

artillery available, might reasonably have been expected successfully to storm the forts.

The bombardment which now commenced was truly terrific, lasting throughout the day and night of September 28 and the following day. It was remarkable, however, how little determining effect this bombardment had, having regard to the weapons and men in use. These circumstances, added to that of the gallant and skilful resistance of the Belgians, account for the fact that it was not until the 29th that Fort Wavre Ste. Catherine was silenced. Its magazine was then exploded. It is doubtful whether this explosion was caused by a projectile of the enemy, or by the premature bursting of one of its own shells, but the explosion, coming as it did after the fort had already been badly battered and smashed up, half its guns being put out of action, settled the matter, and the Belgians were forced to abandon it. The Germans now concentrated their attention on Forts Waelhem and Lierre, especially on the former. On the 30th Fort Waelhem was so badly shattered that for all practical purposes it was put out of action. Germany then particularly turned her artillery upon Forts Lierre and Koningshoeyck. These too, before the close of that day, suffered the fate of Fort Waelhem, the still heroically resisting Fort Wavre Ste. Catherine at length also giving up the struggle. The village of Lierre, in the neighbourhood of the fort of that name, was partly destroyed by fire, flames and smoke rising high to the heavens for several days—a significant indication of German success so far.

During the whole of this attack on the forts, the Germans were recklessly prodigal of their men. The result of this, and of the strenuous resistance of the defenders, was that very many thousands of the enemy were killed and wounded. This great loss of life seems to have had the usual effect of stirring up the worst elements of the German nature, for, with no apparent reason other than that of revenge, the enemy now destroyed the city water-works, which were situated close to Fort Waelhem. This reduced the population of Antwerp to the supply of water afforded by such wells as were within the city limits, and had the very serious result of making it impossible to put out any fires which should occur as a consequence of the bombardment.

On October 2 the position was such that the Germans were enabled, through the breach in the fortifications which they had now effected, to burst through the fortified ring and proceed to the city. It was not, however, until early morning on the 6th that they succeeded in crossing the river Nethe. At first they attempted the crossing at a point near Fort Waelhem. But this

effort failed by reason of the opposition of the Belgians. The enemy then made another assault on an extended front reaching from Duffel to Lierre. In this they ultimately succeeded.

The Belgians fought with the most remarkable energy, resistance and desperation at the river near Waelhem. At the second attempt of the Germans, between Duffel and Lierre, the Belgian forces were strengthened by the British Naval Brigade, but notwithstanding that the persistent efforts of the Germans eventually enabled them to cross the river—though this was done in the end only after a pontoon bridge had been erected. One can imagine the scene. Hour after hour during all these days, bodies of Germans made attempts to cross the river at various points and to build the pontoon bridge; but during the whole of the time these efforts was met by a shattering deadly fire from the Belgian and British guns, which blew away whole blocks of Germans as fast as they arrived on the scene. Nevertheless the Germans persisted. So great were their numbers that it was necessarily only a question of time, and they were able to cross the river. Even the bridge itself was swept away, together with its burden of unhappy passengers, on several occasions.

Sunday, October 4, was the great day. The British reinforcements, consisting of three Marine and Naval Brigades, were then entrenched in a position which dominated the area in which the Germans were attempting to cross the river. The following statement, published by the Admiralty, describes the movements of the British forces :—

In response to an appeal by the Belgian Government, a Marine Brigade and two Naval Brigades, together with some heavy naval guns, manned by a detachment of the Royal Navy, the whole under the command of General Paris, R.M.A., were sent by His Majesty's Government to participate in the defence of Antwerp during the last week of the attack.

Up till the night of Monday last, October 5, the Belgian army and the Marine Brigade successfully defended the line of the Nethe river. But early on Tuesday morning the Belgian forces on the right of the Marines were forced by a heavy German attack, covered by very powerful artillery, to retire, and in consequence the whole of the defence was withdrawn to the inner line of forts, the intervals between which had been strongly fortified. The ground which had been lost enabled the enemy to plant his batteries to bombard the city. The inner line of defences was maintained during Wednesday and Thursday, while the city endured a ruthless bombardment. The behaviour of the Royal Marines and Naval Brigades in the trenches and in the field was praiseworthy in a high degree, and remarkable in units so newly formed; and, owing to the protection of the entrenchments, the losses, in spite of the severity of the fire, are probably less than 300 out of a total force of 8,000. The defence could have been maintained for

a longer period, but not long enough to allow of adequate forces being sent for their relief without prejudice to the main strategic situation.

