

THE WAR SITUATION

Up to and Including December 27, 1914.

IN the west the war has descended to trivialities—German airship attacks on London and British assaults on the German coast. In the east it appears that the news of a great German victory is without foundation. It is the first time since the war began when an official bulletin from any of the Powers engaged turns out to be fictitious. Berlin's reputation for honesty and accuracy is so high that we must assume a mistake rather than a deliberate lie. At all events the drive against Warsaw on the Bzura has ceased, the Germans are trying a new route, and the Russian Army is still undefeated and undaunted.

This affords an opportunity of commenting on the truth and modesty of the Russian reports. The Grand Duke Nicholas has won many victories, though perhaps no more than have been won by Hindenburg; but his reports never use the word victory or contain any boast. When Petrograd denied the Berlin announcement of a Russian defeat the reputation the Grand Duke had gained from minimizing his own successes and for conservatism of statement was found to be an asset in the universal acceptance of his word.

Fighting in the eastern field is now going on on the Bzura, in the valley of the Pilica, on the banks of the Nida, along the River Dunajec, in Galicia, and in the foothills of the Carpathians. Before the German advance was checked Hindenburg had driven his enemy across the Bzura and Rawka Rivers and had followed them. There his success ended and the Russians again played checkmate. Hindenburg was not only stopped, but driven southward to the Pilica. There he made his new attempt to advance, and the old seesaw of the east was renewed. There was, however, a German advance in East Prussia, and the Germans got back to Mlawa, the point from which they made their first attempt to descend on Warsaw from the north and outflank the Grand Duke's army.

Cracow Relieved

THE Russians were again obliged to give up one of their important military movements by reason of the great strength of the German attack. It is not very long since they had to give up the siege of Przemysl. They were able to advance again and renew the siege, but now they have been forced to give up the siege of Cracow. Reasoning from the past history of the war, we may guess that they will soon be beleaguering that city again, but there was a wholesale withdrawal of all the Russian forces not only around Cracow but throughout that whole region. On the River Nida Gen. Dankl was repulsed and thrown back, and it may be that the failure of

the Austrians at this point had a great deal to do with the checking of the whole movement of the Teutonic army against Nicholas.

One of the most heartrending events of the war took place during this fighting. It was the German bombardment of Sochaczew, in which tenement houses were shot to pieces by eight-inch guns, thousands of civilians killed, and shells fired among the panic-stricken crowds of non-combatants as they tried to flee along the road to Warsaw.

In the west the Allies appear to have been making a slow but steady advance, which may not amount to more than a few hundred yards a day, and their best success seems to have been in Lorraine. The object of this advance was apparently not the recapture of Belgium, but the purpose of keeping the Germans so busy that they would not be able to detach large bodies of reinforcements toward Poland. The British and Germans were engaged in fighting that was almost hand to hand in Belgium.

On Christmas Day the German policy of making England feel uneasy and unsafe had its most spectacular illustration. A German aviator made a dash close to London and flew over Southend. The British biplanes attacked the German and fought a battle in the air while traveling at the rate of seventy miles an hour.

A Battle in the Air

THERE was only one German machine, and it was attacked by three British ones. The German aviator faced his outnumbering assailants with that reckless gallantry which has characterized every move of the German air and water forces since the war began. The British say that the German aeroplane was hit three or four times, and they give it full credit for the heroism with which it fought against superior numbers.

On the same day the British attempted to retaliate by a dash of their own on the German raiders who have been making England unhappy, but this was done by naval vessels, not air vessels. Eight British ships, convoyed by hydro-aeroplanes, assailed the German coast, presumably at the mouths of the Elbe and the Weser. The convoying air vessels threw bombs on ships lying at anchor and on a gas tank near Cuxhaven. The Berlin announcement says that no damage was done and that three of the British vessels were hit with bombs, one of them taking fire. There have been two similar British raids, but they were both aimed at naval vessels, not at an unprotected coast. It is reasonable to assume that the change in the British tactics is due to the attack on Hartlepool, Whitby, and Scarborough and the feeling that that sort of warfare should be repaid in kind. The French attempted to attack the Austrian naval base at Pola, but a French vessel which had succeeded in

getting to the harbor bar struck a steel net, tried in vain to retreat, and was shot down by the forts.

One of the most interesting reports of the week was that of action by the United States armored cruiser North Carolina. A mob in Tripoli, Syria, attacked a number of Frenchmen who had boarded the American steamer Virginia, convoyed by the North Carolina. The North Carolina threatened to bombard Tripoli and the mob broke and fled.

A rebellion broke out in Albania, said to have been fomented by Austrians and Turks. The rebels cut off communication with Durazzo, the capital, and began devastating property and massacring the supporters of Essad Pasha. Essad's palace at Tirana was pillaged and burned, and the Italian Government was obliged to land marines at Avlona, the principal port, to restore order and protect Europeans. Anarchy is said to reign there.

Joffre's Summary Acts

GENERAL JOFFRE demonstrated again his arbitrary control over the French Army by retiring ten Generals of divisions "for reasons of health" and "for reasons of personal convenience." The Commander in Chief had already dismissed five Generals for "weakness in manoeuvres." No one knows who Joffre's commanders are; they get no credit in the official reports, as Field Marshal French's British officers do, but there is some compensation in the fact that when they are disgraced their names are never made known and the reasons go unpublished.

Premier Viviani made an announcement of the greatest importance in the Chamber of Deputies on Dec. 22. He announced that there would be no peace until Alsace and Lorraine were restored to France, until Belgium had regained to the full her material life and her political independence, "and until Prussian militarism has been crushed, to the end that it be possible to reconstruct, on a basis of justice, a Europe finally regenerated." He referred to the treaty of Sept. 4, in which France, Great Britain, and Russia agreed that none of them would make peace with Germany and Austria until all were ready to do so—a treaty which Japan afterward indorsed.

Of course M. Viviani spoke by the card, and we thus have an authoritative pronouncement from one of the four Powers, speaking for all the rest, that the war must be fought to a finish, and that its end must be a restriction of Prussian militarism. German sentiment is fully as determined on war to the bitter end. Thus we have The Magdeburgische Zeitung exclaiming that Germany "has only one duty, not to take her hand from the plow—it is God's will—until the certainty of victory is assured." The outlook for the friends of peace does not seem very encouraging.