

pleased with the watchful and independent administration of the A. E. F., there were great cluckings in corners and many audible predictions that, when the American public learned what was going on, "that man Pershing won't last the summer out." They foresaw for us such a giddy succession of commanders-in-chief as kept French Army politics interesting throughout the war.

Going on to the second question, and leaving aside the matter of morale, was the Belleau Wood enterprise ever necessary? Could not the Americans more prudently have waited until the taking of the wood should fall easily into a larger advance such as was ordered on July 18? In considering that question, it should be remembered that it can usually be asked captiously of any indecisive undertaking. The decision as to where and when you shall pick a quarrel with your enemy is always more or less arbitrary. Verdun, for example, became of prime importance not because of any intrinsic value its possession would give either side, but just because the Germans had said "We'll take it," and the French, as willing to fight it out there as anywhere else, had said "No you won't."

So we took Belleau Wood largely because we wanted to take something—anything—from the Germans. And the Germans clung to it in much the same spirit. Of course there were other assignable reasons. Its possession did relieve us of the prospective embarrassment of being pushed into the Marne and did give the Allies a better jumping off place for July 18. The Germans made a stiff resistance in order, as they fatuously thought, to teach us a lesson—at least to rob us of the joy of an easy success. Which, in the light of how we crowed over it, is fairly amusing.

But, allowing for the sake of argument that all American staffs were made up of nothing but Napoleons and Nestors, even so they builded better than they knew. Even if those June operations had cost us 100,000 lives, they would have been worth it. When it is considered what effect their fighting had on Allied morale, it may be questioned whether any like number of troops in the same space of time contributed as much to the final victory as did the Second and Third United States Divisions at Château-Thierry. The mother of every boy who was killed there can say that no soldier's life was ever given more effectively during the whole war.

THE effect on the French was immediate, visible, startling. The drooping French morale revived as a midsummer flower lifts its head after a cooling shower. To appreciate this, it must be remembered that the French hope of effective American intervention had begun to fade, which was a natural and not altogether unforeseen consequence of the original French insistence that we should make a showing in France even before we were ready to fight.

By the late spring of 1918, more than a year had elapsed since we had declared war on Germany. Almost a year had passed since our first little contingent (only 15,000 raw troops) had landed at St. Nazaire.

That landing, by the way, was grotesquely exaggerated by the eager French public. The number was wildly estimated in the French press at from 80,000 to 140,000, although the exaggeration was due less to deliberate propaganda than to the fact that the excited French journalists, watching from the windows of the Grand Hôtel in St. Nazaire, used to count the troops marching by each day from the piers to the camp, and never guessed they were always the same soldiers, doomed each night to return to the ships to sleep because no adequate preparations had been made to receive them.

So now, nearly a year later, the French were beginning to wonder where we were. It was their own fault—unless, possibly, you consider it our fault not

to have had a large and completely equipped Army with ample boats (and ample French docking facilities) ready when, to our own considerable surprise, we declared war in April, 1917. The raising of French hopes was a deliberate French policy, which first showed itself when, at the beginning of our intervention, Joffre upset the appercart in Washington by conveying straight to the public the French desire that American troops—no matter how few or how untrained—be sent at once to stiffen French morale.

No one not close to the councils of Chaumont and Washington will ever realize how insistently that pressure was maintained afterward and how ingeniously varied were the political devices to hurry the Americans—not necessarily to hurry their final achievement, but to hurry their immediate display. The sending of Pershing in May, 1917, months before he could hope to be followed by any considerable force, represented a yielding to that pressure.

But there was much more to which he did not yield. After General Sibert, who was the first commander of the First Division, had returned to America, it was fairly well known in France that he had differed with his chief in wishing to hustle the troops into the trenches. When President Poincaré came down to review our troops and told them rather pointedly that they looked fit for the hardest combat, Frederick Palmer, the censor, pulled the teeth of that subtle suggestion by coming softly to the war correspondents and assuring them that if they mentioned it in their despatches it would be deftly deleted therefrom.

But meanwhile the French public had been fed for a year by a continuous movie display of "Sammies" in training and "Sammies" in action, and there was not a cinema in France that did not make much of Pershing's famous "All that we have is yours" speech, which Clemenceau adroitly circulated from one end of France to the other. Indeed, he had written it, as one might have guessed who noted how much more fluent and natural it was in French than in English. So Pershing's most famous utterance was written by Clemenceau, although of course it was shown to Pershing before it was published, and represented the substance if not the exact wording of what Pershing had actually said to Foch.