

# *My War Memories*

∴ ∴ ∴ 1914-1918 ∴ ∴ ∴

*By General Ludendorff*

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*With 12 large Maps and  
46 smaller Maps in the text*

VOL. I.



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∴ ∴ PATERNOSTER ROW ∴ ∴

I came to Andenne, where I saw a gruesome and distressing example of the devastation that follows *franc-tireur* operations.

On August 21st I was present at the crossing of the Sambre, by the 2nd Guards Division, west of Namur. The preliminaries of the action were carried through quite smoothly. It was wonderful to see the magnificent men of the Augusta Regiment go into battle.

On the morning of August 22nd I received my call to the East.

## CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF ON THE EASTERN FRONT

22nd August, 1914, to 28th August, 1916.

### TANNENBERG

(MAPS I. AND II.)

#### I

THE letters from General von Moltke and General von Stein summoning me to General Headquarters at Coblenz, and informing me that I had been appointed Chief of Staff of the 8th Army in East Prussia, were handed to me by Captain von Rochow at nine in the morning of the 22nd August, at the Headquarters of the 2nd Army, half-way between Wavre and Namur.

General von Moltke's letter ran :

“ You have before you a new and difficult task, perhaps even more difficult than that of storming Liège. . . . I know no other man in whom I have such absolute trust. You may yet be able to save the situation in the East. You must not be angry with me for calling you away from a post in which you are, perhaps, on the threshold of a decisive action, which, please God, will be conclusive. This is yet another sacrifice you are called upon to make for the Fatherland. The Kaiser, too, has confidence in you. Of course, you will not be made responsible for what has already happened, but with your energy you can prevent the worst from happening. So answer this new call, which is the greatest compliment that can be paid any soldier. I know that you will not belie the trust reposed in you.”

General von Stein, who was at that time Quartermaster-General, and later became Minister of War, concluded his letter by saying :

“ You must go, therefore. The interests of the State make it imperative. Your task is a difficult one, but you are equal to it.”

From Captain von Rochow I learnt that General von Hindenburg was to be Commander-in-Chief, but that it was not yet known where he was to be found or whether he would accept the post.

I was proud of my new task and of the trust placed in me, as revealed by the two letters. I was exalted at the thought of serving my Emperor, Army and Fatherland, in a position of great responsibility at a most critical point. Love of country, loyalty to my Sovereign, appreciation of the truth that the duty of everyone is to devote his life to his family and the State, this was the heritage which I took with me from my home as my portion in life. My parents were not wealthy ; their devoted efforts had not brought them any material reward. Our happy and harmonious family life was conducted on very economical and simple lines. Both my father and my mother sacrificed their all in providing for their six children. I take this opportunity of thanking them before the whole world.

I had to fight my way honourably through life when I was a young officer, but my enjoyment did not suffer on that account. Much of my time was spent in my simple subaltern's quarters in Wesel, Wilhelmshaven and Kiel, reading works on history, military history and geography. The knowledge I had acquired as a boy developed and bore fruit. I learned to be proud of my Fatherland and its great men., and ardently worshipped at the shrine of Bismarck's powerful and passionate genius.

The work of our Reigning House for Prussian-Germany stood out in the clearest relief. The allegiance I had pledged on oath developed into a feeling of deep personal devotion. As I followed history step by step, I became more and more convinced that

the safety of the country essentially depended on the Army and Navy, in view of the fact that Germany had again and again been the battlefield of Europe. At the same time, my survey of life around me enabled me to discern the greatness and significance

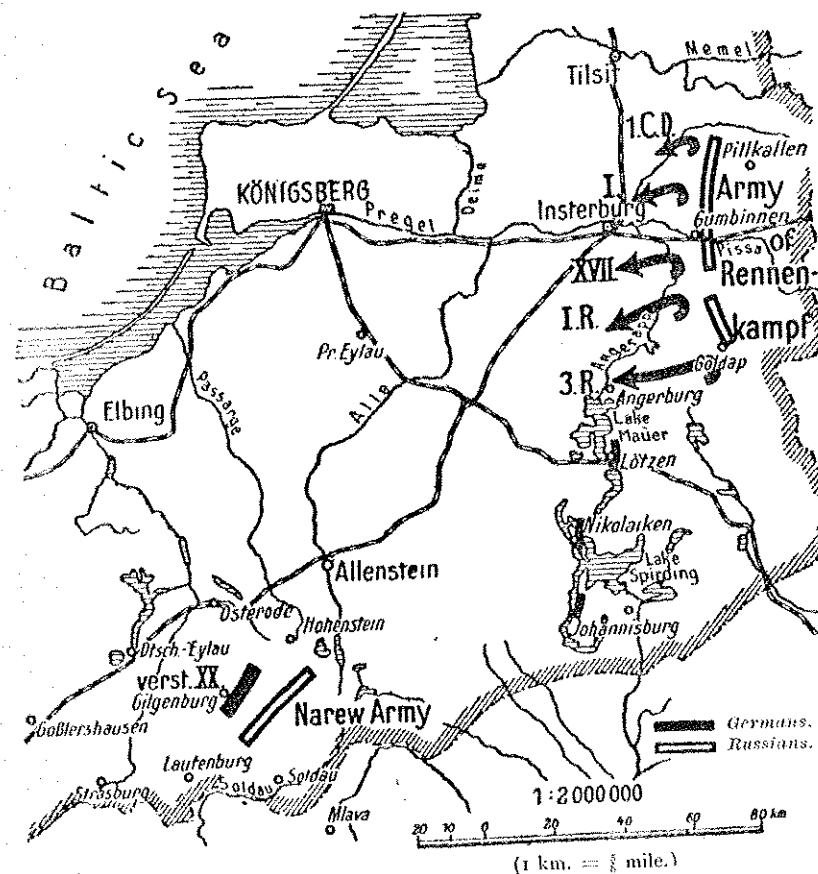


Fig. 2. Tannenberg. Situation on August 22nd, 1914.

of the peaceful services rendered by the Fatherland to civilization and mankind.

My practical work for the Army began in 1904, when I was appointed to the Concentration Department of the Great General Staff. The culmination of my work there was my proposal for the milliard mark bill.

For a long time my mobilization orders had appointed me Director of Military Operations at General Headquarters; but, of course, this was changed when I took over the command of the Regiment in Düsseldorf. My successor on the Staff was appointed to that position. I valued my position as Deputy Chief of Staff of the 2nd Army (to which I was appointed on mobilization) because of Liège, but otherwise it was not particularly attractive.

Under the leadership of General von Moltke, I had taken part in many General Staff rides, and had there gained deep insight into the art of war on a large scale. My new position offered me an opportunity, though only in a comparatively small field of action, of proving whether I understood how to apply the teachings of that great teacher of the General Staff, General Count von Schlieffen. No soldier could have had a better chance given him. But I was deeply distressed that my appointment was the outcome of such a serious situation for my country. My patriotic feelings and heartfelt convictions spurred me to action.

Within a quarter of an hour I was on my way in a car to Coblenz. I passed through Wavre. Only the day before it had been a peaceful town. Now it was in flames. Here, also, the populace had fired on our troops. That was my farewell to Belgium.