The enemy also began on Thursday to press strongly on the line of communications near Lokeren. The Belgian forces defending this point fought with great determination, but were gradually pressed back by numbers. In these circumstances the Belgian and British military authorities in Antwerp decided to evacuate the city. The British offered to cover the retreat, but General de Guise desired that they should leave before the last division of the Belgian army.

After a long night march to St. Gilles the three naval brigades entrained. Two out of the three have arrived safely at Ostend, but, owing to circumstances which are not yet fully known, the greater part of the 1st Naval Brigade was cut off by the German attack north of Lokeren, and 2,000 officers and men entered Dutch territory in the neighbourhood of Huist, and laid down their arms in accordance with the laws of neutrality. The retreat of the Belgian army has been successfully accomplished. The naval armoured trains and heavy guns were all brought away.

The naval aviation park having completed the attack on Düsseldorf and Cologne already reported, has returned safely to the base protected by its armoured cars. The retreat from Ghent onwards of the Naval Division and of the Belgian army was covered by strong British reinforcements.

Vast numbers of the non-combatant population of Antwerp, men, women and children, are streaming in flight in scores of thousands westwards from the ruined and burning city.

By October 6 not only the forts already named had been reduced, but also Forts Kessel and Broeckem. In the meantime, too, the Germans had endeavoured, with their usual foolish tactlessness, to conquer the hearts of the inhabitants of Antwerp by means of an appeal contained in a proclamation which, on October 2, they dropped in vast numbers from a Taube aeroplane which flew over the city. The document, translated into English, was as follows :—

PROCLAMATION

BRUSSELS,

October 1, 1914.

BELGIAN SOLDIERS !

It is not to your beloved country that you are giving your blood and your very lives ; on the contrary, you are serving only the interests of Russia, a country which is only seeking to increase its already enormous power, and, above all, the interests of England, whose perfidious avarice is the cause of this cruel and unheard-of war. From the beginning your newspapers, corrupted by French and English bribes, have never ceased to deceive you and to tell you falsehoods about the origin of the war and about the course of it ; and this they continue to do from day to day. Here is one of your army orders which proves it anew ! Mark what it contains !

You are told that your comrades who are prisoners in Germany are forced to march against Russia, side by side with our soldiers. Surely your good sense must tell you that that would be an utter impossibility! The day will come when your comrades, now prisoners, returned to their native land, will tell you with how much kindness they have been treated. Their words will make you blush for your newspapers and for your officers who have dared to deceive you in such incredible fashion. Every day that you continue to resist only subjects you to irreparable losses, while after Antwerp has capitulated your troubles will be at an end.

Belgian soldiers! You have fought long enough in the interest of the Russian princes and the capitalists of perfidious Albion! Your situation is desperate. Germany, who fights only for her own existence, has destroyed two Russian armies. To-day there is not a Russian to be found on German soil. In France our troops are setting themselves to overcome the last efforts at resistance.

If you wish to rejoin your wives and children, if you long to return to your work, in a word, if you would have peace, stop this useless strife, which is only working your ruin. Then you will soon enjoy the blessings of a happy and perfect peace!

VON BESELER,
Commandant in Chief of the Besieging Army.

It will easily be believed that this precious proclamation had nothing of the effect desired by the Germans. On the contrary, it strengthened the civilian population in their determination to stand by the Belgian Government and its military operations. This determination was evidenced in no uncertain manner by a resolution of the City Council carried on October 5, which, in specific terms, bade the General commanding the defence to be guided solely by military considerations, without regard to property interests in the city, and pledged him the whole-hearted support of the civil population. Thereupon, in order not to embarrass the military authorities in arriving at a decision as to their future procedure, orders were given that civilians should leave the town in order to escape the dangers of a probable bombardment.

