

In the Cruel Grasp of Germany

Ruthlessly barbarious Methods of the Spike-Helmeted Invaders of Belgium and France, which Canada has been saved from

As time goes on the mass of authentic records of atrocities and outrages committed by the Germans in the territory they have invaded and occupied, continues to be added to. Already the record from Belgium and the occupied portion of France has attained large proportions. A few of the additions to it which have only recently come to the world's knowledge are printed herewith. They carry their own impressive lesson in regard to what countries like Canada have been saved from by the heroism which has, at such tremendous sacrifices, held back the tremendous military might of the German Empire and its allies from realizing the long and carefully planned and plotted German undertaking to achieve world domination.

The Acme of German Cruelty

Michel Jodin, writing in the *Ame Belge* (Soul of Belgium), one of the little Belgian papers that appear in spite of all attempts at suppression, writes as follows:—

"Executions by the enemy continue. On May 11 last the people of Charleroi were awakened with a start at five in the morning by a salvo of 48 shots, and soon after those living near the cavalry barracks saw six bodies carried out one after another.

"This horrible tragedy is the epilogue to a trial which lasted four days, April 10 to 13 inclusive, and where all kinds of people were tried in a body—two merchants, a priest of Tournai, Mme. de Cock (wife of a policeman), two Antwerp boatmen, a French soldier, two railway officials, a Brussels police officer, and many others. The prisoners were accused of having spied on the movements of German troops. The military representative demanded a certain number of heads. Judgment was passed only after a month of intolerable suspense; and then began more diabolical cruelty.

"The sentence was not made known to the unfortunate 19. Their families were summoned by telegram to Charleroi, each was informed that six victims would be shot next morning, and that perhaps their relative would be one. In vain they begged and implored to know the certainty; they were allowed to visit the prisoners, and they wept and lamented. The bitter truth would be easier than this agonizing uncertainty. But it was refused; the butchers preferred that the cells should all echo to the sound of sobs and prayers. The blood to be shed in the morning was not enough; all could be made to suffer in anticipation. Those chosen for death could only prepare for it in doubt and anxiety, and those who were safe believed themselves in extremis.

"Wives and children stood all night at the gates of the prison alternating between infinite despair and senseless hope. Certainty came with the dawn, the fusillade did its work, and Delfosse, Vergeylen, Cool, Hofman, Van Hecke, and Merjay breathed their last sigh."

Writing of the sufferings of the people

of the city of Lille, Madame Marguerite Buchet, who was in that city when it was taken by the Germans, writes:—

"The placard which appeared on Good Friday was received with anguish of soul. It announced the deportations. What impressive silence followed the reading of it! Each one asked himself who would be the victims chosen.

"Every one must be ready. Each person could carry 30 kilograms about 60 pounds) of luggage, including blankets and cooking utensils. The notice ended with the words: 'As the decision is irrevocable, it is to the interest of the population to be calm and obedient.'

"Friday night and Saturday there began the requisitioning of men, women, young men and young girls. Oh, the frightful nights. How can one tell of this horror in such a way that the world will be able to realize the anguish? What quarter of the town would be exploited next, no one knew. Each one retired in fear and trembling, saying: 'Will it happen to us tonight?'

Daughters Torn from Mothers

"At three o'clock in the morning soldiers were posted in certain streets which were dominated at each end by Gatling guns. The Germans entered the houses, and as each member appeared before them they pointed out which ones should accompany them, and told them to be ready to follow in half an hour. Then there was suffering not easy to imagine.

"I know a woman who saw her husband and her son of 16 years go; she was left all alone, without news of those she loved, for months. Think of the agony of parents in seeing their children depart in such a mysterious way—for what place, and with whom? Imagine the anguish of a mother who had two daughters, one 20, the other 16 years old, when a soldier said to her: 'Choose which of the two you wish us to take away!'

Shooting Civilians in Batches

The following is a brief extract from the instalment in this month's *Everybody's Magazine*, of "Belgium Bound," by Brand Whitlock, who was United States Ambassador in Belgium:—

"I knew a man near Givet, a rocky wooded country beyond Dinant where many of the earlier atrocities were committed by the Germans. On the night of the 23rd of August, from his home he saw 27 villages in flames, the flames of Dinant rising higher than any other in the sky, glowing red as from an inferno. And of all the civilians who were stood up against the walls to be shot, not one asked for mercy. But yes, there was one: a little boy of 12 who, just as they placed him against the

wall, began to whimper and beg pitifully. The bullets stilled his crying."