I arrived at Coblenz at six o'clock in the evening and immediately reported to General von Moltke, who was looking worn. Here I learnt further details of the situation in the East. On the 20th of August, the 8th Army had attacked the Russian Niemen Army, under General Rennenkampf, near Gumbinnen. This movement had, in spite of initial successes, not resulted in any decisive victory and had to be broken off. Since then the Army between Lake Mauer and the river Pregel was in full retreat westwards over the river Angerapp and, to the north of the Pregel, behind the river Deime, the first line of defence of the fortress of Königsberg. The 1st Army Corps was to be brought by rail from stations west of Insterburg to Gosslershausen and be placed at the disposal of the Army Command, while the 3rd

Reserve Division was to be taken from Angerberg to the Allenstein-Hohenstein front to reinforce the 20th Army Corps.

The line of lakes from Nikolaiken to Lötzen, which was only slightly fortified, was in our hands; only weak enemy forces had approached it.

General von Scholtz, commanding the 20th Army Corps, was in charge on the southern frontier of East Prussia. In the course of continuous engagements with the Russian Narew Army, under Samsonoff, he had concentrated around and to the east of Gilgenburg, his own divisions, the 70th Landwehr Brigade (which was still under his command) and part of the garrisons of Thorn and the other Vistula fortresses. The enemy was pressing him very heavily.

We had to reckon with an advance of the two enemy armies on both sides of the chain of lakes. General von Moltke informed me that the 8th Army was proposing to evacuate the whole country east of the Vistula; only the fortresses were to retain their war garrisons and be defended. The 8th Army had no doubt adopted this plan in the expectation of a speedy decision in the West, when East Prussia could be reconquered with the help of reinforcements from the West and the invading Army driven back. This scheme had often been practised by Count von Schlieffen in strategical war-games. If the assumption was correct, the decision of the 8th Army to spare itself for later operations was sound.

It did not allow for the realities of war, nor did it take into account the immense responsibility of exposing part of one's country to invasion. The amount of suffering inflicted on countries that form the actual theatre of operations, even under the most humane conditions of warfare, has once more been brought home to humanity by this world war.

As events were shaping, retreat behind the Vistula would have spelt ruin. We should not have been able to hold the Vistula line against the numerically superior forces of the Russians, and it would certainly have been impossible for us to give direct help to the Austrians in September. Their collapse would certainly have followed. The situation, as I found it,

was indeed very serious, but, after all, the problem was not insoluble.

At my request, orders were immediately sent to the East Front fixing the retreat of the main body of the 8th Army for the 23rd inst. The 1st Reserve Corps, the 17th Army Corps and the Main Reserve of the Königsberg garrison were to call a halt. The 1st A.C. was not to be detrained at Gosslershausen, but near General von Scholtz's position, somewhere east of Deutsch-Eylau. Any available troops from the garrisons of Thorn, Kulm, Graudenz and Marienburg, were to go to Strassburg and Lautenberg. These garrisons were composed only of Landwehr and Landsturm formations. Thus, in the southwest part of East Prussia a strong group was formed which could undertake an offensive, while the northern Group either continued its retreat in a south-westerly direction, or could be brought straight down south to assist in the action against the Narew Army. Of course an actual decision as to the plan to be adopted could only be given on the spot. The Russians should not be let off without another battle. No Staff Officer would miss such a chance of turning to good advantage the fact that their two armies were separated from each other.

I also reported to His Majesty the Emperor. His Majesty, who was very calm, spoke seriously of the Eastern situation, and deeply regretted that part of the German Fatherland should suffer invasion by the enemy. He was mindful of the sufferings of his people. The Kaiser decorated me with the order *Pour le Mérite*, which had been awarded me for my work at Liège, and spoke appreciatively of me. All my life this occasion will be a proud, if sad, memory.

At nine o'clock in the evening I left Coblenz in a special train for the Eastern Front.

Shortly before my departure I learnt that General von Hindenburg had accepted the post of Commander-in-Chief and would board the train at Hanover at four o'clock in the morning.

The General was on the station at Hanover and I reported to him. It was the first time we had met. All other versions belong to the realm of fiction.

I explained the situation shortly, and we then went to bed.

About two o'clock in the afternoon of the 23rd August, we arrived at Marienburg, where the Army Staff was expecting us. The situation had changed and the decision to retire behind the Vistula had been abandoned. It was intended to hold the line of the river Passarge. General Grünert, Deputy Chief of Staff of the 8th Army, and Lieut.-Colonel Hoffmann were responsible for this change of plan.

Our reception in Marienburg was anything but cheerful. It seemed like entering another world to come into this depressing atmosphere after Liège and the rapid advance in the West. But things soon changed, and the general atmosphere improved. Staff life was once more what I have already described.

## II

Major Valdivia, the distinguished Spanish Military Attaché during the war, asked me on his first visit to Headquarters in Posen in October, 1914, whether the Battle of Tannenberg had been fought according to a long conceived and prepared plan. I could only answer that it had not. He was greatly surprised, for, like most other people, he had taken it for granted.

Strategic deployment can, and must be, planned far ahead. Battles in a war of positions demand similar treatment, but in the war of movement and the actions incidental to it the situations which the commander has to visualize follow one another in motley succession. He has to decide in accordance with his instinct. Thus soldiering becomes an art, and the soldier a strategist.

Gradually, during the period from 24th to 26th August, the battle plan took shape in all its details. The great question was whether it would really be possible to withdraw the 1st Reserve Corps and the 17th Army Corps from their positions facing Rennenkampf, so as to unite them with other units of the 8th Army, for a blow against the Narew Army. It depended solely on Rennenkampf himself, for if he knew how to make the

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most of his success at Gumbinnen and advance quickly, my plan would be unthinkable. Then there would be no alternative but to withdraw the 1st R.C. and the 17th A.C. in a more south-westerly direction towards Wormditt, while the other part of the 8th Army held up the Narew Army and prepared to check it, if occasion served. The idea of a stiff defence of some line east of the Vistula, if necessary, also entered into our calculations.

We discovered by degrees that Rennenkampf was advancing only slowly. The two Army Corps could therefore be gradually deflected in their retirement through the Bartenstein-Gerdauen line, in a sharp southerly direction to Bischofsburg-Neidenburg.

Next, the 17th A.C., protected by the 1st Cavalry Division and the 1st R.C., was moved south via Schippenbeil to Bischofsstein. As soon as it had passed behind the 1st R.C., and on the 26th advanced from Bischofsstein to Bischofsburg, the 1st Army Corps itself moved, south of Schippenbeil, in the direction of Seeburg. Only the 1st Cav. Division remained facing Rennenkampf, near, and to the south of, Schippenbeil. Of this division, also on the 26th, the 1st Cavalry Brigade received the order to draw out via Rössel on Sensburg. Accordingly, from the 27th of August onwards, only two cavalry brigades stood between Lake Mauer and the river Pregel, facing twenty-four very strong infantry and several cavalry divisions of Rennenkampf's. The defensive chain of lakes was thus open on the west; and in any case it would have been quite easy to turn it and completely isolate Königsberg.

Our decision to give battle arose out of the slowness of the Russian command and was justified by the necessity of winning in spite of inferiority in numbers. It was none the less one of tremendous gravity.

On this line the two Corps were marching in the rear of the Narew Army from Neidenburg to Allenstein. In this way they exposed their rear without adequate protection to Rennenkampf's army, which was only two or three days' march away. When the battle began in real earnest on the 27th and, in contrast to previous wars, was not finished in one day but continued until



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the 30th, Rennenkampf's formidable host hung like a threatening thunder-cloud to the north-east. He need only have closed with us and we should have been beaten. But Rennenkampf brought his main body hardly beyond the Allenburg-Gerdauen-Neidenburg line, and we had time to win a brilliant victory.

