably never known in their peasant lives. For it is the truth that the Russians lavish the best of care on the wounded, both Austrian and German as well as their own. In fact, they are all treated exactly alike, as far as I have been able to observe.

I did not linger long in this unlovely spot, but wandered back to the bridge. The Austrian trenches here were close to the shore, and for the first time in this war I observed prisoners actually in the process of being captured. In a long blue line they were filing out of their own positions, with only a few Russian soldiers direct-

ing them which way to go. As fast as fifty or a hundred would accumulate at the bridge-head and a gap occurred in the traffic, they would be started to the rear, where they were assembled in larger groups and forwarded on toward the base.

This point was of considerable tactical interest, because, as I have mentioned, it was the spot where the Russians broke the line early that morning. It is quite inconceivable that the Austrians here put up any real resistance, for our losses, considering the numbers engaged, were trifling. Five or six hundred would, I think, easily cover them. Our men left their trenches wading up to their necks in the marsh, and came through the Austrian line in a number of places. My own opinion is that the enemy here fire with their machine-guns and rifles until the Russians are at the barbed wire, and then they simply surrender, not caring to indulge in hand-to-hand fighting, and still less anxious to risk being cut up by the Russian cavalry if they get out of the trenches and endeavour to escape to the rear. The Austrians are beginning to realize at last that falling into the hands of the Russians means no further hardships, and probably kinder treatment than they have received in their own service.

In that action we also took a number of officers, including two commanders of regiments. One of these only took command at noon the day

before, and by four in the morning he and his entire staff fell into Russian hands. The large number of officers taken in all these actions is rather indicative of the fact that the morale and enthusiasm to continue the war is scarcely stronger in the commissioned officer class than it is among the rank and file.

After spending perhaps an hour at the bridge, we returned to our motor, the last shell of the morning bursting unexpectedly not far away just as our engine started. In a few minutes we were over the crest and probably out of actual range of enemy guns, which is always a rather pleasant feeling if one has been in the fire zone for a number of hours.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE ANALYSIS OF THE BATTLE

Two hours after leaving the battle-field I was back at the headquarters of the corps, passing on the way thousands of Austrian prisoners and some odd hundreds of their German Allies. I suppose that during the morning, at different places, I had talked with some fifteen or twenty different individuals, and, with the information I obtained at the various staffs on the way back, I was able by three in the afternoon to form a very fair impression of what had actually taken place. This battle is unique in my experience as a war correspondent, in that within twelve hours, one was able to get both tactics and strategy of the whole movement and a general idea as to the outcome of an action which had involved over 100,000 men, and extended over a front of thirty or forty versts. This was due to the exceptional nature of the terrain for observation, to my facilities which permitted me to accompany the commander first and join the advance later, and then with my own means of transportation get back promptly to a point where I

could get news of the movement as a whole. So swiftly did events transpire, and so symmetrical was the movement in all corps involved, that within this narrow space of time I was able to crowd in almost every aspect of the operations. The movement which I have described in the foregoing chapters justified, I believe, the space I have given it because, even in the big perspective of these vast operations, it forms an extremely important item.

Our lines on the Stochod to the north having temporarily suspended their activities, we see in this movement the inauguration of an entirely new operation which is as important as any since the first break. It is clear now that the Russians can always beat the Austrians, and while they are girding up their loins for further operations against the serious German stand, they are again beginning the movement suspended nearly a month ago in the centre of the south-western group. In the operations which I have described, we find the Austrian line broken in every place where it was attacked. The day's total for the four corps engaged brought the prisoners up to approximately 15,000 soldiers, some 300 officers, and above 30 guns, of which, I believe that 14 were howitzers and heavy field-guns. The corps that I was with seems to have done the best, getting nearly 5,000 of the prisoners and 20 out of 30 guns. Whether or not the advance

will result in the abandonment of Kovel, it will certainly have one of the strategic advantages which the taking of the junction itself represents, namely, it will be the driving of the wedge in between the Germans and their weakening Allies.

As near as I can now ascertain, the average of the first day's advance was between ten and twelve versts. Since returning to the base I have not been able to check exactly the subsequent movements, but believe we are now not above 20 to 30 versts from Vladimir Volinski, and possibly much nearer.

Not the least instructive portion of my trip was the talks I had with prisoners, especially with the Germans. With the Austrians I have been talking for weeks, and, as I have written again and again, their one and only desire is peace, and peace at any price at that. Generally speaking, they are finished morally, if those we have been taking for a month past represent the sentiment of the army as a whole. But with the Germans it is far different.

I met a group of fifty, with two officers, and spent nearly half an hour talking with them. These particular soldiers were from the 22nd reserve corps, and had come directly from Verdun two or three weeks ago. They had received a terrible mauling there, and had been in the line over here suffering heavy losses ever since they arrived, and now were prisoners, taken in a sweep-

ing victory over their collapsing Allies. Here one might expect, surely, to find depression and morale at its lowest ebb. As a matter of fact, I have not talked with prisoners for a long while whose morale was better. How they maintain it is beyond credence. I asked the officer if they did not feel depressed over the situation. "Not in the least," he replied promptly, and with a cheerful smile thrown in. "Why should we? The war is going very well. I think it will be over in a few months." I was somewhat amazed at his quick reply. "How do you make out that it is going well?" I asked him. "Certainly things are going badly for you over here." "Oh, this is a detail," he remarked casually, glancing over his German companions. "Certainly it isn't going well for us personally. As you see, we are prisoners. But, on the whole, the war is favourable for us. As you probably know, we will have Verdun in a few days now." "Well, how about the English advance?" I asked him cheerfully. "Amounts to nothing," he replied without interest. I told him of the Allied progress. He listened with little interest. "Well," he answered, looking thoughtfully at the ground, "if it is true that they have taken some of our trenches yesterday, we probably have already retaken them to-day." "Ah, yes," I said; "but it isn't a question of a few trenches. They've taken twenty miles of your first line, and have





TWO NEW KRUPP GUNS CAPTURED WHILE SHELLS WERE STILL IN THE BREECIES.



AUSTRIAN PRISONERS.

penetrated five miles deep, beside bagging no end of prisoners and guns." I certainly thought this would impress him, but he threw back his head and laughed heartily, as, in fact, did every soldier who heard the conversation. "Of course we don't believe that," he said. "It is quite impossible."

I walked down the line, talking with others, and in no single instance did I find depression or even apathy. Certainly a great contrast to the hordes in blue that were filing past in the road. When I spoke of the Austrians they made wry faces, but said nothing. It seemed that many of the captured guns were loaned them by the Germans, and it naturally annoyed this fifty who had been surrounded and cut off, to see the beautiful guns that they had lent their Allies being taken to the rear, while the roads were blocked with the 4,000 or 5,000 Austrians. Incidentally, the guns that I saw were beauties. Two of them in a near-by village were 10·4 centimètre, of Krupp's very latest pattern. I examined them carefully, and do not believe they could have been in service more than a few weeks, if that. They were long, slim field-pieces, with all the latest in sights and special equipment. The breeches were so beautifully oiled and adjusted that a baby could have swung the block with its little finger. On looking into one, I found the shell still in the barrel. The am-

munition used evidently is not fixed to the shell. The charge had been hurriedly withdrawn, but the shell still remained, a mute witness to the promptness with which our cavalry arrived behind the gun positions.

The conclusions which I have reached in regard to the Germans are by no means limited to such meagre evidence as my own inquiries afford. All the generals and officers whom I have asked acknowledge the morale of the Teuton enemy. There is a great deal of anxiety among the Germans as to what is going to be the outcome in regard to food supplies, but this apprehension has not so far much affected their fighting capacity. Now that there are successes against the Germans both in East and West it is certainly the time for the Press of the Allies to warn their people against premature optimism in regard to victory. Any one who is looking for a sudden collapse of those armies of the Kaiser is, I believe, going to be badly disappointed. Their extraordinary organization is intact, and it is possible, even if they can be forced back to their own boundaries this year, that they will have a year of fighting left in them after that. The more I see of the Germans these days, the more certain I feel that the war is a long way from a conclusion, though these days we are now passing through have brought victory for the Allies beyond a doubt. The Austrian weakness, which

seems to be growing like a leak in a dyke, must on this front, unless they are reinforced from elsewhere, oblige a complete readjustment of German strategy.

In viewing the campaign over here, however, it must not be forgotten that the harvests everywhere in Galicia, and I suppose also in Poland, were ripe for cutting. I examined some wheat near Rovno that was already ripe for threshing. I am told that half Galicia and most of Poland are under cultivation. We can rely on it that the Germans will not go back without carrying with them all these crops, and, with this harvest safely tucked away in German warehouses, the immediate shortage of foodstuffs will be ended, and German efficiency will no doubt find plenty of means of getting through another winter.