The Bombing of Hospitals

Col. G. H. Andrews, chaplain of a Canadian regiment, who has recently returned from the front after three years' service, gives the following account of a German air attack on a hospital on May 29 last, his statement being verified by the affidavits of a number of Canadian and British Officers, privates and nurses:—

"The building bombed was one of three large Red Cross hospitals at Boulogne and was filled with allied wounded. A hospital in which were a number of wounded German prisoners stood not very far away.

"The Germans could not possibly have mistaken the building they bombed for anything else but a hospital. There were flags with the Red Cross flying, and lights were turned on them so that they would show prominently. And the windows were brilliantly lighted. Those inside heard the buzz of the advancing airplanes, but did not give them a thought.

"The machines came right on, ignoring the hospital with the German wounded, indicating they had full knowledge of their objective, until they were over a wing of the Red Cross hospital that contained the operating room on the ground floor. In the operating room a man was on the table for a most difficult surgical feat. Around him were gathered the staff of the hospital and its brilliant surgeons. Lieutenant Sage of New York had just given him the anaesthetic when one of the airplanes let the bomb drop. It was a big fellow. It must have been all of 250 pounds of high explosive.

Wounded Fall Through Floors

"It hurled downward, carrying the two floors before it. Through the gap thus made wounded men, the Belgians in which they lay, convalescents, and all on the floors came crashing down to the ground. The bomb's force extended itself to wreck the operating room, where the man on the table, Lieutenant Sage, and all in the room were killed. In all there were 37 lives lost, including three Red Cross nurses.

"The building caught fire. The concussion had blown the stairs down, so that escape from the upper floors seemed impossible. But the convalescents and the soldiers, who had run to the scene of the bombing, let the very ill ones out of the windows, and escape was made that way.

"And then to cap the climax, the German airplanes returned over the spot of their ghastly triumph and fired on the rescuers with machine guns. God will never forgive the Huns for that act alone. Nor will our comrades ever forget it."

German Prison Camps

The report of Sir Robert Younger's committee on the treatment of British prisoners in German prison camps was published four months ago. Since then further authenticated evidence of maltreatment of prisoners by the Germans has accumulated. The following are typical instances:—

"One man who was captured on the morning of March 28, 1918, was made to work for two hours, immediately after he was taken prisoner, serving a German field gun with ammunition and digging out a position for it under British fire. A witness was captured on March 21, 1918, and with about 30 others was taken to a German battery in action and made to carry shells and make a dump of them beside the road near Queant. At Villers (near Cagucourt) he was with a party, including warrant officers, N.C.O.'s, and men of the R.A.M.C., who were made to work on roads and light railways. If they did not work hard for eight hours a day they were knocked about with rifle butts or sticks. After a week at Villers they were marched to Ecoourt (five miles from the front line) and put in a cage which was within range of the British guns. Here they worked under shell fire and the treatment was worse than they had previously experienced. The witness saw four men set to carry a marquee—a six-man job. Owing to the weight and the state of the ground they fell, whereupon a German Corporal and another man hit them with sticks. One man was thrashed till he lay on the ground groaning. One working party had a Corporal killed and three men wounded by shell fire."

Many Die of Weakness

Another man reports that after being captured with ten others after dusk on March 24, 1918, they were questioned and marched from place to place for a long time, and he adds: "We were under artillery fire when we rested. This was about 1 p.m. on the 26th, and we had had no food since we were captured on the 24th, and nothing to drink except shell-hole water." This was their fate till dusk, when they tried to escape. One was shot, but the witness arrived in the British lines about 1 o'clock on the afternoon of the 27th. Since dusk on the 24th he had been given no food at all and had had only three hours' sleep.

Another witness says: "I met one man who had been working behind the German lines. He said they were very badly treated . . . many died of weakness. When fresh batches were captured the Germans kept them working in the lines instead of sending them to the registered camps. Either this man or another that I met told me that a man died in his hut and his body was there three days before it was removed."

Pitiful to See Them

Further testimony: "Four of our prisoners were brought to Meschede Continued on Page 20"



A French Bridge Blown Up by Retreating Germans to Retard the Progress of their Pursuers.



A View of the Ruins of the Church at Albert. A Characteristic Scene in the Fought-over Territory.