Few knew the anxiety with which I watched the Niemen Army during those long days.

In order to allow the 17th A.C. and the 1st R.C. to make their full striking power felt, the other groups of the 8th Army had of course to attack. And whatever happened they had not to let themselves be beaten.

The reinforced 20th A.C. had passed through difficult and exhausting days. On the 23rd it stood, facing south, on the heights north-east of Gilgenburg, while the enemy was approaching from Neidenburg, that is from the south-east. The 3rd Reserve Division was still assembling west of Hohenstein. The 1st A.C. had just begun to detrain near Deutsch-Eylau. General von Scholtz was successful in beating off superior enemy forces, but whilst holding the heights east of Gilgenburg he was obliged to withdraw his left flank sharply west of Hohenstein, about as far as Mühlen. Although uncomfortable for the troops, this movement had its good points for the Russians thought they had won. They did not believe in any further German resistance, still less in a German attack. They saw the road open into German territory east of the Vistula.

On the 24th we got into touch with General von Scholtz and actually met him at Tannenberg. He and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Hell, were to distinguish themselves in the course of the war and leave their names to History.

General von Scholtz gave us a lucid account of the great achievements of the troops under his command since the beginning of the campaign and the great difficulties encountered in the last battles. He was of opinion that the enemy would attack him again, but that he would be able to stand fast.

On the journey from Marienburg to Tannenberg, an intercepted enemy wireless message was given us which gave a clear idea of our opponents' dispositions for the next few days. The Narew

Army was advancing, its left wing in *échelon*, its 6th Corps directed via Ortelsburg on Bischofsburg, which was reached or passed by the 26th, and its 13th Corps directed from Neidenburg through Passenheim on Allenstein. The 15th and 18th Corps, with which General von Scholtz had been engaged during these days, was following. On the 26th, the most southerly *échelon* was to be found somewhere near Waplitz. Still further back to the left, and pushing west, the 1st Corps, covered by several cavalry divisions, was moving through Mlawa and Soldau, against Lautenberg and Strasburg.

It was a question of breaking up this movement of the enemy by an attack from the west with the southern group of the 8th Army. It was a great temptation to attack simultaneously south of Soldau, in order to surround the 1st Russian Corps as well. The defeat of the Narew Army, in conjunction with the advance of the 17th A.C. and the 1st R.C., could thus have been absolutely annihilating, but the forces at my disposal were insufficient. So I proposed to General von Hindenburg that an attack be made in the direction of Usdau by the 1st A.C. on the line Deutsch-Eylau-Montowo, and by the right wing of the reinforced 20th A.C. from the direction of Gilgenburg, so as to throw back the Russian 1st Corps to the south, beyond Soldau. Then, our 1st A.C. was to break through in the direction of Neidenburg, in conjunction with the 1st and 17th A.C. and 1st R.C., in order to surround at least the main body of the Narew Army. We had to confine ourselves to this plan, if we wished to succeed.

The attack by the 1st and 20th A.C. had to be postponed to the 27th, though I should have been glad to see it begin earlier; but the 1st A.C. was not yet ready, the condition of the railways in East Prussia being far from good. General von François, commanding the 1st A.C., quite rightly insisted on concentrating the whole of his Corps before attacking.

But matters did not develop as smoothly as would appear from this short sketch. All the troops were exceedingly exhausted, and strengths had been reduced by continual fighting. Many difficulties were met with in the transmission of orders to the 1st R.C. and the 17th A.C. Enemy cavalry patrols rendered that

zone unsafe. It was doubtful whether the enemy would give us time to carry out our plans.

But the greatest difficulties were due to the refugees, numbering many thousands, some on foot and some in vehicles, who blocked the roads behind von Scholtz's group. They hung on to the troops, and a sudden retreat on the part of this Army Group would have had the most distressing consequences, both for refugees and soldiers. But it could not be avoided, for the few gendarmes were not sufficient to take charge of such masses. We could do nothing for them. The memory of the many sad sights I then saw haunts me still.

### III

On the 24th and 25th of August, our Headquarters were at Rosenberg and on the 26th at Löbau. We took advantage of these last two days to get into touch with commanders and troops in various parts.

On the evening of the 26th the positions of both sides were somewhat as follows:

General von Mühlmann—who had the 1st A.C. under his orders—was in Lautenburg and Strasburg, with portions of the garrisons of the Vistula fortresses, in close touch with enemy cavalry. The 1st A.C. itself had been concentrated to the south of Montowo, and had fought its way as far as Usdau, which was strongly held by the Russian 1st Corps. General von François was ready to continue his advance on the 27th.

To the right wing of the reinforced 20th A.C. had been allotted the task of attacking Usdau from the north and then joining hands with the 1st Army Corps in its later advance upon Neidenburg. The 41st Infantry Division was to march upon Waplitz from Gross Gardienen, while on their left a Landwehr Brigade, the 3rd Reserve Division and the 37th Infantry Division were simultaneously to attack Waplitz and Hohenstein on a line running north from Mühlen. The enemy had pushed forward on the whole front and occupied Allenstein.

Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division, which had been placed at our disposal by our General Headquarters, was coming up near Osterode and Biessellen. This division came from Schleswig-Holstein, where up to now it had been employed in guarding the canal and the coast. It was to take Hohenstein from the north-west.

The 1st Reserve Corps reached the neighbourhood of Seeburg on the 26th. The 17th A.C. had been engaged with a division of the Russian 6th Corps between Lautern and Gr. Bössau, north of Bischofsburg and had driven it back in the direction of Bischofsburg. The 6th Landwehr Brigade, which had advanced on the 24th and 25th from Lötzen to the north-west of Bischofsburg, had taken a successful part in the action.

The attack on Usdau was to begin at 4 a.m. on the 27th. We wanted to be present at this decisive point, in order to be able to superintend on the spot the co-operation of the 1st and 20th A.C., orders for which had already been given. Just as we left Löbau for Gilgenburg the joyous news reached us that Usdau had fallen. I considered the battle won. However, we had not got that far yet. Soon after, it transpired that Usdau had not yet been taken, and it only fell late in the afternoon. From a tactical point of view the Narew Army was now broken through. The 1st A.C. threw the enemy back beyond Soldau and marched upon Neidenburg.

The 20th A.C., greatly exhausted as it was, was not so successful, and the 41st Infantry Division, near Gr. Gardienen, made no progress. Nor was any ground won further north.

Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division closed in on Hohenstein. We returned to Löbau in the afternoon, not altogether satisfied.

On our arrival, news came through that the 1st A.C. had been routed and that the relics of this corps were arriving in Montowo. Such news was difficult to believe. A telephone inquiry to the Railway Commandant there elucidated the fact that troops of the 1st Army Corps were collecting at that point, but later on it appeared that it was a question of only one battalion that had found itself in a very tight corner and given way. Another

rather alarming discovery was a number of supply columns hurriedly retreating through Löbau.

A general has much to bear and needs strong nerves. The civilian is too inclined to think that war is only like the working out of an arithmetical problem with given numbers. It is anything but that. On both sides it is a case of wrestling with powerful, unknown physical and psychological forces, a struggle which inferiority in numbers makes all the more difficult. It means working with men of varying force of character and with their own views. The only quantity that is known and constant is the will of the leader.