How much longer Austria will be willing to send her men to Siberia via the Russian front remains to be seen. Certainly somebody somewhere in Austria must be getting very tired of equipping reserves to be sent to the front. With Austria once out, the end of the war is in sight—a year away, perhaps. Certainly it is folly to underrate the strength of an enemy who still has in the field armies of the size that the Kaiser has to-day.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMY OFFENSIVE AND THE CAPTURE OF BRODY

SITTING in my motor-car on a hot, dusty road on the morning of July 28th, I was able to scribble with pencil a telegram to the *Times* that Brody had been taken at 6.30 that morning, and I handed it to a friendly officer to file in the field-telegraph office, for I was free to discuss in detail the extraordinary operations which had been going on in General Sakharoff's army for the past twelve days, and which had that morning reached their consummation in the taking of Brody, which has stood between the Russians and the city of Lwow.

I have written several chapters on the picturesque side of the fighting and dealt very broadly with the situation. It is possible now to give an accurate outline of what had been accomplished here during July. Inasmuch as the fate of this whole front was bound up with these operations, it seems quite worth while to sketch briefly the whole situation which, with the taking of Brody, marked the end of a distinct period in

the Russian operations.' That the importance of General Sakharoff's movement may be clearly understood, it is necessary to outline briefly the situation on the whole front in the six weeks ending on July 29th.

Brussilov's offensive began on June 5th, and for several weeks swept everything before it on the Rovno front. Lutsk was taken, and Kovel and Vladimir Volinski threatened with immediate capture. The Germans, with characteristic energy, began to concentrate troops taken from every front possible, and were able, towards the latter end of June, to bring the Russians to a standstill on the general line of the Styr River. With their extraordinary railroad systems, and their wonderful organization, they were able to mass troops and big guns, plus incredible quantities of ammunition, much more rapidly than were the Russians. Then came one of the most critical situations of the summer. The enemy, having checked the Russians, began a double concentration, aimed firstly at the recapture of Lutsk, and secondly at forcing the Russians back to their winter line, and, if possible, pushing their advance still farther eastwards. The programme, worked out with the greatest skill which the German General Staff was able to bring to bear on the subject, contemplated a double offensive, and for this purpose two independent aggressive movements were organized.

The first was composed almost entirely of Germans, and it was expected that it would come down the line of the Kovel-Rovno railroad and *chaussée*, driving all before it, as was the wont of German offensives last year when pitted against troops lacking in rifles and unsupported by shells. The second offensive group was likewise to be aimed at Lutsk, striking up from the south-west. This group was composed of Austrians and Germans mixed. Between the two groups it was expected that the enemy would fight a containing action, and that the Kovel group, striking south-east, would meet the group striking north-east at Lutsk, and that the Russians on the line between would be caught in the two jaws of the vice. It was, in fact, the same old scheme which failed at Warsaw and later at Vilna, in 1915.

The movement began first in the Kovel direction, and was composed largely of fresh German troops against tired Russians, who, be it added, were at this time heavily outnumbered, and for a week the Germans, by constant attacks, made slow but steady progress. The Russians were forced to give way inch by inch toward Roshistshe. But with all their efforts and sacrifices, which were huge, the Germans were unable to make any decisive advances, and after twenty-five consecutive attacks, their driving power evaporated about July 7th-8th, and they came to a halt.



Their gains were but a few versts and their losses incredibly big. By this time the Russians were able to make redistributions, and the danger here was passed.

Now began the movement of Loesche and Kaladin acting in unison. Loesche, who had so far been out of the serious fighting, began his sledge-hammer blows along the Sarney-Kovel line of railroad, while Kaladin again took the offensive. Loesche's rushes resulted in an overwhelming victory in this region, with the capture of above 40,000 prisoners and between 60 and 70 guns. His rapid advance, plus Kaladin's renewed activity, threatened the German flank, and they were obliged to fall back precipitately to the line of the Stochod. In a word, the offensive of the Kovel group had been tried and had been hurried back with overwhelming losses in casualties, guns, and prisoners. The enemy, now in a fortified position on the Stochod, were able temporarily to check the further advance of the Russians, and no doubt the eyes of the German staff were turned with considerable anxiety on the second offensive movement gathering strength and striking power in the south. It is clear that if this had been able to drive through the Russian line and retake Lutsk, the armies of Kaladin and Loesche in the north would have been taken in flank, and the offensive thrown back on Kovel might again be revived and the original

plan yet realized. The Germans have not had a more critical moment on this front, and never did they so need a successful blow, for the morale of the Austrians was going to pieces like a rope of sand, while that of their own troops was temporarily shaken. With their northern failure they began then to increase their preparations for the Lutsk blow along the Styr. Probably even the Germans never made more careful plans than at this time. Troops were hurried up from every possible front to assist in this movement, on which so much depended. From Italy, France, and even from the Riga front formations were hurried up to help.

Huge reserves of shells and great quantities of heavy guns were sent here to pave the way for a grand and final drive on Lutsk. It now was the task of General Sakharoff to destroy this second group. General Sakharoff, who, readers of Manchurian war news will recall as General Kuropatkin's Chief of the Staff, is a man of extraordinary poise, and Brussilov knew perfectly well, no doubt, what to expect from him when he gave him this task. With absolute confidence the Russian General made his plans, which were grouped in three phases. The first phase contemplated the destruction of the German-Austrian offensive; the second phase, the capture of the line of the Lippa; and the third the forcing of the Brody defences and the capture of the town

itself. This plan was laid out on a schedule. I have watched every phase of it, and it has moved without a single hitch, and Brody has been taken within twenty-four hours of the exact time planned by the General when he began the movement in the middle of July. I think that this represents one of the most remarkable achievements of the war, for even the clever Germans have never been able to keep their movements up to schedule time.

The line of the enemy at this time extended through the village of Shklin almost due east to Ugrinov, then southerly to Zlotchevka. From there it extended almost due south to Novoselki and the river Styr, whose banks the enemy held, to the village of Pljashevo. At this point this stream is joined by the slow-flowing waters of the Pljashevka, whose eastern bank formed the enemy line as far south as Ostrov. A glance at the map will indicate to the reader how disastrous would have been a blow from this region directed on Lutsk. General Sakharoff had been watching coolly the preparations of the enemy. Early in July it became clear to him that the Russians could not meet the enemy in either guns or munitions, and he therefore determined to wait until the last moment, and then take the offensive himself. With rare judgment he picked the day before that chosen by the enemy for their great blow, and on July 15th began his artillery pre-

paration all along the front. As I have mentioned in a previous chapter, it was a wet and rainy night, and as the artillery fire was in equal volume all along the Russian line, the enemy do not seem to have taken any alarm as to what was coming. Possibly they counted so surely on their own blow, planned for the next day, that they did not care what the Russians did.

Sakharoff's first demonstration was along the enemy line on the Styr, and no doubt if the Austrians and Germans expected any blow at all it was in the direction of Michailowka, an important town in this region. But Sakharoff had other plans and struck with his greatest force directly south from the towns of Suklin and Ugrinov. I have described in other chapters how this attack, launched at three in the morning, swept everything before it. By noon the defenders on the Styr were all but cut off by a second blow launched due west from a point on the Styr south of Michailowka. There was a perfect stampede here, and the enemy lost 30 guns and 12,000 prisoners in Russian hands, getting back with great difficulty on to the line of the Lippa River the next day. It was not until this territory was occupied by the Russians that they realized the force of the blow which they had so cleverly anticipated. Every peasant's hut was stacked with shells and small-arm ammunition, while huge supplies were accumulated in all the im-

portant villages. The moment of the attack was so near that heaps of shells were stacked on planks behind the batteries that only awaited the word of command to turn loose their storm of shot and shell on to the Russian trenches. Huge quantities of these shells fell into Russian hands. The inventory even a fortnight afterwards was still uncompleted, but probably at least 200,000 shells were captured. Possibly more than that were exploded by the Austrians in their flight, and no doubt they succeeded in getting away a certain portion of their munitions. The accurate list of Sakharoff's booty, besides prisoners, included 30 guns, 16 being heavy ones, 40 machine-guns, 36 trench mortars, 80 boxes of 9-inch shells, 60 caissons loaded with field-gun shells, 58 wagon-loads of machine-gun ammunition, not to mention an orchestra, field-bakery, and three searchlights.

This movement, which the Russians call the Battle of Michailowka, was fought in less than twenty-four hours from the beginning of the artillery preparation until the utter rout of the enemy. It forms in many ways one of the most significant actions of the war. The plan was German-made, and nearly half the troops engaged were German, and probably more than half the batteries of the same origin. The programme was one which had been preparing for a month along the best lines of German practice. Yet General Sakharoff absolutely destroyed the im-

pending blow and the unity of the opposing force in a single day. With the Battle of Michailowka we see the fading of the last hope of the Germans to retake Lutsk this year, and for this reason alone this action may well be called a landmark in the 1916 campaign, for with it the Germans lost their last chance of the offensive.

