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DEER HOUSE. Taken over by ment has taken most of London not return until

MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH CABINET

SOMETHING ABOUT THE FIVE "DICTATORS."

Lloyd George is Shortest—Lord Curzon Tallest—All Are "Anti-Booze."

The average age of the War Cabinet of five members is 56 1/2 years. The oldest member of it is Lord Milner, who is 62, while Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Henderson are, each of them, 53.

The five "dictators" represent four different religious denominations between them. Lords Curzon and Milner are Anglicans. Mr. Lloyd George is a Baptist (of the kind that is sometimes called "Campbellite" Baptists).

Of the five, Lord Curzon is the only one who belongs, by birth, to the "governing class." Lord Milner is of the professional class. So is Mr. Lloyd George, but sprung from a lower class.

Mr. Bonar Law is a successful business man. Mr. Henderson is a workingman. The two Peers in the Cabinet are the only two of its members who have received a university education, both of them having been Balliol men and both having pupils of the great Jowett. None of them are men who are great for sports or games.

Mr. Lloyd George is fond of golf, it is true, but the others are not great at outdoor amusements. Indeed, Lords Curzon and Milner are too serious-minded for amusement of any kind to loom large in their scheme of things.

It is, by the way, a decidedly hirsute Cabinet, as all its members, except Lord Curzon, grow whiskers, and Lloyd George, in addition, is so lax in his visits to the barber's that he generally grows hair enough for two men on his head.

Lloyd George's Greatness. The smallest in stature, Lloyd George towers over his Cabinet colleagues, perhaps not mentally, but in power, order, and prestige with the people.

He has a devoted family man. He has a family virtues. His household is one that breathes an atmosphere of serene and high. With

him, as with so many of his compatriots, piety is instinctive. Life he regards alike as a high destiny and as a school of discipline.

It has been said of one of his present colleagues that as soon as he could lip. Mr. Lloyd George, on the other hand, was chiefly learned in his younger days in Welsh Nonconformity, Welsh bards, Welsh village life, and the intricacies of Welsh politics.

His childhood was spent in the romantic region about Snowdon. All his education was got in at the Church of England elementary school, the only available school in the village. It was a dull and wormwood to him to have to attend an Anglican school, and partake of Anglican doctrinal teaching.

It must have been a really great man that, from such humble and obscure beginnings, could make himself what he is to-day—the first real Child of the People to hold the office of British Premier. He is generally regarded as the man of the moment—indispensable man. And the curious thing about it all is that this indispensable man in Great Britain's greatest war is pretty well the profoundest lover of peace in the British Isles.

Which goes to show how passionate is his conviction that the present war is a righteous one on Great Britain's part.

FLYING DUST. Remarkable Alterations in the Surface of the Earth. A correspondent of the Geographical Journal describes the remarkable alterations in the surface of the earth produced by flying dust.

The power of the wind to transport even moderately coarse rock, he writes, is almost incredible. Many of the broad valleys between the eastern and the western slopes of the great Cordillera are filled with such deposits to a depth of hundreds of feet.

"The wind has nothing to do but fly," is the way an old prospector put it. In some places the formation of a dune many acres in extent and several feet high is a work done in a period of time that is measured by days rather than by months.

In many comparatively small areas blinding dust storms blow nearly half the time. The old south-western mail stage-coach line had a station in Arizona that was almost uninhabitable on account of the flying dust. The men employed there rarely remained any considerable length of time; occasionally all of them would leave in a body.

In Mexico flying dust and dust deposits are on an even greater scale, and the boundaries of the belts of scoured-out and built-up land are less definite than in the dry region of the United States. At times the finer dust is blown across lowlands of the coast far out into the Gulf.

Many of the smaller streams of the West and Southwest are heavily overloaded with sediment that is, or was, wind-blown dust. Years ago a driver thus described the Platte: "You won't know when you're gettin' cross it, son, for it's a mile wide, and an inch deep, and the bottom's on top."