All those who criticize the dispositions of a general ought first to study military history, unless they have themselves taken part in a war in a position of command. I should like to see such people compelled to conduct a battle themselves. They would be overwhelmed by the greatness of their task, and when they realized the obscurity of the position, and the exacting nature of the enormous demands made on them, they would doubtless be more modest. Only the Head of the Government, the Statesman who has decided for war, and that with a clear conscience, shoulders the same or a bigger burden of responsibility than that of the Commander-in-Chief. In his case it is a question of one great decision only, but the Commander of an army is faced with decisions daily and hourly. He is continuously responsible for the welfare of many hundred-thousands of persons, even of nations. For a soldier there is nothing greater, but at the same time more overwhelming, than to find himself at the head of an army or the entire field army of his country.

Late at night we received news in Löbau that the 1st R.C. had reached Wartenburg. The Russian 6th Corps was in full retreat before the 17th Army Corps beyond Ortelsburg and was again defeated south of Bischofsburg. Smaller forces were sent in pursuit, while the main body of the 17th A.C. bivouacked at and to the north of Mensguth, on the evening of the 27th.

Nothing remained to be done on the 28th but to give orders for the 1st A.C. to occupy Neidenburg. In the meantime, the Corps had already made a turning movement in that direction.

The 20th Army Corps was to carry out the attack which had been fixed for the 27th, and more especially to push forward the 41st Infantry Division. Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division was to

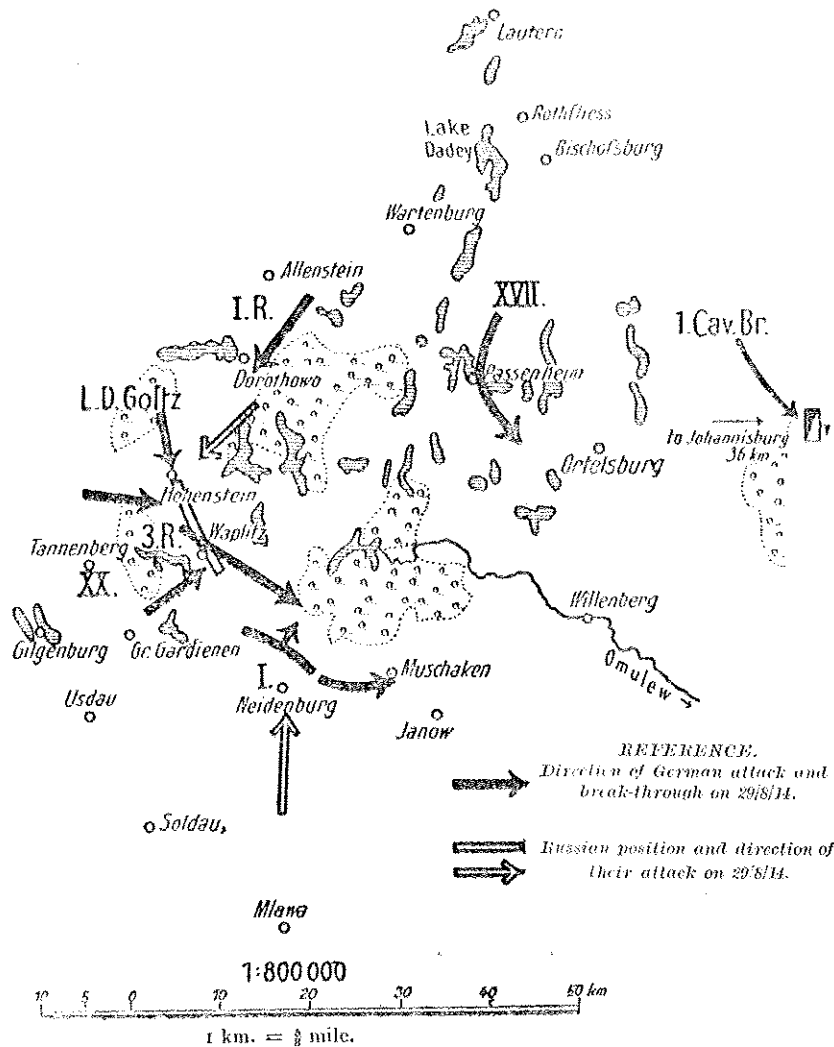


Fig. 3. Tannenberg. Position on August 29th, 1914.

attack Hohenstein. The 1st R.C. and the 17th A.C. were moved up west, covered against attack from Ortelsburg, to positions on a line running from Allenstein to Passenheim.

Early on the 28th, we went to Frögenau and took up station in the open at the eastern end of the village. General von Scholtz was not far off. A very ineffective field-telephone connected us with the 1st A.C., but no communication at all was possible with the other forces.

Our first impressions were by no means favourable. Neidenburg had certainly been taken, but the 41st Infantry Division had attacked Waplitz in a fog and been driven back. This division, which had suffered heavy casualties, was now holding positions west of Waplitz and anticipating a hostile counter-attack with the greatest anxiety. I sent an officer there by car to give me a report on the condition of the division, and his account was not encouraging. The Landwehr near Mühlen were not making progress. If the enemy attacked the right wing of the 20th A.C. in great force, a grave crisis might result. At the best, the battle would be prolonged.

Finally, Rennenkampf might march. But the enemy made no attack on the 41st Infantry Division and the Niemen Army did not march.

Captain Bartenwerffer, of the Staff of the 17th A.C., flew over the enemy lines, and brought good reports of the progress of his Corps in the enemy's rear.

During the afternoon the situation changed to our advantage. The 3rd Reserve Division, and later the 37th Infantry Division, gained ground west of Hohenstein; von der Goltz's Landwehr Division entered Hohenstein itself. The enemy front appeared to be wavering. General von Hindenburg wanted to drive on to Mühlen. We ran right into a temporary panic, created by Russian prisoners who were being taken to the rear in large numbers. This incident created an unfavourable impression, as the disorder spread far to the rear.

In the evening we went to Osterode. Owing to an unfortunate mobilization order the civil authorities had already left the town. This must have considerably increased the anxiety of the civil population.

We were not at all clear as to how things stood with the individual units; but there was no doubt that the battle was won.

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Whether it would prove a real Cannae was still uncertain. The 1st A.C. had to send a detachment to Willenberg, whither the 17th A.C. was also to proceed. The retreat of the Russians was to be cut off.

During the night we learnt further details. The Russian 13th Corps had advanced from Allenstein on Hohenstein, and had pressed the Landwehr severely. The 1st R.C. had come down south-west of Allenstein—its further advance would close the ring round the Russian 13th Corps and thus conclude the whole operation, whilst the 1st and 17th A.C.'s cut off the retreat of the other portions.

On the morning of the 29th I decided to go to Hohenstein to try and disentangle the congestion caused by the troops getting mixed up. Operations against Rennenkampf's army were to be initiated, whether he advanced or remained where he was.