But this movement was but the first phase in Sakharoff's campaign. On July 20th he was again ready to attack. At this time the enemy had the front of the Lippa River to its junction with the Pljashekva and that stream to the town of Ostrov. Very obviously the least fortified portion of the enemy line was that portion occupied on July 17th along the Lippa. But heavy rains had swollen the river, while the marshes were neck-deep in mud and water. The Austrians, if they expected another attack at all, which is perhaps doubtful, do not appear to have anticipated a movement across the river, the condition of which seemed to make it impassable for attacking infantry. But with the Russians there are few obstacles that one can rely on to check an advance. General Sakharoff made his attack from the direction of Novoselki Tscheshski. Officers and men alike waded through swamps up to their necks and at the point of the bayonet drove the enemy out of their positions. Late the same day came the heavy attacks from the direction of Ostrov and Peremel, with the result

that by noon on July 21st the Russian jaws again closed round a great block of the enemy and simultaneously took the town of Beresteshko, renowned for its ancient traditions of battles between the Poles and the Cossacks three centuries ago. Here were taken nearly 15,000 prisoners and another inventory of booty too lengthy to repeat. It was in the attack on Beresteshko that brave Colonel Tartarov fell. His part was to force the crossing of the river, and he rode at the head of his men under a withering fire from shell and shrapnel. For a time he seemed to lead a charmed life, but at last he was hit in the heart with a ball from a shrapnel shell. As he fell from his horse, he cried, "I am dying." The whole regiment wavered and came to a standstill. The Colonel raised himself on his elbow and in a voice of thunder shouted, "My regiment—ADVANCE!" and then expired. The crossing of the river was carried in a single rush a moment later.

Thus, after nine days, ended the second phase of Sakharoff's programme. There was no delay, however, and on July 26th began the third phase, which contemplated the taking of Brody itself. The Austrians had taken up a new position on the river Slonevka, which was deep and further protected by marshes and forests on the Austrian side. The Russian line near Radzivilov was nearer Brody, but there the

enemy defences were very much stronger. Sakharoff again moved, and struck the Austrians in the flank, his heroic soldiers once more making an assault wading through water up to their necks. The fighting on the river just south of Leshnjuv was of the fiercest nature imaginable, but, as usual these days, resulted in the Russians turning the Austrians out of their defences at the point of the bayonet. Once the Russians were well over the river and bearing down on Brody from the north, Sakharoff ordered the advance from the direction of Radzivilov, and by the evening of July 27th the fighting was going on fiercely within four or five miles of the town, where the Austrians had prepared strong defences. Late in the evening began the evacuation, and at 6.30 on the morning of July 28th the Russian cavalry entered the town which, from its position on the railroad, has frequently been called the key to Lemberg.

General Sakharoff began his movement on July 16th, and the third phase ended on July 28th with the capture of Brody. In twelve days he fought three pitched battles. In the first he utterly destroyed an offensive on which the enemy counted as his last chance to restore his prestige in the east this summer. In the second phase he captured an important town and bagged 15,000 prisoners and ten guns. In the last he took the town of Brody and a number of prisoners



which no doubt ran to 10,000. In less than two weeks he took a number of prisoners that probably totalled nearly 25,000, and huge quantities of miscellaneous booty. It was all done on a prearranged programme, and was only twenty-four hours late by the timetable, and that due entirely to the fact that we had ten consecutive days of rain.

The historian of the war will have to look far to discover a more perfectly planned and beautifully executed movement than the operations of General Sakharoff from July 16th-28th, 1916.

## CHAPTER XX

### LUTSK AGAIN

IT was becoming as difficult to follow developments on this front at the end of July as it is to watch in detail the various acts going on simultaneously in a five-ring circus. While the offensive was still young it was possible from Rovno to get a perspective of the objectives on this front at one and the same time. But as our progress continued to grow the armies were diverging, and greater distances separated the various headquarters, making it almost impossible to get from one army to another in time to handle in proper sequence the events which were moving at the same time. I left Dubno on July 28th the moment that Brody was taken, thinking to have a day or two in which to pick up the outline of what was going on along the Stochod and Vladimir Volinski fronts; but, arriving at Lutsk in a cloud of dust about noon, I found the whole town surging with the back-flow of two great actions progressing simultaneously within twenty or thirty versts of Lutsk. I have mentioned repeatedly the

feverish life of this little town since the Russians retook it in June, but I had never seen its main street so surging with activity as that noon when I came in. I did not know that there had started an action here until we came skidding around the curve by the Cathedral, at the head of the main street, and ran into what seemed an endless column of captured enemy guns and trophies, dragging through the town to the railroad station. First came four huge 6-inch Krupp guns lumbering and rattling over the cobbles, their sombre noses poked up at the sky in the same attitude in which they delivered their last blast at the Russians before the Cossacks fell on them from the rear. Behind these, drawn by Austrian teams, were a dozen or fifteen 4- and 6-inch Krupp howitzers, their gaping muzzles suggesting bewilderment as to why they were being thus unceremoniously towed to the rear.

The staff of this army was deep in its own problems, and so crowded was the town that it took us two hours to find a place in which to leave our baggage for the night. Already the first assortment of wounded were drifting back from the front. As always, came in the vanguard the lightly wounded, mostly light head-hits or men with bandaged hands and arms. A continuous line of them came sauntering casually along the side-walks, inquiring their way from the town

policemen, who directed them to the nearest hospital. The weather had cleared, and the sun blazed down out of a cloudless sky once more, and already the roads were masked in clouds of dust. The wayfarers from the front were grey with it, and their uniforms so powdered that it was hard to place the colour of their clothing at all. While hunting for a hotel, a Russian military automobile whirled in from the front. In it were seated four men in the blue coats of the Austrian uniform and one Russian officer. As the car flashed past one noticed the stars on the silver-faced collars, denoting the rank of General, and for the first time I suspected that the operations going on to the west were sweeping in their success.

Later in the evening I was invited to go and see these captured officers, who were the first to arrive of some 10,000 prisoners that fell into Russian hands the same day. It is not pleasant for a correspondent of an English paper to interview a captured enemy General at the moment of his supreme humiliation. It is one of those extremely disagreeable duties, however, that sometimes fall to one's lot in war. These men, with three of their aides, were confined in a comfortable room in one of the barracks of the town. Outside their door stood a Russian sentry, rather as a mark of respect to their rank perhaps than as a guard, for escape was obviously an

utter impossibility. More than a year ago I wrote disparagingly of the Austrian captured officers that I saw in Przemysl, and I am more than happy now to write of these men in quite a different strain, for neither their captors nor their friends at home, had they seen them, could have had anything but respect for them in this hour. These men had remained with their troops until their own escape was impossible, and their capture is to their credit and not to their dishonour. The General, judging from whose insignia I took to be the commander of a division, was a short, thick-set man of about sixty, his face the colour of copper from long exposure to sun and the elements in the open. It was clear at a glance that here was no arm-chair officer nor one likely to remain far from hardship and danger. His blue uniform was almost as faded as the ones I have so often seen worn by the private soldiers one meets going back into safe-keeping. The stars and silver facings on his collar were dim with wear, and as tarnished as the trimmings on a last year's Christmas-tree. His companion, who was a brigade commander, was pale and covered with the dust of battle. His uniform was worn and frayed. One of the aides, in faded blue, had an arm in a sling, the sleeve of his tunic being split up to the elbow, while the other had a bandage around his head. If I have criticized the morale of the Austrian

troops during the opening weeks of this campaign, I certainly have nothing to say against the spirit of this little group that faced me in the dim room lighted only by a spluttering candle.

"The morale of our troops is excellent," announced the General, with a barked defiance like the discharge of a gun.

"Will Austria continue the war after the Russians have taken Lemberg?" I asked him.

He smiled grimly as he replied, "The Russians must take Lemberg first."

"Then you think they will not be able to take it?" I asked.

"Never," he replied with the same explosive energy.

"But they have already taken Brody to-day," I suggested mildly.

This was very evidently news to all of them, for I saw them exchange hasty glances, but the General, quickly recovering himself, said, "Well, what of it? Brody is of little importance."

"How long do you think Germany can hold out?" I queried next.

He answered without a second's hesitation, "Until England has been punished for her crime in starting this war."

"Then you think Germany still has the chance of winning?" I asked him.

"Certainly she will win," he replied grimly. "It may take several years yet, but Germany

will never stop until she has taught England a lesson for her crimes." Then he hesitated as he continued: "There are ten men in England who must bear the entire burden of responsibility of this war. Austria never wanted it, that is clear. By this time the entire world knows that England was the one that forced on the war."

"America doesn't think so," I suggested tentatively.

He snorted at this. "America!" he said contemptuously. "America and Japan have been bought by English money spent for munitions, that is why they are against us."

"I cannot agree with you," I replied. "As a matter of fact, America was in truth neutral the day war was declared. Your Ally, Germany, lost American sympathy with the invasion of Belgium, and won American hostility when she sank the *Lusitania*."

For the first time he made no reply, but shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly. Probably even the Austrians are not misled as to the price Austria has had to pay because of German frightfulness let loose. This was not, however, a pleasing subject of conversation, for he returned once more to England. "England can say nothing about methods of war," he barked. "She has turned loose on white men her niggers from all over the world. So have the French. Do you call that gentlemanly war?"

