

Signor Marconi informed the Government, who raided the premises, seized the apparatus, and demolished the station.' The cable appeared in much the same form in the English papers, and the correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* added the following remarks on his own account: 'Seeing that Italy, like most other countries, exercises the right of reserving control over wireless telegraphy in her own country, it is easy to understand how, at so critical a period as the present, a recurrence of this sort of abuse on the part of a conventual institution is calculated to provoke drastic measures against religious congregations as a whole.'

The exposure of this interesting little figment—supplied by other English papers—is complete and conclusive, and it is dynamite to the amiable suggestion as to the necessity for 'drastic measures' against the religious congregations. The very slender foundation of fact on which the fairy-tale about the 'influential religious Order' was built up is thus told by the Rome correspondent of the *Daily News*: 'A clandestine wireless installation has been discovered on the terrace of a German pension here. Two students were arrested, and they confessed that they had intercepted messages from the Eiffel Tower.' Signor Marconi had nothing whatever to do with the great 'discovery' which the cable so magniloquently attributed to him—so at least may be judged from the statement made by the head of the London office of the Marconi Company. Speaking to a representative of the *Daily Telegraph*, Mr. Godfrey Isaacs said the story had been brought to his notice, but not officially: 'He knew nothing about it through the company, and regarded the statement as exaggerated, his reason for that view being that a station of the power stated would require such high aeriads that they must have been observed. Secret stations had been discovered and dealt with, and it was possible that the report in so far as it related to an installation was correct.' In other words, an installation of relatively inferior power was, possibly, discovered, but it had nothing to do with any religious Order, 'influential' or otherwise. This picturesque addition to the narrative, and the association of Signor Marconi's name with the story, were merely a piece of journalistic embroidery on the part of the correspondent. Needless to say, the cable agency has not thought it worth while to transmit a correction of the utterly false statement for the dissemination of which it made itself responsible.

If Paris Were Besieged

The British retreat from Mons, rendered necessary, as we now learn, by the failure of the French left to hold their own, concluded on August 26, and by September 8 the German invading force had penetrated to within 17 miles of Paris. All the indications pointed to an immediate attack on the capital; and Home papers of about that date are filled with speculation as to what would be the outcome and probable effect upon the war if Paris were besieged. It would seem unquestionable that the moral effect of the fall of the capital—at least in inspiring the Germans if not in weakening the *elan* of the defending forces—would be very considerable; but the general consensus of expert opinion as expressed in the English papers is to the effect that the attempt to capture Paris would be attended with enormous difficulty, and that even if successful it would merely be an incident—a regrettable one, of course, but having no deciding influence on the ultimate issue of the struggle.

'We are still resisting doggedly,' said M. Clemenceau in the *Daily Mail*, 'and have many troops in reserve for the big battle that will follow this one. The Germans cannot invest Paris. Its size is too vast. And its defence will be assisted by the armies now fighting on the Oise seventy miles away. The fortifications of Paris are by no means the feeble defences they were in 1870. From our wireless station on the summit of the Eiffel Tower we can control the movements in co-operation of our armies in the provinces

of France. The situation is in no way desperate, although the Germans have invaded France.' The military correspondent of the *London Times*, recognised as one of the most reliable of the expert authorities, stresses the same point as to the tremendous difficulty which the Germans would probably experience in reducing present-day Paris. 'The new line of works,' he writes, 'makes Paris almost a fortified province. It embraces in the defended area Enghien, Argenteuil, Versailles, and the forests of Saint-Germain and Bondy. The perimeter is over eighty miles. Starting from the north, there are in succession Forts Cormeilles, Montlignon, Dimont, Montmorency, Ecouen, and Stains forming the northern group. To the east there are Forts Vaujours and Chelles. Between the Marne and the Seine come Forts Villiers, Champigny, Sucy, and Ville-neuve-Saint-Georges. To the south is Fort Palaiseau, while the hills from Palaiseau to Chatillon are crowned by the various batteries which are shown on the map. On the west stand Forts Villeras, Haut-Buc, St. Cyr, and Marly, with the numerous batteries which are also shown. If Paris is invested the line held by the enemy will be not less than 100 miles in length, and if this line is held in the same relative strength as in 1870 no fewer than 500,000 men will be required to occupy it. Such numbers will so materially weaken the German Armies that it is possible that on this occasion the Germans will select one section of the defence, the capture of which will enable them to bombard the capital, and bring up against the forts selected for attack the heavy howitzers which played such havoc with Liège and Namur. We must assume that by this time supplementary defences have been constructed in the intervals between the works, that all buildings which interfere with the fire of the works have been demolished, that obstacles have been accumulated, and that inundations have been prepared.' A former German Chancellor, Count Caprivi, who was admittedly competent in military affairs, long ago recognised that any future reduction of Paris would take either a very large number of men or a long period of time—perhaps both. 'Supposing,' he said, in the course of the discussion of a new military law in the Reichstag, 'the French Army were beaten, and retreated behind the walls of fortresses, then in order to enclose the present fortifications of Paris we must have at our disposal eighteen army corps, in addition to corresponding reserves. It is very probable that the siege of Paris could now be carried on from one point only, but the example of Sevastopol shows that for this a whole year might be required.'

With all respect to the experts, it must be said that the results and experience of the war up to date suggest that a heavy discount must be made on all predictions as to the length of time which a given fortress or fortified town will be able to hold out. After Namur and Antwerp, even the experts cannot be allowed to dogmatise. They are on safer ground when they declare that the fall of Paris, if it did take place, would be a mere incident in the struggle—and this on both patriotic and military grounds. The patriotic ground is stated by M. Clemenceau: 'And however desperate the situation were, you may tell people in England with the certainty of truth that France will fight on and on until this attempt to establish tyranny in Europe has been completely overthrown.' And the military ground for refusing to concede that the fall of Paris would have any final significance is aptly stated by the *London Times*: 'Should the German troops ultimately make good their advance, and come into touch with the defences of the capital, their difficulties will then be only beginning. Moreover, we may be certain that an attack upon Paris will never for a moment be permitted to decide the fate of France. The French have an immense and mobile army in the field. Great Britain can send an endless stream of reinforcements to their aid in any suitable direction. The lure of Paris should this time lead to the undoing of the foe, for never again will France stake her future upon armies shut up behind fortifications.' As it happened, the anticipated attempt on Paris was never made. On the morning