

A Swiss Homage to the Belgian Army.

Under the title of "The Belgian Army in the Field," the Swiss Military Review has published, in its numbers of June and July, 1916, a study which proves clearly the high esteem, the admiration even, that the Swiss military classes entertain towards the valiant little Belgian army. In the first part of his work, the author, Lieutenant Van Erde, sets forth what was the Belgian army at the time of its mobilization and what was its effective action during the course of the European conflict. The second part is more especially devoted to the psychology of the Belgian soldier.

"What as far as was believed, could have been expected from the Belgian army before the war of 1914-18?"

"Not very much? That was the general impression. That was, even so, the impression of the German military party. The latter valued at no more than a mere trifle the resistance of Belgium, such a deduction is clearly evident from their actions and the means of execution they adopted. The actual events have more than demonstrated that, in this instance, they had made a singular mistake."

The Belgian army, too weak from numerical point of view—product of country over-confident in the treaty pledges and generally averse to military charges—could not constitute for Belgium, so much exposed, a very satisfactory defence. No one could in any way place much reliance upon it. Nevertheless, in the course of the present war, the part played by the Belgian army has been considerable."

The German plan, as the author explains, was as follows: To cross over

Belgium as a waterspout, fall upon France while the latter was calling its troops into active service, crush its first defence forces and occupy all the north and even Paris in superior numbers; then, France being thus overcome and muzzled, they would only have to run into Russia, too slow to mobilize its armies and which could be defeated by a series of successive routs.

"A plan of Napoleon style, very simple, even too simple at that, since the slightest hitch could overset it completely."

Such a hitch some one gave it. "Belgium's armed intervention was the sandgrain which broke down this whole system of wheel-work so nicely organized."

The author then goes on to describe the heroic resistance of Liege against which the enormous wave of the German onslaught broke itself; the part played by Namur, then by Antwerp, and finally he comes to the battle of the Yser.

"Behind this small Flemish river, the Belgian army, whose original forces had been reduced almost by half, extenuated by this long struggle, by its retreating in uninterrupted marches, poor in arms and provisions as well as in men, sustained the full brunt of Prince of Wurtemberg's formidable army. During twelve whole days, the German troops developed every effort in their power to crush down or break through the obstacle."

"The Belgians did stand. They were very near giving away. Their energy and their obstinacy permitted them to hold on to positions which were believed to be lost. And when the first battle of the Yser was completed in front of the Flemish plains flooded over by the Belgian engineers, King Albert's army had insured the struggle's definite form. It was to be, hereafter, the immobility of the wings whose extremity rested upon the sea itself."

In the second part of his work, the author examines the organization of the Belgian army, as it was at the beginning of the war, when it was passing through a stage of transformation, and the modifications it has undergone during the course of the campaign.

"In short, says he, the crisis of the Belgian army, in 1914, unravelled itself in the midst of the cataclysm. One cannot but wonder and admire, from an exclusively objective and military point of view, how Belgium has been able, in full war times, starting from what was rightly called the phantom army, to constitute such an army as Lord Northcliffe qualified, in a recent writing of his as "a perfect army."

Lieutenant Van Erde then makes a psychological study of the Belgian soldier of whom he gives a glowing description.

"The Belgian soldier is brave. He is brave, for he has that energetic, voluntary, headstrong courage which lasts and overflows. Habitually, he has not the spirit, the overflowing enthusiasm, the 'storming folly.' However, in the course of the present campaign, the Belgian companies have more than once rushed forward to the attack with such ardor that positions were carried, even against all the staff's expectations."

A typical example of this impetuosity of King Albert's troops was given, says the author, by a mixed brigade of the 1st D. A. at the battle of Haelen, which he describes in a few touches.

"However," does he add, "it is rather the courage, quiet, calm, self-possessed, decided and immovable that more particularly characterizes the Belgian trooper. The whole campaign has been but one single act of bravery, stubborn and voluntary, either in the marches forward, or in the retreating, or again in holding out. The Belgian soldier who has received the order to hold out and to remain at any place, wherever it may be, holds out, whatever may happen, until the order to retreat."