“If it is such discreditable war,” I asked, “why did your German Allies use natives in West Africa and in every other place where they could get them?”

From his look I rather gathered that he had never heard that the Germans did so. As our conversation progressed his hostility began to wane, and towards the end he, and his aides as well, were conversing with much friendliness. I spoke to him of the lack of bitterness of the Russians toward the Austrians, and how strange it was for two countries to be fighting when the soldiers of neither bore any bitterness against the other, and then I told him of the kindness with which the Austrians were treated by the Russians. He smiled contemptuously and started to reply, but, glancing at the Russian officers who were with me, shrugged his shoulders and looked at the floor. I read his thoughts easily enough, and smilingly said, “No, I don’t get that from the Russians. Your own prisoners, with whom I talk daily, tell me that the Russians treat them with the greatest kindness possible.”

“Well, we treat the Russians just as well,” he said.

“It is the Germans who have made the bitterness in this war,” I told him, “not your people.”

“The Germans are lied about on all occasions,” he replied, and then launched into an attack on



the falsity of the British Press, ending up with the statement that "The Germans never lie."

I laughed when he said this, and told him that I had just returned from the headquarters of General Brussilov, where I had been called to explain a faked cable, alleged to be one of mine, that the German authorities were circulating among their troops, as evidence that the Russian Army was exhausted. This rather took the wind out of his sails. He smiled a little as he replied, "Well, our *communiqués* are truthful; I know that."

The Russian aide who accompanied me, saluting politely, asked the General if there was anything he could do for him. For a moment the Austrian hesitated, and then asked with diffidence, "If I may make the request, I would be very glad if it were not required of me to go to the rear on foot, for I am not a young man." The Austrian soldiers have often told me that their officers were always warning them against the ill-treatment that would befall them if they were to fall into Russian hands; but I could never have imagined that this belief was sincere until I had heard it echoed in the words of this General. In all the time I have been in Russia I have never seen a single Austrian officer treated with the slightest harshness, and I believe that not even a captured subaltern has been required to walk to the rear since the beginning of the war,

much less a general advanced in years. He was assured that it would not be required of him. He then thanked the Russians for their kindness in permitting his aides to be with him, and asked for a bottle of water and permission to write a letter, which requests were of course granted. I shook hands with all of them, and we parted very good friends.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE STOCHOD FRONT

As the Stochod front now represents the direct campaign against Kovel, and as the occupation of that now famous town seemed to be the most important objective on this front, it appeared best to make my base at Roshistshe for the present. Roshistshe, up to the last movement, had basked in complete obscurity, and the armies passing backward and forward during the past year, have never molested its peace and happiness until the recent offensive, when, unfortunately, it fell within the zone of active operations, and to-day it stands a wreck of its former self, nearly all of the modern buildings having been fired by the retreating army, and many others destroyed by shells, for the active fighting during the retreat was near here. During the days that the Germans were trying to come back, Roshistshe was the objective of their drives, as it is on the railway and holds an important strategic position on the Styr, which lies just east of its heap of ruins.

It was not easy to find quarters here, as there

is nothing left but a few peasants' cottages, into one of which we managed to squeeze both ourselves and our belongings. As the roads, if they can be called such, diverge from here in several directions toward the Stochod, the town has now become the centre of the most intense activity. It is the rail-head for the wounded, and night and day the streets were congested with the traffic of the army coming and going. Such a town is the last one that the discerning traveller should ever choose for a place to stop at, for military activity invariably means enemy aeroplanes dropping bombs at least twice a day. Poor little Roshistshe, with its prosperous past represented only by street after street of ruins and blackened walls, now lives during the daylight hours in momentary terror of the German planes, whose activities here have horrified the entire population. No small town in the war, as far as I know, has ever suffered such brutal depredations from enemy flyers as has this. In the afternoon of July 28th there came five German aeroplanes, which without warning, not only dropped bombs all over the town, but in particular on the hospital encampment just outside the town, and some distance removed from the railway station, which the enemy always alleges to be his target. While the panic-stricken inhabitants were flying hither and thither in the smoke and confusion—for many houses were set on fire—the gentle airmen

soared to and fro over their prey, pouring down a torrent of rifle-bullets upon the town. In the hospital encampment many of the *sanitaires* were hit and a number of unfortunate wounded men lying on stretchers were killed outright.

All of this happened the day before I arrived from the Dubno front, and hence I found the population of the whole town with pick and shovel digging bomb-proofs, with one eye watching the western horizon for the small speck against the blue which means an enemy flyer. Already nearly every house had its own shelter dug in the garden where one might hurry at the first alarm. My cottage, fortunately, had a deep cellar, so we were able to view, with comparative complacency, the feverish diggings going on around us.

The fighting on the Stochod had been going on, then, for two days, and the town was full of wounded, and German and Austrian prisoners pouring back from the front, where we were having extraordinary successes. Thanks to the courtesy of the commander of this army, I had Prince Lubermirski attached to me during my stay here. As the fighting on this front is of such vast importance, I spent the greater part of July 30th at the advanced positions.

With the genial Prince as guide, we left Roshistshe shortly after the morning air-raid, for the planes come at regular hours, and motored out on the

Rovno-Kovel *chaussée* for about twelve versts, and then turned off, on an incredibly bad road, to go to the staff of a division whose troops were trying to force the crossing of the river. At the staff headquarters we met the commander of the division and his aides, and were at once shown the beautiful new bomb-proofs which had been made against German shells, for here we were but six versts from their line, and within easy range of the heavy guns.

The General gave me a great jagged fragment of an eight-inch shell that had burst near his house two days before. "Some days it is very bad here," he remarked cheerfully. "One day we were obliged to do all our business underground, but with telephones and other conveniences it is quite immaterial whether we are directing operations from our cottage or from our bomb-proof shelter."

The surrounding country is nearly as flat as Poland, which is the worst country for observation in which I have ever campaigned. The only way of observing is from the balloons or from trees. As the wind was blowing rather strongly, the enemy balloon was not up, and we were able to walk across the four or five versts which separated headquarters from the position of the nearest battery which we were invited to visit. A general attack to the south of us was scheduled to commence at one o'clock in the afternoon,

and already Russian batteries in all directions were busily at work on the enemy's barbed wire, laying the foundation for an assault with the bayonet. Our battery, which was belching salvoes of steel every few minutes, was neatly hidden. Why it was not drawing the enemy's fire when we came up I have no idea, for it had been in action from this same point for three days, and had been heavily shelled two days before, as one could see at a glance, in walking into the position. Tree-tops were lopped off in every direction, and huge shell-holes at frequent intervals in the woods indicated where German six- and eight-inch high-explosive shells had been making their protest against the work of the Russian gunners.

As we came up the whole operation was proceeding as methodically as a drill. An officer sitting on a stump with a note-book, was directing the fire from instructions received every few minutes from an orderly at a telephone in a near-by bomb-proof. All the directions were in figures, denoting changes in elevation and deviation from the target, and not a man in the battery, the officer not excepted, knew what their target was. Their aiming-point was a tree in the rear of the enemy lines, and as long as the gunner had his sights on that he cared not whether he was shooting at a village, a trench, or an enemy battery. The man at the breach sat at

his post with as little concern as though working a lathe in a machine-shop. The war has become absolutely methodical, as a matter of fact, and these people go about their work without excitement or confusion. Their job is to do certain mechanical things about the gun and to start the shell hurtling on its way, and their business is done when the projectile leaves the gun ; and I suppose the only way they ever know when their fire is becoming effective, is the questionable satisfaction of having the enemy reply.

After sitting about with the battery officers and watching them at their methodical tasks, I left the battery to go to the observation-point, which is always a more healthy place to be in in a fight than a battery in action, though even that is not to be recommended for one with a tendency to nervousness. This particular point was a nest some 80 feet above the ground in the branches of a great pine-tree. A ladder nailed to the trunk enabled one to crawl up the back of the tree and to squeeze on to the tiny platform hidden in the foliage. It was like being in the crow's-nest of a ship at sea, for the great tree rocked gently to and fro with the wind like a vessel on the bosom of a deep swell. The view was well worth the climb. From our post we could look out over the flat country for miles. The valley of the Stochod lay two versts away. Here the sluggish stream oozes through marsh-



land. In some places it is a verst or two from dry ground to dry ground.