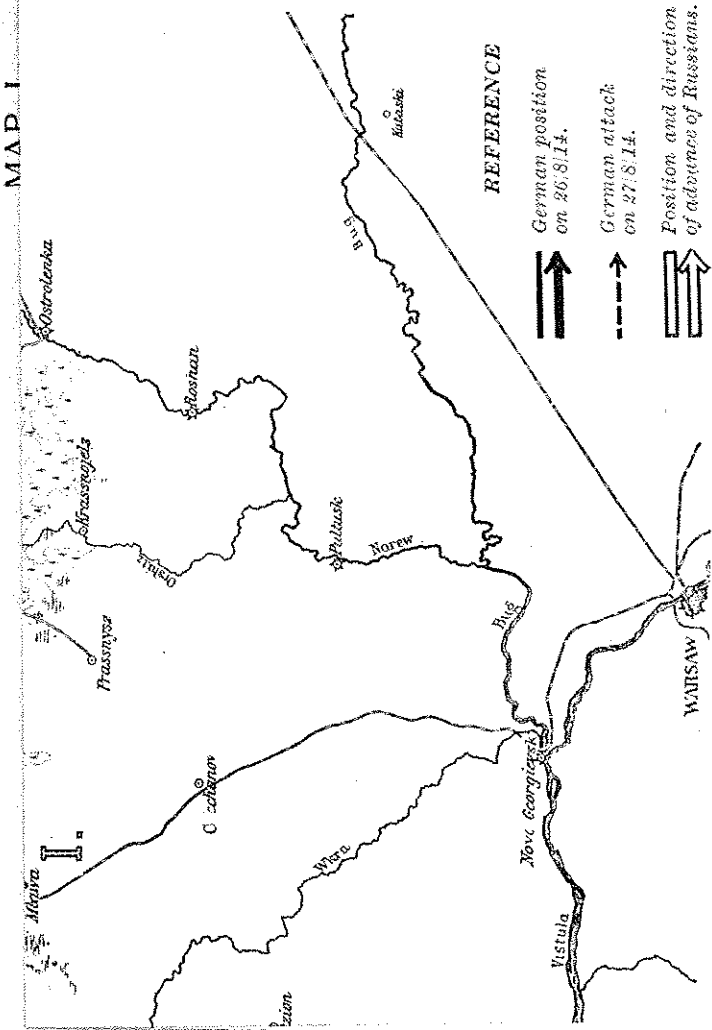
Still another incident occurred before we were certain of victory.

Early on the 29th, we received a message by aeroplane that a hostile Army Corps was marching on Neidenburg from the south, and was nearing the town. It was therefore threatening the rear of the 1st A.C., which, with its front facing north, was engaging Russian troops in retreat. At the same moment we were called up from Neidenburg and informed that hostile shrapnel was falling on the town. Then we were cut off. All available troops were set marching in the direction of Neidenburg, to support the 1st A.C. in the engagement we anticipated. But General von François had saved himself already by his own energy, and the enemy displayed more hesitation than the situation justified.

After giving these orders, I set out for Hohenstein, and on the way went over the battlefield, which made a deep impression on me. East of Hohenstein our own columns were getting entangled with masses of Russian prisoners. It was no easy task to restore order. The 1st R.C. and the 20th A.C. were drawn up along the road from Allenstein to Hohenstein and the Army Command had thus again at least two corps at its disposal.

The battle was drawing to a conclusion. The 3rd Reserve

MAP I



Division had broken through the enemy lines and reached Muschaken, east of Neidenburg. The Russians, retiring through the thick woods, tried to break through the German ring at several points. At Muschaken, in particular, very heavy fighting took place on the 30th, but without in any way influencing the issue of the battle.

General Samsonoff shot himself and was buried near Willenberg without being recognized. His widow, who was in Germany in connection with matters concerning prisoners of war, was able to trace his grave by a locket which had been taken for identification purposes from the body of the fallen general when he was buried.

The Russian Generals who were taken prisoner arrived at Osterode and reported to General von Hindenburg.

The number of prisoners taken and the amount of booty captured are already well known.

The enemy losses in killed and wounded, too, were extremely heavy. The widely-circulated report that thousands of Russians were driven into the marshes and there perished is a myth; no marsh was to be found anywhere near.

One of the most brilliant battles in the history of the world had been fought. It had been the achievement of troops which had been fighting for weeks, sometimes unsuccessfully. To the training of our army in peace time, alone, did we owe this feat. The battle was a glorious triumph for the generals and their troops, indeed, for every officer and man, and the whole country.

Germany and Austria-Hungary rejoiced. The world was silent.

At my suggestion, the battle was named the Battle of Tannenberg, in memory of that other battle long ago in which the Teutonic Knights succumbed to united Lithuanian and Polish hosts. Will any German now, as then, suffer the Lett, and more especially the Pole, to take advantage of our misfortune to do us violence? Are centuries of old German culture to be lost?

I could not rejoice wholeheartedly at our mighty victory, for the strain imposed on my nerves by the uncertainty about Rennenkampf's army had been too great. All the same, we were proud of this battle. The victory had been brought about by a

break-through, an encircling movement, firm resolution to win and intelligent limitation of aims. Despite our inferiority on the Eastern Front, we had succeeded in assembling on the battlefield a force nearly as strong as that of the foe. I thought of General Count von Schlieffen and thanked him for his teaching.

In the Protestant Church at Allenstein General von Hindenburg and I rendered thanks to Almighty God for this victory.

I had not a moment to spare for relaxation. I had to work out the re-grouping of the Army for further operations. It was an uncommonly difficult task simultaneously to finish one battle and make plans for the next. Innumerable other matters had to be attended to between whiles. One urgent matter was the removal of the prisoners. Having regard to the uncertainty of the situation their number was a heavy burden in itself.

I was decorated with the Iron Cross, 2nd Class, of which I was exceedingly proud. Even now, when I think of Liège and Tannenberg, my heart swells with pardonable satisfaction. The value of the Iron Cross, 2nd Class, dwindled in the course of the war. That is quite natural, although regrettable. But the Order should be worn with pride by anyone who has honourably won it.

#### IV

On the Western Front the victorious progress of the German arms was still unchecked. Accordingly, General Headquarters considered that they could reinforce the 8th Army with three Army Corps from the West. The telegram announcing the proposed reinforcements arrived just at the commencement of the battle of Tannenberg. Later, I was asked whether one Army Corps could be retained in the West, and as I had not asked for reinforcements, I assented. So only two Army Corps arrived, the Guard Reserve Corps, the 11th Corps and the 8th Cavalry Division.

The decision to weaken the forces on the Western Front was premature, but of course, we in the East could not know that, for the reports from the West were favourable. But it was par-

ticularly fateful that the reinforcements destined for the Eastern Front were drawn from the right wing, which was fighting for a decision, instead of from the left wing which was stronger than was necessary after the battle in Lorraine had been fought. The corps which was to have been the third for the Eastern Front was left in Lorraine.

The situation in Galicia had already become threatening. The Russian main forces had hurled themselves on the Austro-Hungarian armies and beaten them east of Lemberg at the end of August.

The Austrian Army was not, at the beginning of the war, a first-class fighting instrument. Had we really entertained aggressive intentions before the war, we should have insisted on Austria-Hungary's improving her armaments. Her railway communications, which were totally inadequate, would also have been extended. Our neglect in that respect was, in any case, a great mistake. The Triple Alliance was only a political union, while the Franco-Russian alliance was of a definitely military character, and this constituted a great advantage to our enemies.

Even our arrangements with Austria-Hungary in the event of a joint war were of the poorest. General Count von Schlieffen always feared a breach of faith, which indeed actually occurred. A scheme of mutual operations existed only in the roughest outlines. The deployment of the Austro-Hungarian armies on the further side of the river San was justified only if they felt themselves superior to the Russian Army without outside help, as many Austro-Hungarian officers believed, or if we could cross the river Narew simultaneously with strong forces. But this we were not in a position to do, as the last Army Bill had not granted us the three extra Army Corps for which the General Staff had hoped. Further, we now had also to make up on the Western front for Italy's defection.