HOW A SOLDIER FIRST KNEW FEAR

ALWAYS FELT THAT A MAGIC VEIL PROTECTED HIM.

Sensation of Immunity From Physical Harm Had Accompanied Him From Boyhood.

He had the curious, inexplicable feeling, long before any experience of the firing line, that he should go unwounded through whatever scenes of war might be his portion.

This sensation of immunity from physical harm had accompanied him ever since the days of boyhood, when, as an apprentice in the machine shop of a big British engineering and ship-building firm, moving constantly among huge lathes and cranes and whirling pulleys and belts, he ran a few more risks of accident than his friends who chose to take their preliminary views of life from the safe elevation of an office stool.

Even in his first spell of front-line duty he became noted as a man who bore a charmed life. There was hardly a moment when he was not aware of what he had come to regard as his birthright—this soft, invisible, impermeable garment.

The sun had risen, and in its pleasant warmth he sat on a heap of rubbish by the north wall of the church to rest and eat a morsel of food; but he felt, somehow, queer.

A Little Stone Devil. A level glow of sunlight illuminated an ancient carved stone gargoyle, representing the conventional grinning devil with horns and an arrowhead tail, on a pinnacle above the church door. It seemed to watch him maliciously with its hollow, evil eyes, and he shook his fist at it.

Although during the whole attack the veil had been with him, and was still there, he knew, for the first time, fear—cold, horrible, ominous fear. Presently he heard a familiar threatening sound, and knew that some sort of news had reached the enemy's batteries. Weeks ago they had "registered" on this village, as a precautionary measure, and now it was lost to them their chance had come.

A couple of shells went over, bursting far down the roughened street. Where were the other fellows? The silence was strange. He did not know (nor did those uncomfortably accurate gunners) that the message had come to retire till nightfall, to leave the place empty, unoccupied by either side, since no fortification or entrenching could be properly done under the enemy's heavy fire.

So he moved close to the wall and the din grew louder every minute. No one thought of retirement, but the first to think of attack were a sergeant and a man who set off to bomb and shoot their way laterally along the left trench. Together they ran a marvellous race. The sergeant leaped into a machine-gun emplacement, killed the crew and captured the gun. By mere threats of bombs the two took a bunch of prisoners.

Finally these valiant platoons cleared and presently garrisoned the whole of the front that the companies on their left had failed to reach or hold.

BRAVE NEWFOUNDLANDERS.

Storm Hun Trenches and Win Victory in Somme Battle.

A great little fight has been fought by a company or two of Newfoundlanders, and the tale has human and historical value that it will give the exact likeness of a thousand and one struggles engaged in by unnamed platoons, companies or battalions in the later part of the Somme battle, says the London Mail.

The appointed time for the attack was three in the afternoon. The goal was the exciting name of F39C2.5 to 49A12, or some such hieroglyphic of the map-makers, which the regimental officer must translate into a recognized object of the landscape. What mattered most was that the objective, whatever it might be—a strong place, or a string of holes, a topographical term, or a smothered trench—lay at a distance of 400 yards.

In the waiting hours the enemy's gunners proved suspicious and restive. They dotted the assembly trench with whizz-bangs and crumps. But there is nothing better to add venom to a charge than preliminary shelling, and the Newfoundlanders "went over the lid" in a streak. They expected a quarter of a mile course, but had gone only half the way when they came upon a strong trench that had escaped the notice of airmen and map-makers.

It proved formless, but far from void. It was indeed full of Germans, to the real delight of the storming party. A hand-to-hand fight was all before, and ever since "Remember July 1" has been the battle-cry of all Newfoundlanders. Desire of vengeance for their fate on that day arms every action of the regiment.

One of the two officers who then escaped was leading this October charge; and as he reached the unexpected trench he knew that he and his men held vengeance in their hands. For a minute or two bayonets and bombs were busy; and then the German had no more spirit left in them. Their weapons were thrown down and were taken. Seventy prisoners were taken. The trench was won.