In our immediate foreground was the line of the trench we had taken two days before, and about two versts' distance was our own line, and, just beyond, the Austro-German position. All along the river was the puff of breaking shrapnel, with the occasional black blast and fuming crater of a high-explosive shell from a heavy battery. The wind was dying down, and the smoke from three burning villages was drifting up into the hot summer sky. These were the positions we were to attack during the coming night, and in front of the smoke one saw the quick flashes of bursting shells. In our observation-post was the commander of a division of artillery, and from this perch he was directing the fire for a number of batteries. Each time he would tell me his target and show me on the map what batteries were going to fire. An obliging aide would then fix the telescope on the post to be fired at, and tell me exactly at what point in the field of the lens to fix my attention. Then the commander, cool as the gunners, would take his cigarette from his mouth, give the order to fire, and go on with his conversation about quite a different subject. Instantly, from some quarter of the wood would come in rapid succession the detonations of the guns, and then the long, diminishing whistle of the departing shell. When you are

watching to see a shell burst, it seems as though the time would never come. Just as you feel like telling the officer that his guns have fired blank cartridges by mistake, you see a series of small volcanoes break into action on the enemy's line, and a moment later there drifts back on the dead, hot air of midsummer the dull report of the explosion. Every now and then an enemy shell bursts in the foreground, and once in a while an intruder with a low, anxious whine, skims through the forest somewhere beneath us, to burst disconsolately in the rear. Where they come from nobody seems to know or care, for their arrival is not even mentioned. They seem as lost as if sent on an errand without motive, no one knowing or caring what becomes of them. On the fringes of battle-fields one is constantly running across these objectiveless and melancholy missiles, coming out of space and bursting miserably in ploughed fields or marshes behind the lines.

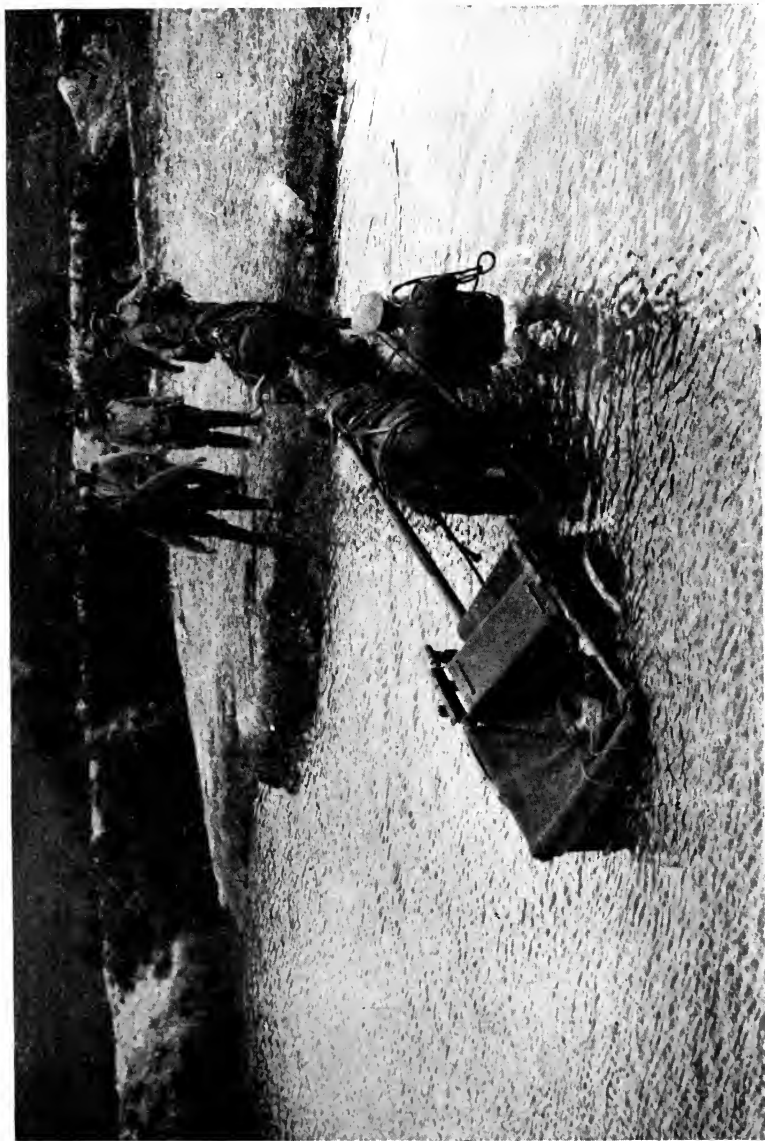
After spending nearly an hour in the tree we returned to the battery for tea. Sitting in the shade by a samovar, we ate bread and marmalade and the refreshing beverage from a samovar, that hissed comfortably on the table, as contentedly as in the family kitchen. "We did have a phonograph, also," one of the officers told me, "but it died the death of a hero, a shell burst in the horn and it was ruined. It didn't matter so much about the phonograph, but unfortunately

the orderly who was running it was killed. Will you have some tea?" And thus we chatted, while in the dim distance came the thunder and roar of the battle preparing for the climax of the assault, not yet due for hours. Now and anon a stray shell to our right sighed through the air, but aroused no interest in any one.

Leaving this battery, which I was not unwilling to do, we started for another one tucked away several versts to the north. It was one of those short-muzzled field-gun outfits that give a short, disagreeable report like the snap of a fox-terrier. It opened while we were still a mile away, and with a monotonous regularity its disagreeable bark broke the stillness of the forest. We were still perhaps 600 yards from its hiding-place, when, with the howl of a lost soul, a German shell passed twenty feet over our heads and burst fifty feet beyond us in the forest. Somehow, in a wood there is much more sense of security than in the open. Notwithstanding, we stopped. Was it merely a chance shot, or were there others to come? Our question was answered almost before it was formulated, for there came another shell, and another and another, each on the heels of its predecessor, filling the wood beyond us with the smoke and dust of the explosions. It was perfectly clear that our snappy little battery in the wood had been doing effective work on its target miles away, and that

some battery commander had received orders to silence it. So our little battery at once woke up all of its guns, and, with spasms of delight at being noticed, began throwing shells over our heads at a great rate. Certainly the wood was a poor place, and we turned at right angles to the fire and made for an open field, for it was obvious that fire was being directed on the wood, and that we should be fairly safe once out of that uncomfortable target. About six shrapnel and three high-explosive field-gun shells passed over our heads while we were walking a few hundred yards, but twice that number answered from the Russian guns. Evidently the additional Russian shells that the enemy stirred up, were doing still more execution, for there came the sudden menacing howl of a six-inch shell that had been sent to inquire into the impertinence of the little Russian field-pieces. There is something extremely business-like in the sound of a big shell, and if you had never heard a shell in your life, you would know, when you heard it coming, that it was going to do something important in about two seconds. When it bursts you are more than sure that your conjecture was correct.

These burst in the wood, and we could see leaves, bits of trunk, and branches borne on the crest of the black, greasy smoke that poured from above the spot where the shells had burst. Artillery fire is not difficult to evade if one



TRANSPORT ON THE STOCHOD.

On the Stochod the soil is swampy, and, as bridges and railway have been destroyed, the soldiers sometimes fight in waist-deep mud. The difficulties of the terrain in this region are excessive.



GERMAN SHELL WHICH HAS FAILED TO EXPLODE.

knows the country and the positions of the targets. If you are a few hundred yards right or left of the target you are approximately safe. The bad place to be is in front or behind, where shorts or overs have a fair chance to get you.

In a few minutes we were clear of the line of fire, and from the near-by field could watch the shells bursting six or eight hundred yards away with as much assurance of safety as seeing them burst on a movie film. The Russians tell me that the enemy munitions have somewhat deteriorated in the past few months. Now and again German shells fail to explode, and in proof of this statement I was led to a place in the forest where a great German six-inch shell lay on the grass. It had a singularly naked appearance, and, if shells have feelings, it must have been greatly mortified at its failure. The officer I was with told me it came slithering through the grass, somersaulted several times, and finally stopped within a few feet of his tent. Its nose was full of splinters from a tree ground into the fuse. It was a malignant thing, and I felt as I looked at it that it must be making every effort that a shell could make to blow up spontaneously and kill all these jeering spectators of its inefficiency.

We reached home (Roshistshe) in the evening, and from my little table where I wrote, I could hear the constant rumble and roar of the guns.

Stepping out into my back-yard, I could see the long, quivering, anxious ray of the German searchlights peering here and there in the darkness in search of the first glimpse of the Russian columns that were waiting to assault. Now and anon a star-shell rose majestically in the sky, its glow floating against the black for several minutes. A great assault was in the making.



## CHAPTER XXII

### A VILLAGE OF HORRORS

WAVING wheat-fields, with occasional patches of timber, characterize the undulating country here for miles in every direction. As one dips into the valleys of the rivers such as the Styr and the Stochod, the ground runs off into verdant green meadows that merge into marshes near the rivers themselves. Off the Rovno *chaussée* not far from the river Styr there was, before the war, a thriving village, whose name matters not. Its one long street, with the neat, single-story peasant cottages, shaded by elm-trees, must have been, I think, one of the most peaceful and pleasant spots one could have found in all Russia. Peasants from miles around brought their crops here for dispatch on the railroads, and a block of newly erected brick and stone business buildings, with their stores, banks and hotels, made up as prosperous a little town as one could imagine. Now all of this has been revolutionized, and war has made of it a village of horrors. The stone buildings, where

proportions and architecture were rare for a rural community in this part of Russia, lie a heap of ruins, with only here and there a ragged wall or a black fragment of chimney standing to indicate where once had been a business block. Caught in the maelstrom between the Russian and Austrian armies in the recent advance, the work of a generation in building a monument to its prosperity was wiped out in a day, and there remains nothing of it all but heaps of blackened stones. The resident end of the village, where nestle the rows of cottages, escaped the desolation of shot and shell, and remains as before.

