

V A N I T Y
F A I R
November, 1918

The Great Battle Against the Buns

Details of the Anti-Temperance Offensive in Champagne

WHY are people so apathetic about the great wave of Prohibition which is sweeping over the country? Why do men go to their clubs, their dinners, their after-theatre parties where they enjoy—in moderation, be assured,—the solace of the once flowing bowl, which now trickles in a diluted stream, and of which they partake with well-regulated abstinence, and yet without once betraying their knowledge of the looming fact that soon, ah! very soon, this slender brooklet will dry up and disappear.

Verily, we are a strange people! Sahara surrounds us on all sides and we look upon the prospect calmly, even indifferently.

BUT I think I have discovered the reason for the apparent apathy in this particular regard. The news of the great Reform wave, the details of the bitter struggles between the Wets and the Drys, the skirmishes, advances and retreats, take place in our halls of Legislation. Their organ of publicity, *The Congressional Record*, is as dry as the most ardent anti-saloon Leaguer could wish. Hence the propaganda stuff does not get over. It never reaches the public.

As one who believes in pitiless publicity on all topics of nation-wide interest, it seems my plain duty to bring the vital character of this great struggle before the moderate thinkers—and drinkers—of our country. This I can do best by borrowing the phraseology of the other great war,—which I do with reverence, and simply to bring the matter home to the thoughtless and unheeding. Imagine yourself, then, unfolding your favorite morning paper to be confronted with some such article as

GREAT ADVANCE BY DRY FORCES

Allies take Boissons. Latest news of the battle for Prohibition. By ——'s (insert your favorite morning paper), special correspondent at the front, James W. Drinkwater.

Somewhere in Champagne. Oct. 24. (By aero-post.) When I walked through the once pleasant streets of Boissons at two A. M. to-day, I could not help wishing that the picture of desolation which presented itself to me could be thrown on the screen of every moving picture palace in America, to bring home, if possible, to our people the vandalism perpetrated by Ober-general DeWett's retiring forces. Hand-picked troops under General Trinken (they were mostly of the famous Holstein and Hoffbrau divisions) have waged a fierce battle for this little town since last Thursday. The allied forces under General Sec were not, however, to be denied. Their success is a high tribute to the strategy of Maréchal Buvonpas and a supreme vindication of President Wilson's recently stated insistence upon a one-

Offensive in Champagne

arch-prototype, Attila the Hun. Literally, not one stone was left standing on another. La Rue de Pomard, the main street of the village, which used to run East and West, now points North and South. This will give a faint idea of the terrific pounding which the Buns underwent at the hands of our gunners who, in the later stages of the struggle, fired their gigantic 220 mil. Bill-Bryans point blank at twenty-yard range into the tottering walls of the Ancienne Brasserie de la Galette, which the enemy defended with the utmost perspiration.

ORDERS taken on captured officers show that the troops were commanded to hold all breweries to the death—and they obeyed. Battered tanks clog the narrow thoroughfares rendering traffic well-nigh impossible. Our troops have not yet occupied the town as, following their usual custom, the enemy has filled every lake, reservoir, spring, well, pump, water bucket and tooth mug with laughing gas. Such efficiency, even in defeat, warns our war-councils of bitter struggles yet to come.

It would seem, however, that the general retrograde movement toward the Rhinè provinces has been definitely decided upon. A glance at the map will show the stand made by the Münchener and Budweiser Divisions, at Bouchon. It is here that Generals Durstig and Schwiller have, for over a week, held up our advance, the line taking the form of a bottle, with Bouchon at the apex.

Its fall cannot be very long delayed.

THE much vaunted Whiffenpoof Line has already been pierced at two points, one East of Rummycourt, menacing the important railway center of Pille and the Canal de Suds, the other, Southeast of Chateau Yquem where our troops, astride the Barelle, have reached the junction of that river with its tributary, the Bière, at Trou-le-Bung.

It was here that special gallantry was displayed by our colored troops who took Ham, with great enthusiasm and appetite, after the repulse of the Jewish Volunteers, who fell back on Bivaux in the face of vastly superior and more numerous forces.

In this connection it should be mentioned that the apparent inactivity of certain of our elements has been due to the fact that they found themselves opposed to Bun shock-troops without the very necessary equipment of shock-absorbers. It is understood, however, that this defect has been remedied. Everywhere the new whippet water-wagons are doing wonderful work. Their effectiveness would have been increased had it not been for the difficulty in securing drivers. Owing to the gentle, rolling motion of the wagons, many of the men entrusted with the task of driving were displaced from their seats during the skirmishes. In one company alone, fifty-six per cent of the drivers failed to keep their places. One young American, more persistent than the rest, mounted his particular wagon twelve times in one engagement, only to be unseated on every occasion.

The water wagons proved particularly effective in mopping up around Boissons and Rummycourt. After the destruction of the Galette brewery, Major Croton, whose name will be familiar to many residents of New York and Ken-sico, was breveted on the field and the entire siphon-and-hose division has been recommended to receive the Congressional Blue Ribbon.

To sum up,—once DeWett's bottle is broken, a retreat to the old Whiffen-

Offensive in Champagne

poof Line is inevitable. The question is, will the enemy go further? Will he elect to stand on this line pending a subtle peace-offensive, or will he be forced to his last great strongholds defending the home-land?

In the latter case, which seems the more probable, his line would run about due South from Pille through the towns of Tremens, Dizzy and Riot. It is inconceivable that DeWett will ever give up Tremens. It is the last resort of the Buns. To surrender that would be to yield all, and before that happens we may look to see serious proposals which would terminate hostilities.

I am frequently asked when this war will end. Like other war correspondents I am in a position to know,—not vaguely or indefinitely, but with the utmost precision. After mature study of conditions and after reading the accounts of legislation recently enacted at Washington I do not hesitate to state, emphatically, that it will all be over on July 2nd, 1919.