According to former military agreements with Italy, three Italian Corps and two Cavalry Divisions were to deploy in Alsace, whilst the main body of the army, minus the coast-defence forces, were to be assembled on the Franco-Italian frontier. Simultaneously, the Fleet was to endeavour to cut France

off from her colonies in North Africa. These arrangements were in force for some time—but subsequently lapsed. Then at the express wish of General Pollio, Chief of the Italian General Staff, these plans were once more worked at.

General Pollio died in the summer of 1914—shortly before the outbreak of war. There was not the least necessity for France to leave even a single soldier on her south-east frontier; she could employ every soldier against us, for she knew perfectly well that Italy would not come into the war on our side. Our former ally thus did us untold harm. Her attitude towards England was not to be misunderstood. Animosity certainly existed between Italy and Austria-Hungary, but although this was of long standing, it did not prevent Italy entering into an alliance with us and Austria-Hungary. This alliance brought Italy many advantages and we naturally expected that she would feel under an obligation to us.

A healthy national egoism is easy to understand, and exists in every nation. But there are certain ethical laws which must not be violated, and that is precisely what Italy did. So she cannot complain of the adverse criticism we levelled at her during the four years of war.

The critical position of the Austro-Hungarian Army at the end of August, opposed by greatly superior Russian forces, was not to be misunderstood. General von Conrad, Chief of the Austrian General Staff, insisted, quite properly, from his point of view, that we should cross the river Narew. But seeing that the 8th Army was still inferior in numbers to that of General Rennenkampf, it was impossible to accede to this request. An advance in the direction of Mława-Pultusk could at any time be stopped by the advance of General Rennenkampf towards the Allenstein-Elbing line. There was, therefore, no alternative but to deal first with the Russian Niemen Army.

Still under the influence of the Battle of Tannenberg, Rennenkampf had apparently withdrawn his advanced units several kilometres, but he seemed to intend a stand between the river Pregel and Lake Mauer. The 8th Army was compelled to fight a second battle, and had to use all its available strength.

In the execution of this plan, the reinforcements from the West were detrained on the Allenstein-Elbing line, and the 8th Army was concentrated ready to advance between the Willenberg and Allenstein front.

Only small forces were left behind for the defence of the frontier near Soldau. They were to advance into Poland in the direction of Mława.

As soon as the troops had been deployed, we intended to attack Rennenkampf on a wide front between the river Pregel and Lake Mauer, while enveloping his left wing beyond Lötzen and further south. The task delegated to our outermost southern wing was to guard the Army from attack from Augustowo and Osowiec, where we expected hostile forces to detrain. The concentrated 8th Army was to fight in three groups, from the river Pregel to Lake Mauer, east of Lötzen and in the direction of Lyck.

At the beginning of September the following units were ready to advance:

The garrisons of the Vistula fortresses, near Soldau,  
Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division, near Neidenburg,  
3rd Res. Div. and 1st A.C., near Willenberg, Ortelsburg,  
1st Cavalry Brigade west of Johannsburg,  
17th A.C., Passenheim,  
20th, 11th A.C., and 1st R.C. in and on both sides of  
Allenstein,

Guard R.C. coming up from Elbing towards the lower  
course of the river Passarge,

8th Cav. Div. advancing in the direction of Lötzen,

The 1st Cav. Div., minus one Cavalry Brigade, was still  
occupying its positions facing the Niemen Army. It was also  
to advance via Lötzen,

The main Königsberg Reserve holding the line of the  
Deime,

The main Posen Reserve and Count von Bredow's Land  
wehr Division were being brought up, but did not arrive  
in time for the battle.

The supply columns and trains of the 1st R.C. and the 27th A.C., which were behind the river Passarge when the forward movement started, had to carry out some difficult movements, but finally succeeded in reaching their concentration area without too much friction.

Some Russian Cavalry, before which our 1st Cavalry Division had to give way, had temporarily penetrated west even as far as the Passarge below Wormditt, without doing any military damage, however. Strange to say, they had not even destroyed the main railway line from Elbing to Königsberg.

It was naturally of the utmost importance to us to get our railways into working order again, especially those we had had to destroy ourselves during our retreat from Gumbinnen. This was particularly essential in regard to the station of Korschen. This station ought to have been thoroughly demolished; but within forty-eight hours of our recovering possession it could be utilized again. It was lucky for us that the work of destruction had not been carried out as thoroughly as I had expected. The troops as yet were not sufficiently experienced. It was plain that special technical instruction was needed. I made a mental note of this for future occasions.

### V

The advance against Rennenkampf's Army began on the 4th of September. On the 7th the Guard R.C., the 1st R.C., the 11th and 20th A.C. entrenched a position in front of the enemy lines at Wehlau-Gerdauen-Nordenburg-Angerburg, between the river Pregel and Lake Mauer, and attacked during the following days according to plan. The engagements, particularly those of the 20th Army Corps, did not go well for us. The Russians made a powerful counter-attack. The enemy positions were strong and cleverly constructed, and we should never have got the upper hand of them with the arms and ammunition at our disposal, had it not been that the projected enveloping movement near Lötzen and the fortified chain of lakes was beginning to have its effect.

Even east of Lötzen, which had held out bravely against enemy attacks all this time, things did not look promising. The 17th A.C. and the 1st and 8th Cavalry Divisions, which had advanced from the fortress, only made slow progress north-east of the lakes, on the 8th and 9th of September. They had some very hard fighting round Kruglauken and Possessern. The 1st A.C., which had pressed forward from Nikolaiken and Johannsburg, had to be deflected sharply north from the east side of the lake line. By this movement it secured more room for the 17th A.C. by the evening of the 9th. The 3rd Res. Div., with Von der Goltz's Landwehr Div. behind it, was still advancing in the Bialla-Lyck direction. On September 3rd it had already encountered the enemy in very superior force near Bialla.

This operation also was extraordinarily daring. To begin with, the Russian Niemen Army, with its twenty-four infantry divisions, was very much stronger than the 8th Army, with its fifteen to sixteen divisions. Moreover, the Russian divisions consisted of sixteen battalions, and ours, at that time, of twelve. The Russian fighting strength was further increased by from four to six divisions, which were being assembled round Osowiec and Augustovo. This immense superiority could be concentrated against us at any moment and at any chosen point. Our right wing, in particular, was in danger to the east of the lakes. It might be overwhelmed. Even in such a situation as this, we did not hesitate for a moment to venture on a battle. Our superior training was in our favour. Tannenberg had given us a great advantage.

The Army Command would have liked the right wing to have been stronger, and a division of the 20th A.C., west of the lakes, had been kept ready to be placed at our disposal. But this division had to be returned to the Corps. The front of fifty kilometres, on which the four corps attacked the enemy, was certainly very long. Further, the staff of the Guard Reserve Corps, fearing a Russian attack, had therefore concentrated its units. The north wing had to stand firm on the Pregel, otherwise the 8th Army might be outflanked there. The attack of the enveloping wing must not be stronger than we had allowed for. We

had to wait and see whether our main attack would succeed or fail. Hard fighting would be the decisive factor here. We could only do everything in our power to secure the success at which we aimed.