"This trooper, courageous and energetic, has physical qualities well adapted to his moral ones. Generally, rather clumsy for mobilization, he has an endurance beyond every test. He can stand with amazing resistance cold as well as heat, rain and snow, just as the sun's ardent rays. He has a considerable working capacity and his production is enormous. He has shown, more especially during the first battle of the Yser a wonderful persistency in maintaining his strength and will throughout privations of every kind and in spite of a total absence of rest. There, it was found necessary to call upon troops known to be decimated, reduced, believed to be incapable of any action, broken down, absolutely drained, from these troops it was necessary to demand an effort which brought worldwide admiration and which amazed even those who had asked it."

None shall ever know what amount of individual abnegation was required

for that admirable resistance on the Yser during which the six Belgian divisions were all employed, almost without respite, during the first eleven days of the German push. As early as the third day the leaders thought it no longer possible to maintain their positions; the men were exhausted, and their re-creating was only done at a haphazard between bombardments; they slept standing in the holes they used for trenches; they had to be re-lieved. The staff knew that these men were at the last cast; that they had given all the energy and obstinacy ever believed possible; that, materially, they were played out.

And yet they must hold on—they must.

"And the men exerted themselves, strained themselves, the officers, setting the example. They fought, they placed one another when on guard to keep awake. They continued to struggle, to hold, to resist all attacks, to stand an uninterrupted bombardment, to break the enormous waves of the German sea-let loose, jostling against their chance positions. And they held! Not only for twenty-four hours more, but during fourteen days! It may be added that from a total effective fighting force of 50,000 men they had lost very near 20,000."

The author concludes that from these few observations (a portion of which only is here reproduced) taken off-hand and rather hastily noted, one impression is set out most clearly. Here it is:

"In the course of the war Belgium has unravelled her military crisis in the most happy way. From this formidable trial her army springs out, reformed, strengthened, regenerated. While accomplishing heroically, admirably its mission, it has been transformed under the direction of a staff worthy of it and of its country, into a perfect modern army."—Vancouver Sun.

Bolcke, Fokker Star.

(By Captain Bolcke, of the German Imperial Flying Corps.)

Captain Bolcke, the Fokker aviator, who has brought down 25 aeroplanes, has given an interview to Mr. Herbert Bayard Swope, of the New York World (reproduced in German newspapers), in which he discusses not only his own methods, but also those of the British aviators, whom he has often met in aerial combat.

My twentieth victim was Captain Wilson, of the British Royal Flying Corps, attached to a division stationed near Pozieres. Wilson was flying over the German lines when I rose to meet him. I not only contrived to outguess him by divining his intentions, but was also lucky enough to outmanoeuvre and outshoot him. The Englishman dropped to the ground safely, landed with a broken propeller, while I came down in his immediate proximity.

As Wilson surrendered he asked for the name of his captor. "Bolcke," I replied. The chaplain and humiliation of defeat and capture disappeared for a moment, as the Englishman put out his hand. "As I shook it my prisoner said: 'If I had to be shot down, I'm pleased that it should have been by so good a man.'"

Wilson was sent back to Cambrai, and the next day I invited him to lunch at the officers' mess. The captured flyer expressed his appreciation of the exceptional treatment he had received and told of the high regard in which the English held the German flyers. That night he was sent to a German prison camp.

Only two of the twenty enemy aviators I have fought, unfortunately, lived after the fight. They all fought so well I was sorry luck was against them. I think most of the eighteen were killed by bullets from my machine, or died in the fall, a few meeting death in smashing on the ground. One Englishman, Wilson, and one French officer remained alive; the others died for their countries.

As to the comparative merits of the English and French flyers, I have noticed no great difference. Both are courageous and skilful, with perhaps a distinction to be observed in the spirit animating them, the English never lacking the inexplicable spirit of sport, while the French take it fatalistically, with the gravest earnestness. Flying to us is a duty, not a sport, as most Englishmen take it, to our bewilderment.

The London papers have credited me with saying I used to live in America, where I was a litboy and got my flying experience in that way. I was never in America and never happened to be a litboy. I lived in Dessau, did some flying just a few months before the war began, liked the work, and when called out went into the flying branch.

I was first an observer, later a pilot, and was shifted, because of my steady eye and sure nerves, into the fighting detachment, in which position I do nothing but fight off enemy aeroplanes—scouting over the lines or so to the relief of my own people attacked on observation duty. I always fly alone. There is an observer's seat in the machine, but he never fills it. In fact, most of the German fighting fly-

ers travel alone to minimize the risk, and by engaging the enemy give the observation machines a chance to get back with their information.

The English say the German fighters and observers almost never cross their own lines but fly over their own troops.