In these operations commanders of armies were nearer the front than I have ever seen them before, and with the advance there came to this village the staff of an army, bringing with it the seething life which instantly flooded the tiny cottages that remained, with the turmoil and activity of that world that lives behind the lines of a great military movement. From every direction came the field-wires, great sheaths of them looped in at the window of an unpretentious, one-storied house wherein ticked the instruments of the operating department. Outside, in the still night, one could hear the clatter of the scores of instruments that day and night were clicking in the news from the positions and clacking back the orders and directions for the coming moves.

Such houses as were not occupied by officers of the staff had been turned into hospitals and dressing-stations for the wounded. The position of the village in relation to the geography of the country, is such that the wounded came here from a front perhaps forty versts wide, and those who have read of the fighting on the Stochod know that on forty versts of front savagely attacked by the intrepid Russian infantry, and as fiercely contested by the stubborn enemy, there have been no small number of casualties. As we had been advancing in general, we had not only our own wounded but likewise the enemy's who had been left in the positions that we carried. An hour's fighting at the front, even with small losses, instantly swells the aggregate of the wounded, and every house available in this little village was filled to its capacity with the relics of the battle-field, frequently as many Austrians and Germans as our own, if the particular movement had yielded us an enemy trench.

Day and night, when operations were in full blast, the streets were filled with the price of victory. Some were in carts and some were in the modern motor ambulances which came hooting through the streets at all hours, each with its burden of stricken men. Dressing and operating stations worked all through the hours of the night, and there was scarcely an acre where one could not find the patient soldiers waiting for their turn

at the dressing-station, or lying on their stretchers for the time to come for an operation.

Into this tragic place of suffering has come a new and extremely unpleasant element, namely, the enemy aeroplane. In writing of a war, it is difficult not to sympathize unduly with the army that one is with, but this should not prevent one from dealing fairly with the enemy. On this front I have always endeavoured, as conscientiously as within me lay, to give the enemy, especially the Germans, the benefit of the doubt, for the bitterness against them has become so great that it requires an effort to give them justice. Always I have tried to view their acts and operations as dispassionately as possible, and reconcile their acts, as far as might be, with some conception of military necessity prompting it. But the days spent in that village made it extremely difficult to view with anything but horror the deeds of the enemy airmen. In a place which, with their information, they must have known was filled with wounded, their own as well as Russian, they consistently threw bombs, as frequently and in as great quantities as the weather permitted, and their carrying capacity enabled them to take with them. Again and again they came, sometimes five and six aeroplanes, and threw their explosives all over the town, and, not content with that, poured into the panic-stricken civil population veritable deluges



A COSSACK WITH SHATTERED HAND OUTSIDE A DRESSING-STATION.

His horse also has a bandaged leg. Captured machine-guns lying in the hay.



AN ENGLISH NURSE WITH A SEVERELY WOUNDED SOLDIER.

During the fighting on the Stochod, German aeroplanes fired with machine-guns on the British field hospital. The soldier shown was hit with a bullet from a machine-gun in one of the raids.

of machine-gun bullets. It must be clear to the enemy that all the officers and men whom they would wish to kill (and might legitimately, from a military view-point) have perfectly constructed bomb-proofs into which they can retire with perfect safety. The burden, then, of all these attacks, fell for the most part on the unfortunate wounded in tents, who could not be moved, and upon the civil population, hundreds of whom had already been killed. Personally, I have never lived in such an unpleasant place, or one where there was more of tragedy.

Thanks to the genial commander of the army, we had a house and orderly to ourselves, and a friendly bomb-proof whose entrance offered us hospitality and protection against the air-raids, with the by-product of machine-gun bullets and our own falling fragments of exploded shells; but the life of the villagers was incomparably miserable. From daylight until darkness their eyes were ever looking for the speck in the sky which meant the possibility of death and misery to them. The bombs falling on their homes meant being buried alive if they stayed within, and possibility of cremation as well. To run about the streets, as they usually did, meant being sprayed with machine-gun bullets or exposed to the flying fragments of the bombs themselves. Nearly every raid brought the same toll of killed and wounded, the bulk always being civilians,

men, women, and children. In one of the last raids a girl was killed not far from my house, while little children were to be seen daily at the hospitals with arms, heads and bodies mangled.

We had a very sad case at the British Russian Hospital, over which Lady Muriel Paget presides. Eight bombs were dropped on this establishment at different times, though it is remote from the railway station, the advertised objective of these raids, and in spite of the fact that it is, as the Germans must be well aware, universally crowded with wounded. While there one evening I saw an unfortunate peasant woman who had just been brought in from a neighbouring field where she had been at work. Playing near by, in the dust, was her little boy of perhaps eighteen months old, and his three- or four-year-old sister. A bomb fell near by, blowing the baby into fragments and sending a great jagged piece of the cruel steel through the stomach of the mother. Drenched in blood and moaning piteously, they brought her in on a stretcher, on which at her feet sat the little girl, who miraculously was uninjured. The father was fighting with his regiment. As I stood in the flickering light of the candle that made great shadows in the tent, and watched the face of the dying woman, now convulsed with the horrible agony of the wound, I could not but wonder how the man who dropped the bomb would have felt



had he stood beside me this evening. Again and again bombs dropped on this part of the town, killing the miserable soldiers lying helplessly on their stretchers. This hospital encampment on its hill near the town seemed for several days to have been the particular target of the aeroplanes, and one could only view with admiration the pluck and determination of the English doctors and nurses who stuck steadily at their posts during those trying days, ministering to the wounded and alleviating as far as could be the last agonies of the dying.

If the friends of Lady Muriel Paget who have known and seen her socially in London could have seen her as I have seen her here in this ghastly spot, they would certainly feel, as I have come to feel, that she and her splendid assistants are as surely "doing their bit" for the Great Cause as any soldier fighting in the trenches. The constant apprehension of aeroplanes which come twice a day is perhaps the most nerve-racking experience in war, especially when many bombs have been dropped before and you have seen your *sanitaires* blown to pieces before your eyes and your wounded killed while you are attending to them, as has been the experience of these devoted English men and women, who, far from home and remote from the limelight, are quietly doing their duty in remote Russia. Nor are the enemy flyers content with the havoc that

they work upon the hospitals at the base, but they have now taken to preying upon the highways and showering the ambulances with machine-gun bullets. This last practice is too atrocious for any comment to be necessary, and I am personally of opinion that it cannot have the approval of the higher or responsible authorities in Germany itself. I hope their crimes may be ascribed to the ferocity and cruelty of individual flyers, and not to any sanction or instruction from responsible officers.

It was only within the weeks of late July and early August that the enemy flyers took to playing highwaymen on the roads. It is, of course, quite legitimate for them to follow automobiles and bomb them if they can, though it is certainly unpleasant for the occupants themselves. The fact remains, however, that the destruction of officers or soldiers (perhaps even unfortunate correspondents) is perfectly legitimate. Certainly I would not have the slightest feeling against the individual who chased me in this way. It is small chance their ever getting a motor which is travelling rapidly. The slow-moving ambulances, which with their canvas tops are unmistakable, are absolutely defenceless. An aeroplane can, absolutely without risk to its driver, plane down just above these lines of carts, and with its machine-gun spray the road with an almost certainty of

killing somebody. Just such a case occurred on the road to Lutsk early in August, and I am officially informed that the enemy aviator killed twenty wounded in this cowardly manner. It is difficult, in the face of incidents of this sort, to keep an open unprejudiced mind in judging the enemy.

The net result of all of these doings in and near our village was to increase the bitterness daily against the enemy. People frequently express surprise that so many Austrians are taken prisoners and so few Germans. My own opinion is that it is largely because the Germans have made themselves so hated by the Russians that, after a successful attack, they are not in the mood to take any prisoners. Cruelty in war is poor policy. One such act as firing on the wounded scores twenty lives for the enemy, but at the next fight, if a trench be carried, he loses ten times that number, who are given no quarter.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE PUSH ON KOVEL

SUFFICIENT time has elapsed to get some perspective as to the significance of the fierce fighting on the Stochod which raged between July 28th and August 10th, though not enough has passed to enable one to describe it in detail. In order to meet the rules and regulations of the censorship it is therefore necessary to treat somewhat vaguely as yet one of the most interesting and important operations, both in its influence already exerted and its still greater potentialities to come, on the summer's campaign. One can, however, trace with a reasonable degree of accuracy the significance of Brussilov's recent push for Kovel. Within two weeks of the commencement of the great Russian offensive it became clear to all military observers that the hitherto little known junction of Kovel was being aimed at. While the Russians were still pushing on through Lutsk, the Germans were adjusting themselves to meet the new situation which the successes of the Czar's troops in the south-west had developed.

