

is evident that the Kaiser, with his paper blockade, has played right into Britain's hands, and furnished just the lever which she needed to develop her forward policy. If she was really feeling her way as to how far she could go in the matter of stopping neutral cargoes, she has done so with some success, having now reached the stage of practically stopping them altogether. As to the actual outcome of the struggle, this returned correspondent is of opinion that the war will end in a draw. He does not believe that it will be possible for either side to score a decisive victory. Germany, he admits, cannot advance much farther to the east or west, and the Allies will be unable, in his opinion, to penetrate either of the strongly fortified German frontiers. That, of course, remains to be seen; but this general view of the position is interesting as showing that even the friends and admirers of Germany cannot see that she can possibly win through.

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But to the English reader, especially at the present juncture, the special interest of Mr. Swing's statements will be found to consist in the disclosures which they make as to the German plans in regard to Poland. On this point the American correspondent has something new to tell us. 'The Russians knew,' he says, 'that they would have to swing superior numbers against Germany to win. They have probably been in a majority of two to one, some say three to one, but Hindenburg's strategy has carried the day. If the Germans take Warsaw, they will establish winter quarters there. I do not believe that they will be able to carry the war a farther distance into Russia. The taking of Warsaw will enable them to carry into effect some interesting plans relative to the Kingdom of Poland, about which very little, so far, has leaked out. My information is that Germany proposes to establish an autonomous Polish Kingdom, with a Polish King, and bearing the same relation to the German Empire as the Kingdoms of Saxony and Bavaria. This indicates that Poland will get a square deal out of this war, whichever way it goes.' This, it will be remembered, was written about the end of December. It furnishes an explanation of the continuous and reckless wastage of human life in the tremendous efforts to capture Warsaw, and it gives us, also, some measure of the disappointment which Germany must feel at the prolonged failure of those efforts.

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Germany, according to the American correspondent, has not yet quite made up her mind as to what is to be done with Belgium. 'German public opinion,' he says, 'is strongly divided as to what shall be done with Belgium at the end of the war. There is a group of influential men in Berlin who want Germany to give it up absolutely as soon as the war is over. They point to the fact that as Germany has not been successful in assimilating the Poles and the Alsations, they do not wish her to assume any further burdens of this kind. Then there are the extremists, on the other side, made up largely of the military element. They want to keep Belgium and make it a new "Neu Deutschland," a name they have already given it. Then there is a third or intermediate group, and in my opinion its influence will ultimately prevail. It wishes Germany to maintain the right of free passage through Belgian territory in case of war, and to prevent Belgium from putting any obstacle in the way of a German military advance.' Any worry or discussion on the part of Germany as to what will be done with Belgium is at least premature, and perhaps unnecessary. It is one of those problems which, as we all hope, will in large measure be settled for her.

The War and Christianity

A good deal has been said—mostly, we are sorry to say, in allegedly Christian circles, by the Mr. Doubtings and Mr. Fainthearts of various religious bodies—as to the evidence which the war affords of the failure of Christianity. The world, it is said, has had nineteen centuries of Christianity, and is this all there is to show for it? No, it is not all. Brutal, horrible,

hellish as the war is, it is only an episode. The records of the past are filled with the triumphs of Christianity, and when the present temporary lapse into lunacy and paganism is over, the records of the future, too, will be laden with fresh stories of the gracious victories of the Cross. After the war, indeed, Christianity's great opportunity will come, and once again, as described by the inspired prophet, it will carry out its great mission—to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives; to comfort all that mourn; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. The rejection of Christian principles which has made the war possible was purely sectional. There has been no breakdown of Christianity among the mass of the peoples but only amongst a handful of junkers and potentates who happen for the moment to control the destinies of nations. How deep a hold, after all, Christian sentiment has upon the hearts even of the very fighters themselves is most strikingly illustrated in letters from the front describing how Christmas was celebrated in the trenches.

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In France—at one section of the trenches at least—it was a Catholic chaplain who began the good work of fraternising, and his overtures evoked immediate response from the German officers. An officer's letter, published in the *Daily Mail*, tells the story. 'Dotted over the sixty yards separating the trenches were scores and scores of dead soldiers, and soon spades were flung up by comrades on guard in both trenches, and by instinct each side set to to dig graves for their dead. Our padre had seized his chance and found the German commander very ready to agree that after the dead had been buried a short religious service should take place. He told us that the German commander and his officers were as anxious as the British could be to keep Christmas Day as a day of peace. This was quite in keeping with the behaviour of the Germans, who had kept up only an occasional firing on Christmas Eve, and were very busy singing carols and glees.' 'We did not know all that was being said,' adds the officer, 'but afterwards we asked the padre two questions. The one was, "Why did you and the German commander take off your hats to one another?" What happened, as we learned, was: The German took his cigar-case out and offered the padre a cigar, which was accepted. The padre said: "May I be allowed not to smoke, but to keep this as a souvenir of Christmas here and of meeting you on Christmas Day?" The answer, with a laugh, was: "Oh, yes; but can't you give me a souvenir?" Then the hats came off. For the souvenir the padre gave was the copy of "The Soldier's Prayer" which he had carried in the lining of his cap since the war began, and the German officer, in accepting it, took off his cap and put the slip in its lining, saying as he did it: "I value this because I believe what it says, and when the war is over I shall take it out and give it as a keepsake to my youngest child." What was in the notebook was interesting enough to be worth recording. The second question was, "What was in the notebook the German commander showed you?" The answer was that he had been shown the name and address in England of a certain brave British officer. He had been killed, and as he was dying the commander happened to pass and saw him struggling to get something out of a pocket. He went up and helped the dying officer, and the thing in the pocket was a photograph of his wife. The commander said, "I held it before him, and he lay looking at it till he died a few minutes after." Our padre took down the name and address, and has been able to pass on the information to the bereaved home.'

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A similar spirit was displayed—and, to their credit be it said, the initiative appears to have been mostly taken by the German soldiers—right along the lines. 'You need not have pited us on Christmas Day,' writes an officer in a Highland regiment. 'I have seldom spent a more entertaining one, despite the curious conditions. We were in the trenches, and the Germans began to make