That is not true as regards the observers. They have done much good work over the enemy's forces, but it used to be true in part about the fighters. It was due at first to the fact that there were several parts of our new Fokkers we wanted to keep secret; second, because it was important that we should remain on guard in our own territory to prevent the enemy observers from gaining information.

Of late circumstances changed, and we fly everywhere. Obviously it always is the best tactics to bring your man down behind your own lines so he can be made a prisoner if alive, and his machine kept from the enemy for repair. But each follows a fight through now, no matter where it takes us.

I use no special formula, except to try to get my man before he gets me. Almost all the fighting aeroplanes are similarly rigged, with a machine gun fixed in front of the pilot. Being stationary, it is necessary to bring my gun into position.

I have had five machines smashed under me, but always vol-planned to earth successfully. My favourite machine has the lines of a bird. Even close at hand it looks tiny, being much smaller than the English or French ones.

On the day following my twentieth prize two of my companions were killed trying to stop an English raiding party of eight aeroplanes that flew over the German lines bombarding railroad stations. The fight was at 5.30 in the afternoon, and showed the exceptional courage of the Germans in taking on a fight with such a superior force.

I hope to see you again in happier times. We Germans don't want to fight, but so long as we are forced to, you may be sure we will, and fight so we shall never be beaten. This thought and certainty is in every German's bosom.

Where Bolcke was there were three English prisoners, Lieutenant Ronald Walker, March Rectory, Cambridge; Second Lieutenant Smith, Cemetery-road, York, and Captain H. G. Salmond, Bedford, the last named very slightly wounded. His eyes were saved by the pair of heavy flying goggles, he wore, a bullet cracking the glass but not splintering it. Captain Salmond's observer was in hospital with a bullet through the neck. Salmond said:

"We all of us think the German flyers are very good, and that this chap Bolcke is top-hole, but I'm bound to say it's jolly hard to get a fight out of them. We've got to hang over the German lines for hours at a time before we can tempt the Germans to come up and have a go. I had bad luck in being bagged, though I must say my man was game. One of his shots glanced and broke a wing frame. I almost keeled over, but righted and managed to get down without hurting myself much, except for the wound and bruises I got in landing."

St. Margaret's Guild.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The members of St. Margaret's Guild held their annual meeting and election of officers for the ensuing year, last night, in the Canon Wood Hall. The Secretary and Treasurer submitted their reports for the past year, which showed the Guild to be in a highly satisfactory condition.

Rev. C. A. Moulton conducted the election of officers with the following results:—President—Mrs. F. M. Stirling, re-elected. Vice-Pres.—Miss E. Ellis, elected. Secretary—Miss E. Bremner, elected. Assistant Secretary—Miss E. Wellman, re-elected. Treasurer—Miss A. Hunt, re-elected.

Committee—Misses G. Edwards, E. Churchill, F. Morris, N. Willis and A. Tessier. The past year has been the most successful in the history of the Guild. Besides raising large sums of money for church purposes the members have contributed through their efforts 203 pairs of socks, 51 pairs of mitts and 17 rifle covers for our soldiers at the front, and to the various patriotic funds they have forwarded several hundred dollars. The Penny Sociable last week realised the gratifying sum of \$410.00.

Rev. C. A. Moulton has been appointed Spiritual Director of the Guild in succession to Rev. W. A. R. Cracknell now in England.

Fish Shipments.

During the past fortnight the following shipments of codfish have left the Labrador coast for Gibraltar:—Vessel. Qts. Shippers. Hilda R. ... 4000 R. McRae & Sons. Roehna ... 6000 P. Templeman. Ponhook ... 8150 Mann & Co. Ellen James ... 5130 J. W. Hiscock. E. Pritchard ... 3200 Ryan & Co. Callahan ... 4200 J. Rorie & Sons. Cyrella ... 3695 T. & J. Dunn. Blodwin ... 3600 J. Rorie & Sons. The Arkana also left Dark Tickle for Paines with 3,400 quintals shipped by Cunningham & Thompson.



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an obstinate in being good as the opposite so called indulgent or capricious treatment always makes him in being bad. There is no reason why he should be walked with or held, why he should be taken up when he cries, why he should be trotted when he awakes, or why he should have a light at night. Things like these are simply bad habits for which the parents have only themselves to thank. The child adapts himself to his training and it is his treatment that his habits reflect.

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