From innumerable conversations with prisoners, and from information obtained from the staff, I early formed the conclusion that the Russian offensive, in its early stages, created annoyance in the staff circles of the Central Powers rather than serious alarm. It was generally believed by them that the Russians had made a lucky stroke, and that in a few weeks the movement would evaporate and the troops of Brussilov would be unceremoniously hustled back to the winter line before Rovno, if not indeed far beyond. Not until the repeated efforts of the Germans and Austrians to regain the offensive had failed ignominiously did the enemy apparently realize that the Russian stroke was no mere half-prepared flash in the pan, but the outcome of six months of preparation and the product of careful deliberation, the aim of which was definitely to break the Austro-German strength in the east.

By July 1st the Germans were fighting furiously to regain the initiative, and by July 20th were making an even greater effort to maintain a defensive which threatened to collapse any day. By this time it had become clear that the regaining of the offensive for themselves was impossible, and that it was questionable if they could even hold their positions before Kovel. During these weeks, however, the German General Staff, which appears to have handled the strategy of the entire

Eastern front, had seen the handwriting on the wall, and German engineers were working night and day to make Kovel as impregnable as was humanly possible. A glance at the railroad map shows the enormous advantage that the enemy has always had in the concentration of troops, and during this entire movement reserves and reinforcements had been flowing into the threatened sector with unvarying regularity. Brussilov, however, was not the man to lose an advantage once gained, and so steady had been his pressure on this front, that the Germans seem to have been unable ever to accumulate any strategic reserves, but were obliged to rush each unit of incoming supports directly from train to battle-field, to hold back the Russian infantry always beating at their defences. Their capacity to throw in troops faster than the Russians resulted, however, in sufficient check on the Stochod to enable them to transform a naturally strong position into a well-nigh invulnerable line, certainly a far stronger one than any they have had on our south-west front since the beginning of the war.

Day by day the Germans looked to see the collapse of the Russian offensive, but the much-advertised evaporation of the great push failed to materialize. The line of the Stochod, with its swamps and meadow-lands, is at best a most difficult country for an army to negotiate, but, when fortified, it presents an obstacle which

seems almost insurmountable. Add to this ten days of untimely rains, and one realizes its strength doubly increased.

After the middle of July the fighting shifted to the army of Sakharoff. A push for Kovel started at one o'clock on July 28th. When the movement was launched, the enemy had had nearly two months in which to distribute its human resources, and at least a month in which to prepare the position on the Stochod. The German Emperor had been at Kovel, and the redoubtable Hindenburg had likewise held council there, and, if reports of prisoners are to be credited, both had agreed that, come what might, Kovel was to be held to the last ditch and the last man. From the taking of this decision by the German Higher Command the holding of Kovel became the entire centre of the German strategy in the East. It is almost unnecessary to say to those who have followed the German campaigns in this war that, when they make a plan, they do not do it by halves. With the Kaiser and Hindenburg staking the destinies of their eastern campaign on the holding of Kovel, it is clear that no idleness was going on behind their lines. Thousands upon thousands of labourers were working night and day making every village into a fortress and every ridge into a fortification. Trenches, acres of barbed wire, sprang up almost over-night, while train-loads of guns pouring in day after

day soon transformed this strip of country into a zone of defence which represented the latest word in defensive practice as learned by the Germans in two years of warfare. There seems to have no longer been any tendency among the Germans to ridicule the Russian offensive, and one may assume that the talk of retaking Lutsk was no longer the popular theme in the Teuton camp. To hold Kovel somehow or other was now the aim and object of their entire thoughts.

The Russians had been fighting almost without intermission for nearly two months, and now faced the most difficult obstacle which they had ever encountered in the war. The push started with the accustomed artillery preparation, and was followed by a series of infantry attacks which, for dash and unflinching courage, have not been equalled in the campaign this summer. Within a few hours the Russian armies were all over the enemy, and for a day swept everything before them. General X, advancing on his front, forced a breach twenty versts long in the enemy line, taking approximately 10,000 prisoners and 47 guns in a single day, including among his trophies two generals and two regimental commanders. General Z, attacking on the Stochod, took between 35 and 40 guns, and nearly as many prisoners as his southern neighbour, carrying a whole series of enemy trenches west of the Kovel-Rovno *chaussée*; while certain of





THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE : FIGHT FOR KOVEL.  
Russian soldiers in the trenches.



THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE : FIGHT FOR KOVEL.  
Curious stretcher used for carrying the wounded to the hospital.

his more northerly corps gained a foothold on the west bank of the river.

These first days' operations represent the most extraordinary heroism. Having observed the positions from Russian artillery observation-posts, I can speak with some authority when I say that they appeared impregnable. But the superb troops of General Z, regardless of enemy fire, crossed the river, in many places wading up to their necks, and turned the enemy out of incredibly strong positions. The flatness of the country had rendered observation extremely difficult. They carried everywhere positions which they knew, but were obliged to suspend their advances against hidden positions in the rear that had not yet been located. For three days fighting continued without intermission, the enemy counter-attacking whenever there was a lull in the Russian attack which by day and by night was beating at their lines. Farther to the north General Y was engaged in a life-and-death grapple with heavy German forces in the region of morasses and forests that is pierced by the Kovel-Sarney railway line; but he, as well as his southern neighbours, crossed the Stochod at many points. For a week there was a relative lull in the operations, though what one calls a peaceful period on this front in these days would be a pitched battle in any other war but this. From August 7th to 10th fighting on a huge scale

was resumed by the Russian armies. It now became clear that the nature of the German defences was such that they could not be rushed in a day, or, in fact, many days. Weeks and weeks of preparation had built up a formidable opposition which threatened to make the Kovel front as difficult a line as the fortifications which the English and French are beating at in the West.

By August 12th the Russian line was across the Stochod everywhere, with the exception of a short stretch of some twelve to fifteen versts lying between the Kovel-Rovno railway and the village of Maiden. The Russian line north of the Kovel-Rovno railway is many versts west of the river. General Y was across the river with his infantry from the marshes in the north to the line of the Kovel-Sarney railway. In a word, then, the last push on Kovel resulted in the Russians bagging a large number of guns and prisoners and in the forcing of the supposedly impregnable line of the Stochod at all important points save one. Though the Russian Army has not taken in one advance the town of Kovel, it has placed behind it the river that was one of the greatest obstacles.

Brussilov has never appeared to greater advantage than he has in this last movement, which one can certainly contrast favourably with the efforts of the Germans at Verdun. The Russian

commander made important gains, and then quietly dug in and at once started another movement in the south. The Germans, under similar conditions at Verdun, had continued for six months to pile up their patient dead by the tens of thousands, rather than admit that their gains were not commensurate with their losses. Brussilov said to me last year, when I asked him why he had not held longer on to Przemysl during the retreat, "I do not believe in following an unsound military policy for the temporary effect on public opinion." The Russian General has had the courage of his convictions in temporarily suspending advance on Kovel, in spite of the fact that all Russia, and the West as well, has been eagerly awaiting the capture of the place. I cannot discuss future military operations and still keep friends with the censor. It is safe, however, to express the opinion that what Brussilov fails to accomplish in one way he will in another. If he does not take Kovel from the front it will be because he knows a cheaper and equally effective way to get it. What this will be remains to be seen.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### SUMMARY OF THE RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE TO SEPTEMBER 1ST

THE entrance of Rumania into the great World War marks the beginning of a new phase in the conflict which is now entering its third year. Russian movements hereafter, and Austro-German operations in the East, will be governed to a great extent by this new factor.

The present seems an excellent time in which to summarize briefly the nature of the Russian achievement which, in less than ninety days, has changed the entire outlook of the war.

In order to realize the extent of the achievement and to appreciate the credit due to the Russians, one must look back a year. The armies of Russia were practically without ammunition, and so short of arms that but a small portion of the available men could be put into the effective fighting-line. From May until late September of last year the world watched the Russians retiring from position after position. Hardly a week passed that the children of Germany were not called upon to celebrate another advance of the German armies.

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The world, for the most part, not unnaturally believed that Russia was beaten, and could not be counted on for at least a year as a decisive factor in the war. Under the incomparable leadership of Alexieff, the army was extricated from a position in Poland which the Germans looked upon as a certain disaster for it. Later, with the same cleverness and skill, he withdrew an entire army from surrounded Vilna without the loss of a gun, and by October 1st the Germans with chagrin beheld their supposed prey slow down in his retreat and at last come to a stand which could not be broken through in the interior of his own country. Mackensen is credited with the statement that, after the war, he intended to spend the rest of his days in studying the Russian Retreat. It is perhaps not too much to say that this retreat fighting, holding as it did some thirty-five to thirty-six German corps to the eastern frontier, vastly helped the Western Allies. It is clear that, while these huge Teuton armies were striving for a crushing decision against Russia, it was impossible to strike equally effectively at the Allies in the West. While Russia was drawing to herself the German surplus in men and munitions, France and England were preparing. The answer is Verdun and the British-French Offensive in 1916. Thus did Russia contribute to the cause in 1915.