Nevertheless the day's fight had hardly begun. Behind the captured position the German barrage fell like a portcullis, quite impassable. No attempt could be made to send back even the prisoners, and on the shoulders of the storming party lay the whole burden. Everyone with a spade began digging against the moment when a counter-attack should develop on the shell fire "shorten." As the work went on it was seen that the danger in front was not the only danger. Something had gone wrong on the left, and the continuation of the trench westwards was still held by the enemy.

On the other hand many cities showed a much higher death rate for infants. In Königsberg, for example, it was 19.5 in Magdeburg 19.5 and in Danzig 19.2 per cent, and the cause is perhaps an unfavorable influence of the war. But other cities again compensate for the loss. In seven the figure was less than 14, namely, Dresden, Hanover, Frankfurt-on-Main, Dusseldorf, Stuttgart, Hamburg and Bremen. The figures as a whole seem to be encouraging.

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DECLINE OF THE BIRTH RATE

INFANT MORTALITY IN GERMANY IS INCREASING.

Birth and Death Rate Significant From War Economist Point of View.

A decline of the birth rate is in a special manner the work of war; it has not the feature of accident but of inevitable character of life and death. And to the belligerent nations living branches, the source of intense solicitude. An Amsterdam despatch tells us that infant mortality is increasing on account of lack of sugar, which is a fair specimen of the non-scientific reports. In England and France the true state of the Teutons has been a theme of much inquiry, and the minds of physicians and public authorities have been listless in following out the interior intricacies of the living birth rate in Germany and its no less important problem of inferior vitality.

Living Birth Rate. The living birth rate and next to it the infant death rate are full of significance from the point of view of the war economist. Hence the figures given by Dr. Mamloch in the last number of the Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift have a special interest, for they disclose the two things about which so much has been written, the actual birth rate throughout Germany, and not in some large city like Berlin, and the effect of the war on the death rate of infants. In the second quarter of 1915 the number of living births in a total of twenty-six German cities of over 200,000 inhabitants fell from 66,032, the 1914 figure, to 43,723. For the whole year the previous year, a reduction of 19.3 per cent. The loss was greatest in certain cities, 27.2 per cent in Chemnitz, 27 per cent in Nurnberg and 23.6 per cent in Hamburg, while in Mannheim the loss was slight, or 14.2 per cent. In Berlin the reduction of the birth rate was proportionately greater than in the year 1914—1870-71. Some of the loss was made good by a reduction of the infant death rate, though the figures here are very unequal. Thus, on a basis of 100 live births, the death rate in 1915 was 14 per cent, as compared with 15.3 in 1914. Such a low infant mortality rate as that of the war year 1915 had never previously been observed in Germany.

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VERDUN IS NOW GERMAN PROOF

HUN SOLDIERS WILL NEVER GET NEAR IT AGAIN.

Journalist Finds the Famous City Firmly Held By the French.

Arno Doach-Fleuret, staff correspondent of the New York World, cables from Verdun, France, that the Germans can never come back at Verdun. They have been vanquished by the new heavy French artillery and the fine supporting picked army of Verdun, and are steadily slipping off the hills to the Woerwe Plain. He adds:

I have just been over most of the ground lost by them in the past ten days. I visited the region of the outer forts, Douaumont, Thiaumont and Vaux, as one of four lucky correspondents given the extraordinary privilege by the French Government. We went at night, as by day it was impossible.

We were under steady shell fire for twelve hours, and I can say that neither the Germans nor any other army can advance again toward Verdun over the wrecked country.

Loosening German Hold. We passed along the front line of the French army facing north from Thiaumont and Douaumont, seeing the steadily advancing line of French rapid-fire guns, backed by concentrated artillery fire, loosening the Crown Prince's hold on the foothills to the north. The temper of the French army at Verdun makes it evident that they never will be content until the Germans are pushed out on the water-plain of the Woerwe.

