

Notes

German and British Vessels

According to the *Shipping Register*, there are 74 British vessels, with a tonnage of 170,000, detained in German ports; and there were, in the British ports at the outbreak of the war, 102 German ships, with a total of 200,000 tons. As the German carrying trade is strictly limited to the Baltic, that Power has had no occasion so far to requisition any of the British vessels, but the British Government has, of course, freely requisitioned the German ships. This is in accordance with international law, provided due compensation is paid. Article 2 in Convention VI., of the last Hague Conference reads:—'A merchant ship unable, owing to circumstances of force majeure, to leave the enemy port within the period contemplated in the above article, or which was not allowed to leave, cannot be confiscated. A belligerent may only detain it without payment of compensation, but subject to the obligation of restoring it after the war, or requisition it on payment of compensation.'

Food in War Time

High fees are the rule in the school of experience. Some years ago the British war authorities, acting on the advice of so called 'experts,' refused to adopt the pom-pom for use in the army. During the South African war, however, they woke up to the conviction that they had made a costly mistake. They discovered that the rejected machine-gun was a military weapon of the highest value, and they soon got busy distributing it among the troops. It took long years of patient agitation to secure parliamentary consideration of the grave question of Great Britain's food supply in war time; and when Parliament did take the matter up, nothing practical was done. And now the situation has come under the serious discussion of the civil and military authorities, and parks and recreation grounds are to be hurriedly turned to account. In one of his books 'Mr. Dooley' outlines in his quaint way the starving-out policy, that, if successfully pursued by Uncle Sam, would bring about peace more speedily and effectively than all the big guns on sea and shore. 'If all them Great Powers, as they say themselves, was f'r to attack us, d'ye know what I'd do? I'll tell ye. I'd blockade Armour an' Company an' the wheat illivators iv Minuysoty. F'r. Hinmissy, I tell ye, the hand that rocks the scales in the grocery store, is the hand that rules the warruld.' In war time, it certainly is.

Why Antwerp Fell

What a crop of criticisms, and personal recriminations, and plentiful if regretful talk of the 'might-have-beens' of the war, will there be when the curtain finally falls. We have hints even now of the sort of stories that will be poured out upon us later on. Colonel Winston Churchill, former First Lord of the Admiralty, himself a prominent figure in recent newspaper discussions, has been telling in the *Sunday Pictorial* the tale of the siege and fall of Antwerp. Colonel Churchill says that the Admiralty at the outset urged the immense importance of Antwerp and the need of vigorous measures for its defence, but that nothing was done during the entire month of September. Only when the German bombardment started and the in-

sistent cry for help came from the Belgians did England and France consult and decide upon steps for relief. Colonel Churchill explains his visit to Antwerp, saying: 'It was a natural decision of a small group of Ministers who met at Lord Kitchener's house at midnight that some one in authority, who knew the whole situation, should travel swiftly into the city and ascertain what should be done.' The article concludes with the statement that the situation could have been saved a week earlier, but the Belgians, left unaided too long, lost confidence.

Helping the Catholic Paper: A Practical Scheme

The important matter in the work of encouraging the Catholic press—a work in which all good Catholics and Catholic organisations should be interested—is that those taking it up should be in earnest. Where this requirement is fulfilled, ways and means will sooner or later be found to attain the desired result. An interesting illustration of the distance to which intelligent enthusiasm will carry those who have the movement really at heart is furnished by the practical measures for promoting the Catholic press which were adopted by the New York Staatsverband—an organisation of German-speaking Catholics—at its recent annual convention. They are thus set forth in the *Buffalo Aurora*: The president is instructed to address a circular to all the branch societies, setting forth the need of at least one Catholic paper in every Catholic home. The secretaries of the different branches are to incorporate in every circular or other official notice which they send out to the members in the course of next year, these questions:

1. Do you keep a Catholic paper? Answer yes or no.
2. If you keep one or more Catholic papers, give their titles. Please answer these questions at your earliest convenience and return to the secretary of your branch.

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After six months each secretary is expected to send to the district secretary the names and addresses of all those members who have answered the first of the aforesaid questions with 'No' or left it unanswered. The names are to be collected by the district secretary, who is then to appoint voluntary committees who will visit each delinquent member and try to induce him to subscribe for some Catholic paper. Those who refuse shall receive gratis four consecutive numbers of the *Echo* or the *Aurora*, two excellent Catholic papers published at Buffalo. Those branch societies which are able to do so are requested to pay a year's subscription to some Catholic paper for each negligent member from the treasury.

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It will be extremely interesting to note just what this movement will accomplish. It certainly gives promise of success; and there seems no good reason why strong Catholic organisations—such as the Hibernian Society, Catholic Federation, etc.—should not give the experiment a trial, in a modified form, perhaps, in this country.

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