Already the city was full to overflowing with people, most of whom were themselves refugees from other parts of Belgium, having left their own towns and homes as a consequence of the German advance and devastation. Hundreds of thousands of Antwerp citizens had already left the city for Holland, Ostend, France, or England; hundreds of thousands of refugees into the city had already passed on and out in the wake of the citizens; yet hundreds of thousands, in fact nearly a million of people, were still in the city, mostly refugees, on the 5th. So the city,

from this time onwards, through the 6th and 7th of October, was as full as, if not fuller than, in times of peace. But all the people seemed to be living, during the day, in the street, especially in those streets and places which were more in the centre of things; though curiously, but explicable in view of Belgian experience of German methods, the neighbourhood of the cathedral was carefully avoided. Since the commencement of the assault the good people of Antwerp had always retired to rest at an unusually early hour; after eight o'clock nobody could be seen in the streets; night would pass without a sound, except at rare intervals the uncanny reverberation of the footfall of a belated wayfarer. At eight o'clock the restaurants were closed, and no drink or food could be purchased; all public lights were extinguished, trams had ceased running since six o'clock, and all blinds were drawn, so that no light whatever should be thrown on to the streets. So far as artificial luminant was concerned, the city of Antwerp was as dark at night as an unlighted and secluded part of the country.

A few moments before midnight on October 7, the final bombardment of Antwerp commenced. It was preceded by a demand from the general commanding the German forces that the city should be delivered up to him, and a request for a plan of the city, so that in the event of bombardment some measures could be taken to avoid useless destruction of ecclesiastical and other particularly valuable buildings of a like protected character. The demand was refused, but a plan was furnished; and it is believed that copies were distributed by the German general amongst his artillery. The bombardment continued until the morning of the 9th, when the city surrendered, the burgomaster meeting the German general between eight and nine o'clock.

During the whole of this period there was nothing but a continued thunderous cannonading. The first day the cannonading was not only on the part of the enemy, but also, by way of reply, from the Antwerp forts of the inner ring. The bombardment appears to have been carried out by the Germans on a systematic plan, the object of which was to avoid the destruction of life and of all buildings of a protected or valuable character. So the ultimate damage sustained by the city was slight and limited very largely to the destruction of property of relatively little value or importance. There was also comparatively little loss of life. On the 8th the reply of the Antwerp forts ceased, the garrisons retreating; and the whole Belgian army, as well as the British reinforcements, began to move out of the doomed city, making their way towards Ostend and that neighbourhood. That same day the authorities in Antwerp fired the great tanks of oil. One can

imagine the great quantity of this oil, when it is remembered that it represented the store of the whole of the Antwerp oil trade with Belgium, Germany and Holland. Ships in the river were dealt with so as to be valueless to the Germans when they entered into occupation—the engines and machinery were blown up by dynamite, and many were sunk.

The night of the 8th was the occasion of a remarkable scene. Low over the whole of the city hung a dense black pall of smoke, one gigantic head of innumerable columns of fire proceeding from all parts of the city from the burning oil and fired buildings. Beneath this pall the black darkness was fiercely illuminated here and there by the ascending columns of fire, shells were continuously bursting and dropping showers of fire, and amidst all was heard the continuous thunder of the guns and the shrieking of the shells.

Antwerp, one of the world's greatest cities, thus fell in a fitting scene.

On Wednesday, October 7, it was estimated that there were about half a million of people left in Antwerp. By noon the following day there were only a few hundreds. During this short space of time the great mass of stricken humanity had left the city. Boat-load after boat-load had left by the river for England, France, and elsewhere; the boats were packed and the landing-stages a seething mass of waiting humanity. For miles and miles on the few yet open main roads leading from the city, there was a steady, slow-moving mass of people making their way either towards Ostend and that neighbourhood, or towards Holland. So thick were the throngs that progress was only possible at less than a walking pace. The high-powered motor-car, the horsed carriage, the dog-drawn cart, the cycle, the hand-cart, the athletic pedestrian—all had to proceed at a pace so slow and laboured that even the aged and infirm were impatient. The dress of these refugees was almost weird in its infinite variety, but one feature was common—all were apparently clothed in garments hastily donned without reference to the occasion and already much weather-worn. The conveyances were loaded not only with the aged and children, but with a most heterogeneous assortment of bundles and articles. Everybody carried something. Here would be seen an old woman carrying a market-basket filled with some of her most treasured possessions; here a middle-aged man, perhaps, with a little string-bag-full; here a fashionably dressed man and woman struggling with a great trunk between them, each with a hand on a handle; and here a child lovingly clasping her golliwog or doll to her breast. Here and there a woman

would faint, or some accident would occur, and a doctor would be discovered in the crowd. Nurses, too, were in the crowd. And certainly doctors and nurses were wanted, for more than one child was born on the wayside. Fortunately the weather was perfect.