Few of even the most optimistic dared hope that Russia could this year commence and sustain an offensive that would change the whole course of the war. It was now the turn of Alexieff and the Higher Command to show that the Russians were as capable of conducting a perfectly balanced offensive as they had been in negotiating a difficult and dangerous retreat. To Brussilov was given the task of commanding the group of armies which Alexieff destined for the destruction of the German-Austrian strength. Military men will realize what it has meant to reorganize and re-equip an army which had been through the experiences of the Russian Army in 1915. When the great offensive started on June 5th of this summer, few even of Russia's best friends imagined that she could carry it forward for more than a month. None who were not in the know believed that an organization for handling men and supplies had been created in six months which could initiate and maintain for a period, which at this writing is nearly ninety days, a continuous and almost uninterrupted offensive. From the very first week the initiative was stolen from the enemy, and from that time he has never been allowed for a moment to dominate the strategy which has been unfolded by the Russian Higher Command.

Though Brussilov has been the conspicuous figure, one must never forget the great silent

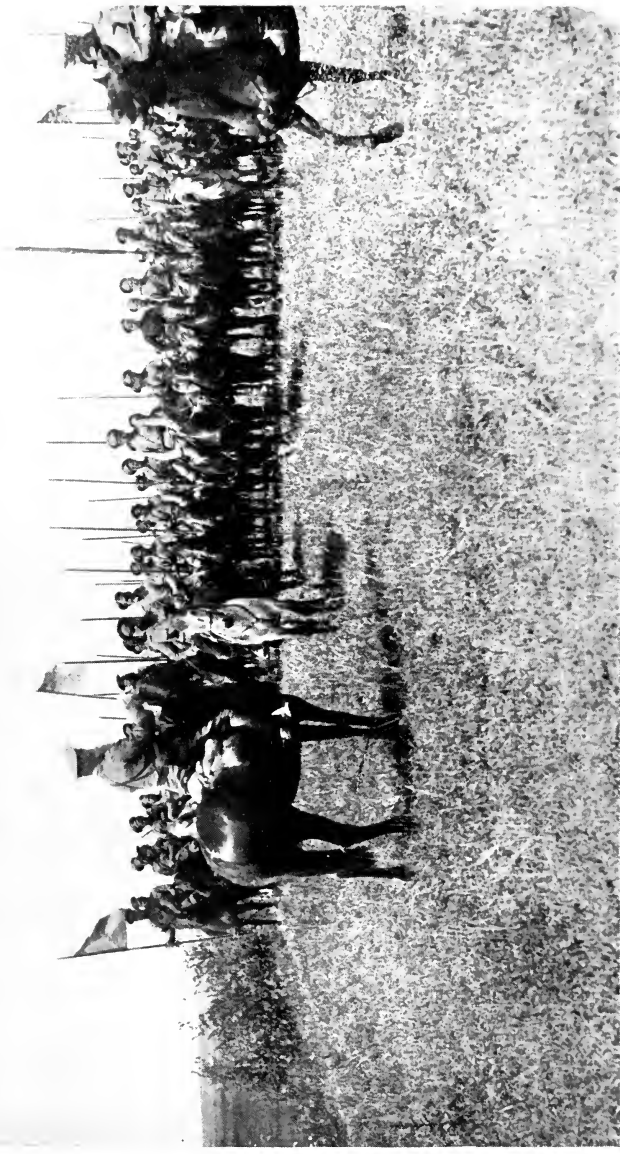


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brain that sat at the Grand Headquarters, guiding, with steady hand, the movements on the whole front. Alexieff, with his cool and calculating mind, and, the Czar only excepted, the supreme commander of the whole front, saw to it that Brussilov had every chance to win. The strategy of Alexieff seems to have been almost perfect, and certainly far superior to anything the Germans had to meet it with. During all these weeks the Russians have been advancing on the entire south-western front, not a week passing that has not resulted in progress in some place or another. German-Austrian efforts to restore to themselves the initiative have invariably failed, and have usually been followed by advances on the part of the Russians. At the time I write the enemy has been turned out of his entire winter line and in some places he is seventy-five and eighty versts back from the old positions. But it is not the mere territory that has counted so much as the situation that has been created. For the first time since the beginning of the war, Germany is thrown definitely on the defensive on our front. The extent to which Brussilov has drawn to himself troops from other quarters, becomes manifest when one appreciates the quantity of troops that have been shifted from other quarters against his front since June 5th. Some of these are German and Austrian, but all have come either from

interior reserves or from positions on other fronts in East or West ; yet, in spite of this addition to the numbers originally facing him, he has continued to eat away position after position of the enemy opposing him.

The first effect was the relief afforded to Italy in the South, and the general if temporary cessation of important enemy movements elsewhere. Immediately followed the great Allied Offensive in the West, which beyond a doubt was of great assistance to the Russians, as it checked, in large measure, the bringing of fresh troops from West to East, which was the case during the Warsaw campaign a year ago. The Allies likewise should remember that, but for the persistent pressure of Brussilov, and the constant anxiety of the Germans to save Kovel, they would have had an even harder time in their offensive than was the case. As I have tried to show, the first great result of the Russian attack was the shifting of the offensive from the Central Powers to the Allies on all fronts. The next important aspect is perhaps the terrific losses that have been inflicted on the enemy, especially the Austrians, by the Russians. We know that the Russians have taken prisoners to the number of nearly 400,000 since June 5th, to which must be added more than 8,000 officers. It is perhaps fair to double this figure for total losses, as the losses in dead and wounded have been very high. One must also realize that, in disasters of



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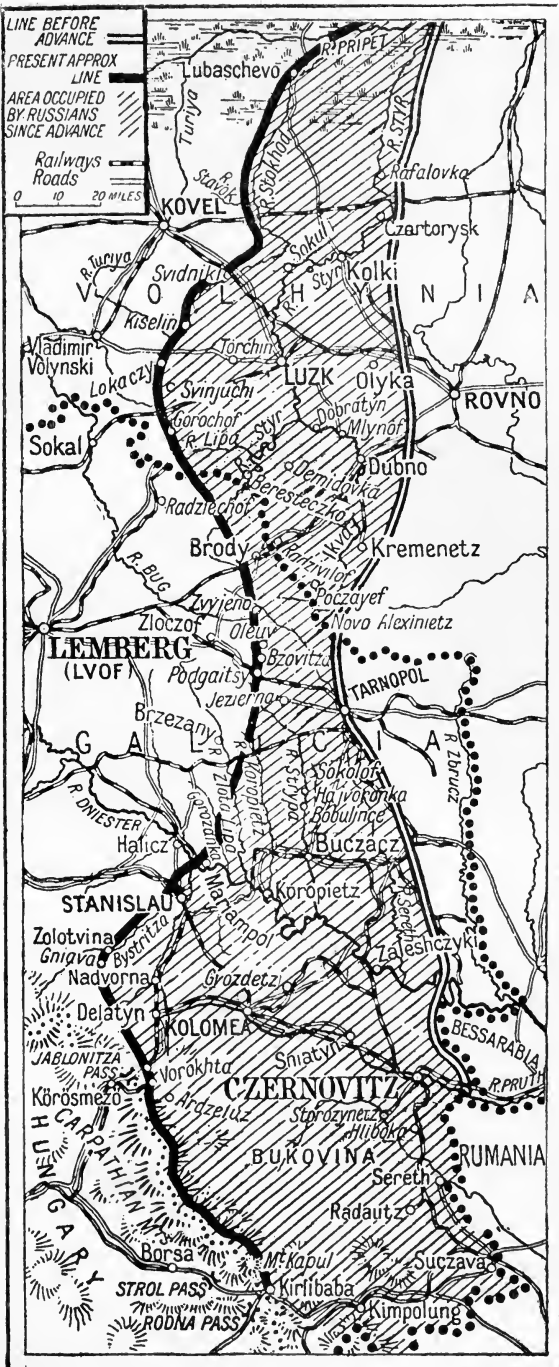
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this sort, there is a very heavy evaporation of strength from the effective fighting forces which is represented by neither dead nor wounded. It is probably not an exaggeration to place the total enemy loss of effective strength at three-quarters of a million. This, coming at a time when both, and especially the Austrians, are hard put to it to find men and officers, represents a loss to the Central Powers which can hardly be replaced. It is true that the Russians have on occasions suffered losses this summer, but from a military point of view these may be ignored, for the visible supply of trained troops in Russia to-day is more than enough to see them through this year, and probably next as well, while there is such a vast reservoir of humanity of available military age and capacity in Russia to-day, that it is safe to say that she could continue with similar losses for five years and still not be drained. It is clear that the enemy disasters have infinitely lowered the morale of the Austrian troops, and certainly they have not improved that of the Germans.

The Bukovina has already been swept clear of the enemy, and in spite of local checks here and there, Brussilov's line continues to maintain at one point or another a persistent offensive.

THE END

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