Verdun is simply a town in the narrow valley of the Meuse, running north. The famous citadel is but a rock in the town, a rock I entered, however, with relief. Verdun's real defences are in the line of forts, particularly St. Michel, on the hills dividing the Meuse from the Woerwe. Douaumont is the highest and most important. The Germans began charging the hills in February, and charged for six months, capturing half the heights except St. Michel, which rises abruptly opposite Verdun. They dominated Verdun from Douaumont.

Flour Levelled. Before the recent French attack these hills were trenched. Now they are an unbelievable mess of shell craters 20 feet deep. The town is full of arriving shells. The main battlefield is on the ridge rising from the Meuse and dropping to the Woerwe, on which are Forts Douaumont and Thiaumont, their walls now completely buried under the dirt thrown up by bursting shells.

The village of Fleury, between, is so knocked apart that we passed it without knowing we had done so. When the ridge was held by the opposing forces its trenches had barbed wire entanglements, communicating trenches and all the paraphernalia of modern trench warfare. Now there is not a vestige of this; no sign where the trenches once were.

THE BRITISH "BANTAMS." Men of Short Stature Prove Fine Soldiers. Unique among the armies of Europe, Lord Kitchener's "Bantams" have amply justified the opinion he had formed of them. They owe their existence to his initiative and foresight. When recruiting for his army was going on, many men were rejected because of their shortness of stature, and Lord Kitchener's idea was that, if the little men wanted to fight for their country, the right should not be denied them. So he began to organize the little men.

A correspondent at the British headquarters in the field says of them: No man of five feet three inches was accepted. Short men who had been turned away in the early days of the new army formed the first battalion. As it was a success, others followed. At the front they were brigaded together, and a visitor to certain parts of the line sees thousands of sturdy, short-legged men marching along the roads and keeping guard in the trenches.

From the Middle West

BETWEEN ONTARIO AND BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Items From Provinces Where Many Ontario Boys and Girls Are Living.

The coal miners at Taber, Alta., have not yet returned to work. Two patriotic concerts held in the Hand Hills district, Alberta, raised \$1,194. Saskatchewan Red Cross Society realized \$140 through raffling of a bulldog.

A children's concert at Yorkton, Sask., netted \$123 for the Sailors' Relief Fund. Money orders paid during November amounted to \$260,000 in the Saskatchewan post office.

The "Wild Cats," a battalion which has been stationed at Regina, has moved to Saskatchewan. The Welsh Church of Lethbridge added \$50 to the local Red Cross Fund through a concert held recently. Lieutenant-Governor Lake of Saskatchewan was entertained at Yorkton, Sask., by the Canadian Club.

A Lethbridge society, the Daughters and Maids of England, raised \$187.05 for the Patriotic Fund of that city. E. A. McMaster, recently appointed divisional freight agent for the G.T.P. at Edmonton, has resigned his position.

In response to request by local corymbees, after Sunday the 249th Battalion, Saskatoon, will cease to hold Sunday evening concerts. The Edmonton bank clearings for the week ending December 7 are \$3,772,584.46. For the same week last year they were \$2,882,865.88.

Mr. Erickson, a progressive farmer southwest of Warner, can hold his grain as long as he desires. He has built a fine elevator on his farm. William A. McScanlan, a well-known Saskatchewan newspaper reporter, has been awarded the Military Cross and has been granted a commission for distinguished conduct on the battlefield.

Thomas Tollit, of the Innisfail district, was committed for trial at Calgary on the charge of treason for forwarding money to his wife's sister in Germany, through the United States. The total value of the agricultural products of the province of Alberta this year will reach the imposing figure of \$174,000,000. This estimate includes grain, live stock, dairy produce, and poultry. Last year's valuation was \$136,000,000, making a total increase of \$38,000,000.