On the morning of September 10th we received the decisive news that during the night the enemy had evacuated his position facing the 1st R.C. north of Gerdauen—probably in consequence of the continuous attacks of the 1st and 27th A.C. It was said that the corps had occupied their position, and intended to march on. The rejoicing at Headquarters can be imagined. A great success had once more been achieved, but still nothing decisive. The Russian Army was not yet beaten by any means. North-east of Lötzen we had only had local successes. It was important to carry out a frontal attack with all our strength, and throw ourselves on the receding enemy whilst the enveloping wing advanced east of Rominten Woods towards the Wirballen-Kovno road. In this way we intended to drive the Russians as far as possible towards the Niemen.

It had also to be taken into account that Rennenkampf, who was now co-operating with the reinforcements arriving further south, would be able to make a vigorous attack in any direction. Our lines were very thin everywhere, though the two northern groups, which had hitherto been separated by Lake Mauer, had joined up again. The situation was still extremely critical, and the tension was great.

The troops had a fresh task before them. Keeping in close touch with each other, they had to pursue the enemy unceasingly by forced marches, and attack him whenever he made a stand. At the same time they had to wait for the co-operation of neighbouring columns before making local enveloping movements, so as to minimize losses. The 17th A.C., and more particularly the 1st A.C. on the extreme right, and the 1st and 8th Cavalry Divisions had to strike again and again. The marching orders for the different sections, beginning at the left, were roughly as follows :

Königsberg Main Reserve : Königsberg—Tilsit.

1st R.C. : Gross-Audowöhnen.

11th A.C. : North of Darkehmen, Gumbinnen—Stallupönen.

20th A.C. : Darkehmen, half-way to Wirballen—Lake Wyschtyt.

17th A.C. : Due north of Rominten Woods towards Wyschtynice.

1st A.C. : Due south-east of Rominten Woods towards Mariampol.

8th and 1st Cavalry Divisions : In advance of the 1st A.C. towards the Wirballen-Kovno road.

These movements did not turn out quite as I had hoped. Friend and foe were difficult to distinguish. Our own columns occasionally fired on one another. The troops made too vigorous frontal attacks, and did not await the co-operation of neighbouring columns. But the most serious difficulty was caused by the fact that on September 11th the 11th A.C. thought it was being attacked by a very superior force. This was quite conceivable and had to be taken into account. Under the existing conditions as regards the strength of the two forces, the front line required the close tactical support of the enveloping Corps. We had therefore to decide to bring the 17th and 1st A.C. further north than was originally intended. After a few hours the belief of the 11th Army Corps proved to be unfounded. But the order had already been given to the enveloping wing. Later, the Corps were again diverted to their original route, but by then at least half a day had been lost.

The 8th Army did magnificent work. The whole advance, which covered well over one hundred kilometres in four days, was a brilliant victorious march for these troops, exhausted as they were by continuous fighting and strain of every kind. This applied more particularly to the original units of the 8th Army ; the Guard R.C. and the 11th A.C. had fought valiantly in the West at Namur, but they had certainly had an easier time hitherto.

The results of the battle were not so obvious as those of Tannenberg. There were no operations in the enemy's rear, for they were not possible. The enemy did not make a stand, but withdrew, so that they could only be forced back still further

by frontal and flanking attacks. Whilst at Tannenberg we took over 90,000 prisoners, we could now only count 45,000. But whatever could have been done under the circumstances had been accomplished.

As a matter of fact, Rennenkampf does not seem to have ever intended a serious stand. At any rate, he began his retreat very early in the operations and marched at night. Our airmen did certainly note the course of some retreating columns, but their reports were too vague. The Russian knew how to conduct retreats and move masses of troops without using the roads.

Our continuous movements, combined with the ever-present menace of envelopment, drove the retreating Russian Army before us so quickly that they crossed the Niemen in a state of dissolution. For the next few weeks they need not be regarded as first-class fighting material, unless the Russians should reinforce them with fresh troops.

The battle of the Masurian Lakes has not received the recognition it deserves. It was a decisive engagement, ambitiously planned and carefully executed against an extraordinary numerical superiority. It was attended with grave risks, but the enemy did not realize his strength. He did not even attempt to fight it out, but withdrew so very hastily that, under our pressure, the retreat assumed the character of flight.

Away from the main battle-field the 3rd Reserve Division, under their energetic leader, General von Morgen, and von der Goltz's Landwehr Division had fought a very successful action against a superior enemy force near Biiala on September 8th, and then beaten the reinforcements which were brought up. In so doing they had removed a grave source of danger to the army fighting further north. General von der Goltz was held up outside Osowiec. General von Morgen took Augustovo and Suwalki after heavy fighting. The intention of the Grand Duke Nicholas to relieve the pressure on Rennenkampf from that quarter was frustrated.

On September 13th the battle was practically over.

On that day the situation was roughly as follows:

Fortress garrisons under General von Mühlmann at Mława.

Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division before Osowiec.

3rd Reserve Division at Augustovo-Suwalki.

1st and 8th Cavalry Divisions and 1st A.C.: Far ahead towards Mariampol.

17th A.C. and 20th A.C.: Beyond the Wyschtynice-Wirballen line.

21st A.C.: To the north of Wirballen.

1st R.C.: Vladislavoff.

Guard R.C.: Already withdrawn north-east of Wehlau.

Königsberg Main Reserve: Tilsit.

Thus in the centre of the field of battle several Corps had closed in on each other. In a sense, there was no room for some of them, and these would be the first available for further operations. At the very beginning of the advance against Rennenkampf, there could be no doubt whatever that under no circumstances would it be continued beyond the Niemen.

After settling with Rennenkampf I had thoughts of proceeding with all our available forces over the southern frontier against the line of the Narew (our flanks being protected by the east frontier of East Prussia), so as to co-operate more effectively with the Austrian Army, in accordance with General von Conrad's plan. I had not yet been informed of the heavy reverses which had been sustained by the Austrian Army. Orders were issued in conformity with this intention, but it was already too late to put it into execution.

## VI

During the whole of the victorious advance of the 8th Army from the neighbourhood of Allenstein into enemy territory, the Army Headquarters Staff had followed close behind the troops. I have always insisted that we should be in the closest possible touch with both commanders and men. It was particularly necessary for the purposes of giving orders and receiving reports, as technical means of communication were still defective.

Telephone facilities in the province of East Prussia were very

meagre. Some of the officials had forsaken their posts. The wireless apparatus rendered good service, but only the cavalry and the Army Headquarters Staff possessed it. So I was obliged to rely mainly on motor-cars, and my practice of sending out Staff Officers.

The gentlemen of the Volunteer Motor Corps did magnificent work as dispatch-riders. They accomplished journeys which recalled the most daring patrol work. I needed the few airmen urgently for reconnoitring, and could not spare them for dispatch bearing. But in spite of the scanty means of communication, we always succeeded in being well informed and getting our orders through in good time. I used the telephone a good deal also, giving encouragement where it seemed advisable, and blaming in no measured terms where the success of the whole operation required it. This personal intercourse with the Chiefs of Staff was useful, as it afforded opportunities for personal contact and co-operation.

We had quite a series of Headquarters. Nordenburg was the first place we came to which had been in the hands of the Russians for a considerable time. The dirt there was incredible. The market was full of filth. The rooms were disgustingly unclean.

At Insterburg we stayed at the Dessauer Hotel, in the same quarters which Rennenkampf had left. The Grand Duke Nicholas is also said to have left the town at the last moment.

We had an opportunity of inspecting the Russian positions more closely, and were all deeply thankful that we had not been obliged to storm them. We should have paid a heavy price in blood.

