

ranks, and many a British soldier lies in a forgotten grave to-day because of the treachery and treason of Belgian officers. In fact, it is common knowledge that the long-delayed coming of the British to Antwerp was caused by the trickery and intrigue of a Belgian officer in the besieged city. In the retreat from Antwerp, a retreat which in every sense was carried out in masterly style, so much so that the Germans found nothing in the captured city, troops, provisions, ammunition and all having been safely moved elsewhere, there was an incident which claims attention.

Crossing the river, it was necessary to construct a pontoon bridge. This was mined for the especial benefit of the German pursuer. It held about 250 men at one time, and while it was loaded down with British marines an officer, in turning, saw to his consternation that a Belgian officer was about to blow the bridge up. A flash, and the Belgian fell with the British sword thrust almost through him, and the Belgians cheered the promptness of the British officer. On more occasions than one the Belgian officers ran away and left the British to their fate.

Even King Albert himself was almost handed over into the hands of the Germans, the Judas Iscariot in this case being his chauffeur. Every morning, it was His Majesty's plan to take a spin in his car and to visit the outlying parts of the defence works. On this particular morning, he noticed something suspicious in the conduct of his chauffeur. At one point he ordered him to stop, but he drove madly on until, with the King's pistol pointed at his head, he did bring the machine to a stop. Thereupon the King took the wheel, after handing the chauffeur over to Belgian guardsmen. One hundred metres away the Germans opened fire, but they did no damage. In the chauffeur's pocket were found several thousands of francs in money, together with German cheques for upwards of one million francs. He confessed that he had planned to deliver the King into the hands of the enemy, in consideration of this bribe, and he nearly succeeded. He was immediately executed.

Antwerp Deliberately Sold.

And, taken all in all, it would be wrong to say that Antwerp was taken. Antwerp was deliberately sold, and indisputable evidence now to hand proves that corrupt Belgian officers were more dangerous than German guns. In one case it was found that a high Belgian officer was actually a German. The whole net-work of fortifications was moth-eaten with spies and traitors. Every German officer before the fortresses held complete plans of the fortifications, internally and externally. Never a shot was wasted, for from windmills and housetops signalmen betrayed the position of the Belgian forces and incidentally furnished the range. Treachery within and a powerful enemy without—that is what the defenders of Antwerp faced, and, in light of it all, it is a miracle that the entire army, with all their supplies, as well as all the provisions in the beleaguered city, escaped the hands of the invaders.

In all fairness to the truth, let it be said that this same system of treachery was encouraged by the Belgian Government before the war—this Government which catered more to religion than to the weal and welfare of the Belgian people. They refused a system of adequate national defence. They refused the construction of a line of forts at Liege and Namur that German guns would never destroy. They turned a deaf ear to the appeal of the Liberals and the people in general to organize a system of national defence which would have given Belgium a fighting force at least twice as strong as that which took the field at the outset of the war. They neglected the equipment of the field forces, so much so that the organization of volunteer corps involved the appeal to England for adequate equipment. In every way this Government has played into the hands of Germans, and it is even claimed in highly-informed circles that Germany had been guaranteed a free passage through the country in the event of a war on France. This was borne out by the statement of German officers and men after Liege, when they told me that, before leaving Germany, they had been given to understand that there would be no resistance in Belgium. But, happily for Belgium, there still remained in the service a man of the heroic type of General Leman, Liberal though he was. He it was who saved France and all Europe—he and his gallant men at Liege.

German Spies Everywhere.

I could quote incident after incident of an authoritative character to support the charge against the Belgian Government, but that is not necessary. Ask any Belgian who knows political conditions in his own land; not only will he support everything I have said, but he will go further. He will tell you that through the negligence of the Government the whole system of the army was allowed to become the prey of German espionage plans, and this accounts for the large number of traitorous officers.

In the meantime, Germany cries to the heavens to support her claim that England was the aggressor, that she never violated the neutrality of Belgium, that this was first accomplished by the French, that she has found papers which support the truth of her charge, that the vandalism and massacre in Belgium was not the work of German soldiery, and this and that; but the world has a few thoughts upon which to ponder.

At Aix la Chappelle an excited woman, who claimed that she was English, told me in a burst of passion that England had made the war and that poor, oppressed Germany was fighting only for the maintenance of her freedom and her rights. This is a type of the palaver you meet with in all parts of Germany. It is gradually finding its way across the Atlantic in the hope of strangling public opinion in America.

They tell you that England is the worst of the worst, that she made the war out of sheer jealousy of Germany's expanding trade. In short, the whole force of German abuse is directed against the head of England.

But it would be well for Americans to bear one or two things in mind. Germany had long since planned on the violation of Belgian neutrality. Before Antwerp, Namur and Mauberge were found the already-constructed foundations for her big guns, a work that ordinarily requires six weeks. These rather innocent-looking structures were concealed under cover of daintily-arranged villas, for the most part occupied by German aristocracy, or in the cellars of Belgian peasants. The removal of the superstructure, and there was the concrete base for the big siege guns. Then, too, German troops had penetrated into Belgian territory before the ultimatum was served upon the Belgian Government. That network of strategic railways which flanks the borderland between Germany and Belgium is prima facie evidence of a pre-conceived plan. There are other evidences to confirm the fact that Germany deliberately violated Belgian neutrality, and the effort to shake off the stigma of the crime only

serves to intensify her guilt. Then, too, it is a coincidence that some of the big guns employed by German forces were amongst those previously ordered and paid for by the Belgian Government. The 200,000,000-franc order was never delivered. Belgium laid in ashes and ruins, her arts and treasures destroyed, her people driven from their homes to the shelter of a strange land, massacre and pillage carried to every recess of the little kingdom—that is the price Belgium paid for her defiance of the Kaiser's plans. And, incidentally, it may be accepted as truth of the disappointment in the heart of German militarism, a disappointment born of the failure of plans that had been carefully laid, and strengthened by a system of espionage.

