peace to a sorely distracted region.' The authorities quoted are emphatic in their opinion that the Allies must promptly and vigorously attempt the development of some such programme as that which has been outlined. 'Whether the Powers would be completely or quickly successful if they put forward such a scheme no one can say. But it is at least clear that they ought to have a scheme and to try it, and not leave everything to chance and the venture at the Dardanelles. Our diplomacy has not so far been very successful, and it is time it came to the assistance of our arms. Difficult as the question is made by the intense mutual jealousy and suspicion of the Balkan States, it is of such immense consequence to the fortunes of the Allies that they cannot own defeat without grave discredit to themselves. A League which has existed once can surely be built up again if the causes which brought about its fall are removed.' Late cables indicate that Germany is making extraordinary efforts at Sofia, Bucharest, and Athens, and that the battle of the diplomats is being keenly and hardly fought.

German Reserves—and their Limit

Even before the war, Mr. Hilaire Belloc was regarded as one of the three cleverest young men in London: and the war has given him a unique opportunity for displaying his wide knowledge and exceptionally versatile talents. He has taken full advantage of his chances: and has now won a place in the very foremost rank of popular writers upon the war and its final issue. His articles show common sense, sound judgment, and at least as accurate knowledge of the facts as can be found otherwhere: and they are marked by a note of reasoned optimism, which inspirits and encourages without at the same time raising undue or extravagant hopes. Such a characteristic is particularly welcome at a time when the Russians are almost helplessly on the run through lack of necessary war material, when the situation in Sweden is beginning to look ugly, and when we are just getting through English and American files our first full information regarding the unspeakable stupidity and muddleheadedness with which the British War Office has managed, or rather mismanaged, the munitions department.

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Mr. Belloc's latest article in *Land and Water* expounds to us the significance, or insignificance, of any merely local or incidental successes gained by the enemy; and is certainly in its main contention very reassuring. Mr. Belloc's contention is that unless the enemy can pierce the Allied line in the west, he gains, no matter what isolated successes he achieves, true ultimate failure. 'No local success,' he writes, 'no flattening of this salient, or recapturing of that position, no slight advance due to his last accession in numbers, can help the enemy at all towards his immediate and only useful end, which is simply the breaking of the Allied line. If it does not break that line he has done nothing; and if his attempt to break through fails, then after it has failed he will be in a worse position to meet the final Allied offensive than it was before. Not only will he be weaker from losses, but he will know that he has now no further reserves to put in the field during the summer. Now, if we take 8,000,000 as the maximum figure of men which Germany can train at any moment, it was to be expected that, in the course of the war, three principal accessions of strength would be apparent in the forces of the German Empire alone exclusive of those of its allies. Upon the appearance of the third of these accessions of strength the last effort of the enemy would have been reached and no more was to follow. In the face of the enormous losses which Germany has been suffering, this last accession of strength would not bring the enemy to anything like the superiority which he had over the Allies during the winter, but it would provide an immediate increase of strength available at this or that striking point: the effects of such a sudden reinforcement would be clear. It is evident that we are now entering this period of the third and last accession of strength to the enemy. He is using a very considerable proportion of his new strength in Flanders and upon other points on the Western front. And that is the explanation of all the news that we have been receiving during the last few days. We may expect, first the element of surprise, then repeated attacks in close formation and losses far superior to those of the defence. The enemy cannot but play now for very high stakes, and attempt, at a great expense of men, to obtain conditions as favorable as possible upon which to conclude what he calls "an honorable peace"—that is, a draw. But by the very use of this method he will, if he fails to achieve his object, find himself in a much worse position after that failure than before, for he is going to use what he knows to be his last reserves and he has already begun to put them into the field. The measure of our success and of his failure in the next couple of weeks will be his ability or inability to get through. If he does not get through, no local advance, no capturing of a few pieces here or there, or even of positions with which recent encounters have made us familiar, can have the least effect upon the final result.'

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Mr. Belloc sums up the position in the following vivid and clinching paragraph: 'To put the matter baldly, supposing the Germans were within a week in possession of the ruins of Ypres: suppose that they retook the spur of Les Eparges: suppose that these continually arriving new members took back the whole of the belt which the French have gained during the spring in Champagne: suppose they retook, one by one, the heights of the Vosges and reached the passes of those mountains, as they have already retaken the summit of the Hartsmannweilerkopf: suppose all this. It would not bring the ultimate success of the enemy nearer by an inch *unless* the effect produced upon civilian opinion should give the enemy politically what he could not achieve in the field.'

The Ammunition Question

Judging by the elaborate and extensive arrangements which are being made for the supply of arms and ammunition, and particularly the latter, the Allies are preparing for a campaign on a positively gigantic scale. Apart from the speeding up and general hustle movement which is being carried out in England by Mr. Lloyd George, the Allies have lately placed literally enormous orders in the United States. For example: A contract for delivery of five million shells to England, France, and Russia has just been signed by the American Locomotive, New York Air Brake, and Westinghouse Electric Companies. The American Locomotive Company is to supply two million five hundred thousand of the shells called for by the contract, and the New York Air Brake and Westinghouse Companies will divide the rest of the order. Each shell costs, roughly, about £2 15s: so that this single contract will call for a payment of £13,000,000. Russia, whose shortage of munitions has already cost her dear, is anxious to place immense orders for shrapnel beyond the contract just referred to. It is estimated that negotiations with American manufacturers, under way or practically closed, call for between ten and fifteen million shells. Delivery of such a huge amount of ammunition as fifteen million shells would entail the ultimate payment of something like £40,000,000 by Russia. The big American companies are either enlarging their plants or arranging sub-contracts in order to meet the demands of this death-dealing business. From Milwaukee comes the information that the Allis-Chalmers Company has closed a contract with the Bethlehem Steel Company which is now booked beyond the full capacity of its plants,—to turn out close to ten thousand shrapnel forgings every working day. The contract is to run over a prolonged period. This company is already making several thousand shells a day and new plants are being hastily installed to take advantage of contracts now being placed. The Allis-Chalmers Company shortly will have a capacity in excess of ten thousand shells a day.