Many of the Russian troops behaved in an exemplary manner in East Prussia in August and September. Wine cellars and provision stores were guarded, and Rennenkampf kept strict discipline at Insterburg. But the war brought with it endless hardships and terrors. The Cossacks were rough and cruel. They burned and plundered. Many inhabitants were killed, women were outraged, and civilians sometimes carried off. These actions were for the most part quite senseless, and one

sought in vain for any reason for them. The people had not offered the slightest opposition to the Russians; they were docile and had not taken part in the fighting, in accordance with our wishes. The Russians alone must bear the responsibility for their misdeeds.

The Russian Army had been a heavy burden on East Prussia. Now we proudly felt that we had rescued German soil from the enemy. The joy and gratitude of the people were very great.

This province was not rescued only to come under a foreign yoke. Heaven preserve us from such a humiliation!

On the 14th of September we were at Insterburg, enjoying to the full our satisfaction over our victory and splendid achievements. All the greater was my surprise at my appointment as Chief of Staff of the Southern Army, which was being formed under General von Schubert at Breslau.

## VII

In the West the German advance had ended in a reverse.

The right wing of the German force in the West was too weak and did not extend far enough; the withdrawal of the Guard R.C. and the 11th A.C. had made itself felt with fatal results. This wing should, of course, have been strengthened by Corps drawn from Lorraine and Alsace. That was enjoined in General Count von Schlieffen's plan. Further, it was quite contrary to his plan to let the German forces there advance so far forward against the Lunéville-Epinal line and be completely held up. That would have been the fate of the entire army if, instead of advancing through Belgium, we had kept our right wing south of Longwy. Whilst we were bleeding to death before the fortresses on the Verdun-Belfort line, our right wing would have been attacked from Belgium and beaten by the combined Belgian, French and English armies. At the same time we should have lost our industrial region on the Lower Rhine. Our ultimate defeat would have been certain.

The order to retreat from the Marne was issued, whether on good grounds or not I have never been able to decide.

It was obvious that the war would now be a long one and require enormous sacrifices of the Fatherland. The hour had come when everything, literally everything, would have to be staked on the war, and the work of enlightening our people would have to be undertaken on a large scale. I was astonished at the optimism I found prevailing in Berlin towards the end of October, 1914. There seemed to be no realization of the tremendous gravity of our situation.

It was nothing less than a fatality, in view of the numerical inferiority of the Dual Alliance and the fact that Germany was surrounded by enemies, that she did not win the war, which had been forced on her, by some overwhelming lightning stroke, and so lay low an enemy superior in numbers but inferior in training. We now had to face the prospect that, in the course of the war, the training of the armies would become equalized to a certain extent, although it was reasonable to hope that the German Army would long maintain some advantage over the others in virtue of its great traditions. The heavy losses in officers might be a serious matter. At all events, it was essential that we should do all in our power to maintain our superiority in training, so that the enemy's superiority in men might not be felt so much.

In particular, we had to face the prospect that England would make use of the time to increase her armaments and raise a powerful army in addition to her fleet. She had quite enough men.

In view of this we could not neglect any means that might still enable us to win the war. Germany had to become an armed camp. That was the burden of the New Year's message I sent to a newspaper on January 1st, 1915.

In the autumn of 1914 and the winter of 1914-15 General Headquarters had raised from eighteen to twenty new divisions. We formed new divisions out of the Landwehr and Landsturm formations. We began by reducing the number of battalions in a division from twelve to nine, and forming fresh divisions out

of the battalions thus liberated, allotting to each its complement of artillery and special arms. We did a great deal, though in many directions we did not do enough.

The 8th Army at this time could quite easily have sent some corps to the Western Front. I do not know whether the idea was ever considered by General Headquarters, or whether the situation of the Austro-Hungarian Army made it out of the question. The latter, as I now realized, was unfortunately retreating, completely defeated, across the San with terrible losses. The Russians were following it up. A Russian invasion of Moravia and then Upper Silesia seemed possible. The Austro-Hungarian Army would have to be supported if it were not to be annihilated. An advance of the 8th Army across the Narew, the operation which had been planned at the beginning of September, would now have been useless. Help must be sent immediately and could not be too powerful. We were not able to reinforce the Western Front.

In the instructions which I received at Insterburg on the evening of the 14th it was stated that two corps of the 8th Army were to form the Southern Army in Upper Silesia. This looked like nothing more than a defensive measure; at any rate, it would be quite inadequate to restore the situation in Galicia. We had not merely to hold the enemy in check; we had to act.

Accordingly, in a conversation over the telephone, I suggested, both to General Headquarters and General von Moltke himself, that the whole of the 8th Army should be sent to Upper Silesia and Posen under General von Hindenburg, who had just been put in command. In spite of the danger that Russia would bring up fresh forces in a further attempt to invade the unfortunate province of East Prussia, only weak forces should be left for its protection. I certainly hoped that such an invasion was a long way off. Even during the operations arrangements had been made to strengthen and extend the defences of Lötzen and the Lakes. We not only insisted that a scheme should be drawn up, but that the work should be put in hand at once. The Angerapp line was also to be fortified. These measures

were the effect of the altered situation, and subsequently proved to have been thoroughly justified.

General von Moltke promised that my suggestion should be considered, and gave me a short account of the sudden change in the situation on the Western Front. Up to that time we had only heard rumours of it. General von Moltke was deeply moved by the state of affairs in the West.

That was my last official conversation with this remarkable man. He had a keen grip of military affairs, and could handle big situations with extraordinary mastery. But his temperament was not really resolute and his inclinations were more pacific than warlike. I can recall many of my interviews with him. At the beginning of the war his health had been seriously affected by two cures at Carlsbad, which he underwent within a period of a few months.

At this time the War Minister, General von Falkenhayn, began to direct operations.

On the evening of September 14th I took leave of General von Hindenburg and of my comrades. I did not find it easy to leave the Commander in Chief and the Staff after two victorious battles. General von Hindenburg had always agreed to my suggestions, and gladly accepted the responsibility of consenting to them. A fine sense of confidence had grown up between us, the confidence of men who think alike. Among the Staff there was complete unanimity of view in all military matters.

I left Insterburg on the morning of September 15th, travelling by car through Graudenz and Thorn to Breslau, my destination. I knew absolutely nothing about my new sphere of action. It seemed to me more limited than my previous one, but I soon found that I had a great and important field for my activities.

## THE CAMPAIGN IN POLAND. AUTUMN, 1914

(MAPS III. AND IV.)

### I

THE journey to Breslau was not exactly cheerful. I went through Allenstein and had dinner at the same hotel in which I had lived. Life had already resumed its old course as in times of peace. I was in Graudenz by the afternoon, and travelled through wind and rain, via Bromberg, to Posen, where I arrived in pitch darkness and spent the night.

I was connected in many ways with the province and town of Posen. My father, who was descended from a family of Pomeranian merchants, lived there until after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. I myself had been stationed at Posen, and was glad to see it again. I was there from 1902 until 1904, as senior staff officer of the Headquarters Staff of the 5th Corps. While holding this position (and also my previous one of senior staff officer of the 9th Division at Glogau) I had an opportunity of seeing the difficulties that confront the administration of this province. I had been in the district of Jarotchin and Pleschen for manœuvres. Poland has shown us no gratitude for what we have done for her. Those who had repeatedly warned Germany against her aspirations were quite right. With deep grief I see my native province faced with a period of much difficulty and sorrow.

On the morning of September 16th I arrived in Breslau. A telegram came almost immediately, saying that General Headquarters agreed to my proposal of the evening of the 14th.