On Friday night a German force entered the city, the bulk of the invading army taking possession on the following afternoon. Then General von Schutz, the Governor of Antwerp, and Admiral von Schroeder, the centre of a glittering staff, held a great review of the German troops in front of the Royal Palace in the Place de Meir.

A vivid description of the scenes incidental to the German army occupying the city was written by Mr. E. Alexander Powell, correspondent of the *New York World*, and printed in the *Times* :—

For five hours the mighty host poured through the streets of the deserted city, while the houses shook to the thunder of their tread. Company after company, regiment after regiment, brigade after brigade swept past, until the eye grew weary of watching the ranks of grey under the slanting lines of steel. As they marched, they sang, the canyon formed by high buildings along the Place de Meir echoing to their voices roaring out the "Wacht am Rhein" and "A Mighty Fortress is our God."

Each regiment was headed by its field music and colours; and when darkness fell and the street lamps were lighted the shrill music of fifes and rattles of drums and the tramp of marching feet reminded me of a torch-light election parade. Hard on the heels of the infantry rumbled artillery, battery after battery, until one wondered where Krupp found time or steel to make them. These were the forces that had been in almost constant action for the last two weeks, and that for thirty-six hours had poured death and destruction into the city, yet the horses were well-groomed and the harness well polished. Behind the field batteries rumbled quick-firers, and then, heralded by a blare of trumpets and the crash of kettledrums, came the cavalry, cuirassiers in helmets and breastplates of burnished steel, hussars in befogged jackets and fur busbies, and finally the Uhlans, riding amid forests of lances under a cloud of fluttering pennons.

But this was not all, nor nearly all. For after the Uhlans came blue-jackets of the Naval Division, broad-shouldered bewhiskered fellows with caps worn rakishly and the roll of the sea in their gait. Then Bavarian infantry in dark blue, Saxon infantry in light blue, and Austrians in uniforms of beautiful silver-grey; and, last of all, a detachment of gendarmes in silver and bottle-green.

Before the actual military occupation of Antwerp, half a dozen motor-cars, filled with armed men wearing grey uniforms and spiked helmets, entered the Porte de Malines and drew up before the Hôtel de Ville. The door-keeper, in the blue and silver livery of the municipality, cautiously opened the door in response to the summons of a young officer in a voluminous grey cloak. "I have a message to deliver to the Communal Council,"

said the young man pleasantly. "The Communal Councillors are at dinner and cannot be disturbed," was the door-keeper's reply. "If monsieur will have the kindness to take a seat until they finish?" So the young man in the spiked helmet seated himself on a wooden bench, and the other men in spiked helmets ranged themselves in a row across the hall.

After a quarter of an hour's delay the door of the dining-room opened, and a portly Councillor appeared, wiping his moustache. "You have a message you wish to deliver?" he inquired. "The message I am instructed to give you, sir," said the young man, clicking his heels sharply together and bowing from the waist, "is that Antwerp is now a German city, and you are requested by the General commanding his Imperial Majesty's forces so to inform your townspeople, and to assure them that they will not be molested so long as they display no hostility towards our troops."

The Burgomaster then went out to the motor-car to obtain the best terms he could. General von Schutz informed him that, if the outlying forts were immediately surrendered, no money indemnity would be demanded from the city, though all the merchandise in the warehouses would be confiscated.

As already stated, the Belgian army had retreated from Antwerp before its surrender. The main portion of that army and the 2nd British Naval Brigade as well as the Marines had retired upon Ostend while the communications remained open. The 1st Division of the Belgian army, which was the last to leave Antwerp, had been engaged in rendering the place useless to the besiegers, but was not delayed by this work too long for it to be impossible to retreat—though to do this it had to fight with the Germans north of the Scheldt a succession of rearguard actions. The 1st British Naval Brigade were forced, though fighting tenaciously, across the Dutch frontier at Huist. A division of the Belgian army were also compelled to cross the boundary into Holland. So a considerable force of Britons and Belgians were lost to the Allies, being interned by the Dutch. It was, however, a matter of the greatest satisfaction to the Allies that once more the Belgian army had eluded the grasp of Germany.