Bismarck's Humour

PRINCE BISMARCK, who is credited with inventing the gospel of "blood and iron," had a deep, dry sense of humour which is sadly lacking in Germany at the present day. The numerous epistles in his Recollections to ambassadors and generals are full of caustic comment on affairs in Europe generally, and Germany in particular. In one of his many long letters to his friend, Gen. Von Gerlach, the iron Chancellor makes an almost Yankee observation about the German people.

"Where on earth," said he, "did we get our reputation for retiring modesty? Heaven knows there is not one of us in office to-day who does not think he knows a little of everything, from prosecuting a great war to picking fleas off a dog."

WAR IS ATHLETICS

SAYS THE MONOCLE MAN

WE are beginning to realize that war is an athletic event. No set of college boys would dream of sending their football team into action until it had—not only been taught to "play ball"—but been trained down as hard as nails by the most trying work, so that it could last out the day and put its skill and knowledge into effect. When two pugilists propose to pound each other for an hour or two, they get into training months ahead. This training is not intended to teach them to box. They know all about that before they issue a challenge. It is only intended to harden them, so that their wind and muscles will endure a couple of hours' hard usage. Yet you will hear people talk about sending men to the front in a great war like this, merely because they are good shots. Shooting, they say, is the essence of the contract; so, if a man can shoot straight, hurry him along to where he can draw a bead on a German.

THE good fight put up by the Boers has mischievously upset much of our costly education on the need of military training. They were absolutely undrilled; and yet, simply because they could ride and shoot and take cover, they held at bay the professional soldiers of Britain. But when we think of imitating this example with a city clerk, who can hit a "bull's-eye" four times out of five, we forget the great difference between the two men. The Boer is always in training. He was as hard as nails before war broke out. It was nothing to him to live in the open and find his food and sleep as he could. That had been his life. He was like the frontiersmen we used to have on this continent. While your city clerk would be quite knocked up by two or three days' roughing it in this way.

THE other day I watched a city regiment pounding in from a long tramp in the country. They did not need to be taught how to march—even the simple trick of keeping-step is not insisted on now, the military authorities having found that the broken step enables troops to march more at ease. But they did need the hardening. They must be able to cover great distances, carrying their kits and arms, without feeling undue fatigue. In a word, they must be trained for an athletic event. The hardships which our boys are enduring in England to-day have this effect. Those who cannot stand them, will be weeded out—and they should be weeded out before they become a charge upon the fighting lines at the front. Those who do stand them, will find much harder things to stand when they are sent into action. They are like a football team or a company of runners—they are being worked into condition to stand the pace.

THAT makes the difference between the first-line troops of the conscript nations, and their reserves. The first-line troops have been in hard training for a year or more. They can stand the marches, the long hours, the bridge-building, the digging, the fasting, the whole endurance test. The reserves—especially those who have not been too long out of the barracks—probably know as much about fighting as their first-line brothers; but they

lack the physical hardness to put through what they know. They are out of training—they have fallen soft. So they are set to holding permanent positions; and even there they are by no means as reliable as the fine-trained men who were in the ranks when war came.

THIS is one advantage that the professional army of Britain enjoys. Its men are always in training; and have been in training for years. They are like athletes coming from the gymnasium or the practice-field to the game. We must keep this need in mind in thinking of any system of military training for this country. It will not do to merely give our lads the "know how"; they must always get the physical ability to do. If we cannot arrange to keep a certain number of them in this pink of condition, we will always be slow in arriving on the battle-field, no matter how many of our fellows have had the mental training necessary. And tardiness in mobilization is a most costly fault. It may cost us the victory. It would infallibly have cost the British Empire the victory in this war, if our unreadiness had not been covered by the splendid readiness of the French, the Russians and the Belgians.

IN the British Islands, they are emphasizing this need for treating the soldiers in camp as "athletes in training" very strongly. Lord Kitchener has appealed to all civilians to refrain from "treating" the recruits in the training camps, or exposing them to any other deleterious temptations. Lord Kitchener's idea is that local committees should be formed in the neighbourhood of camps to educate public opinion on this point. As the London "Spectator" puts it—"People should try to think of the soldiers as being 'in training' in the athletic sense. What is not too strict a regime for, say, the Olympic games, is not too strict when the prize is saving the British Empire and ridding the world of the intolerable German militarism."

PHYSICAL condition has as much to do with winning victories as ability to shoot or any other military skill. And fine physical condition, of the sort that can endure hardship as a good soldier, cannot be hastily improvised. The lesson from this, surely, is that in any plans for military preparedness we may make when this cruel war is over, we must include sufficient hard work to keep our first-line militiamen in constant training. We ought not, on the outbreak of war, to be compelled to train our troops for weeks and months before they are judged fit to go to the front. We ought to have some men—as many as is our fair share in a democratic Empire—ready for instant trans-shipment to any scene of war. I am confident that plenty of young men can be got to join the colours on these terms, and will feel themselves bound to keep in steady training for that supreme "athletic event" we call war. They do it now for football, lacrosse or Marathon. Those who do not "make the teams," and so are not required to take this training, are disappointed and envious of those who do. If the matter is put to them in the right light, they will do at least as much for the master-test of physical prowess—war.