FRANCE PAYS EVERY DEBT. War Finances Healthy, But Britain Carrying Heavy End. Raoul Peret, formerly Minister of Commerce, discussing in the French Chamber of Deputies the budget for the first three months of 1917, observed that France will have incurred expenditures to the amount of 72,600,000,000 francs (\$14,520,000,000) between the end of March next, while Great Britain will in the same period have had an outlay of 90,000,000,000 francs (\$18,000,000,000). This statement drew exclamations from the Deputies to the effect that "Great Britain is thus proved to have collaborated cordially and completely."

The resources Mr. Peret puts against the expenditures made and authorized amount approximately to 64,000,000,000 francs (\$12,800,000,000), as follows: 10,200,000,000 francs, tax receipts; 28,700,000,000 francs, short and long term bonds of France; 5,000,000,000 francs, loans from England and the United States; 9,000,000,000 francs, advanced by the Bank of France; 200,000,000 francs, advanced by the Bank of Algeria. This leaves an apparent deficit of 8,000,000,000 francs. "France has paid when every debt incurred," he continues, "in spite of the apparent discrepancy between the appropriations and the receipts, we need have no anxiety for the future."



Premier Lloyd George.

SOMME A SEA OF MUD.

Great Offensive Has Blasted Fertile Country.

"The country around the Somme front is like a blasted world. Instead of the rolling, fertile plains of former months it has been transformed into a sea of mud." This graphic epitome of the great battle in history was given by Will Irwin, who has returned to New York from a trip to the French front.

Summing up his observations on this battle ground, he said: "The British completely dominate the air. The last week I was there I saw only one German observation balloon ascend. The French army is the most democratic, yet the most effective in the world. It will be a great mistake if the United States models its army after that of Germany."

"The belief is very strong in England that when the Teutons finish with Roumania they will turn on Italy. When they do this, it is stated, they will receive a big surprise." He said there can be no question whatever as to who will win, but the Germans are putting up a wonderful fight, but they cannot win," he declared.

GROWING WORSE EVERY DAY.

Food Scarce in Germany and Neutrals Leaving.

A Swiss recently from Germany states, in the Luzerne Tribune, that the food supply of that country grows worse every day. Neutrals living in the fore spring are determined to leave before spring brings additional privations. Fat and butter is most needed. Workmen in the munition factories are paid high wages and are well fed, as they have more money to spend than ever before. Consequently this class is kept from making trouble. Metals and rubber are also scarce, and many motors use wheels with steel spokes and wooden tires.

DANGEROUS THIEVES.

Arabs in Mesopotamia Who Rob and Kill Sleeping Soldiers.

Rev. Dr. Ewing, of Granger United Free Church, Edinburgh, Scotland, who is with the Indian Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia, in a letter to his congregation says that the Arabs are daring thieves, and dangerous ones as well, for they will not hesitate to kill rather than be caught when raiding the tents of sleeping soldiers.

The camp faces the river, writes Dr. Ewing, and is defended by barbed wire, besides being patrolled by a strong guard at night. This suggests to the Arab thief a fascinating problem, to evade the sentries, crawl through the barbed wire, and make his way into the tents where the men are sleeping to steal what may be carried off easily. He knows the perils, the sentries will shoot on sight, and if caught the thief will be shot at dawn as a spy. Knowing that there is no mercy for him, he will show none, and if anyone stirs in the tent where he is working he will use his long knife with murderous intent. One soldier was stabbed recently, and his life at the time the clergyman wrote, was hanging by a thread.

One night eight marauders were detected crawling on hands and knees near the wire like so many snakes, and for a few minutes the camp was treated to some excitement with rifle shots and flare rockets. One of the Arabs was killed, but the others escaped.

One of 'Em.

A man met an Irishman one day whose son was out at the front, and the following conversation was heard: "Well, Pat, how are you?" "I have you heard from your son lately?" "Yes, I heard from him this morning, and he's a-knocking them Germans down like nine-pins, and he quite expects to have Charing Cross."

"You stupid! You mean the Victoria Cross."

"Well, anyhow, I know it be one of them there big statins he be going to get."