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George Neal

Germans, Military Mad, Digregard Rules of War And Dictates of Humanity

American Press Correspondent Says "Germany is Fighting Foully and is Defying Not Only the Rules of War But All the Rules of Humanity"

OBSERVED NOTHING SO OUTRAGEOUS
THOUGH HE HAS BEEN IN SIX CAMPAIGNS

Says He Can Only Explain Their Conduct as Meaning They Know They Are in the Wrong and so, Like a Burglar Discovered, Will Not Stick at Murder

(Richard Harding Davis)

London, Sept. 5.—I have not seen the text of the letter addressed by President Wilson to American urging them to preserve toward this war the mental attitude of neutrals. But I have seen the war. I feel very deeply, therefore, that if I did not earnestly try to convince Americans that they should not be neutrals I would be shirking a responsibility.

Were the conflict in Belgium a fair fight on equal terms between man and man, then without question the duty of Americans would be to keep to the side lines and preserve open minds. But it is not a fair fight.

Fighting Foully

Germany is fighting foully. She is defying not only the rules of war but all the rules of humanity.

If public opinion is to help in preventing further outrages by her forces and in hastening this unspicable conflict to a close, it should be directed against those who offend. If we are convinced that one opponent is fighting honestly and that his adversary is striking below the belt, or gouging and biting, then for us to maintain a neutral attitude of mind is unworthy and the attitude of a coward.

When a mad dog runs amuck in a village it is the duty of every farmer to get his gun and destroy it not to lock himself indoors and preserve toward the dog and those who face him a neutral mind.

They Are Military Mad

This is not a war against Germans, as we know Germans in America, who are among our sanest and most industrious and most responsible fellow countrymen. It is a war, as Winston Churchill in his interview last Sunday explained, against the military aristocracy of Germany, men who are six hundred years behind the times, who, to preserve their class against democracy, have perverted every great invention of modern times for the uses of warfare to the destruction of life.

These men are military mad. Their idea of government is as far opposed to our own as is martial law and the free speech of our town meetings. Every belief of these high-born butchers is opposed to every principle that is to us most dear.

Selfish Policy

If they will make of Europe an armed camp, they will control commerce on the seas; they will either destroy our commerce with Europe or dictate as to what goods they will admit, or admit them on their own terms.

Meanwhile, they are destroying Belgium, a country with which they had no quarrel. The land they have devastated was not waste land sparsely settled and uninhabited. It was the oldest and most closely built up countryside in Europe. The villages, towns and cities touch with their skirts the skirts of the next adjoining places. They run as close to her as do The Bronx, Larchmont Rye and New Rochelle. The cities they have destroyed with bombs and fire like Rochester, Utica and Troy. These cities were not fortified. They were industrial centres, and, besides, possessed treasures of art and architecture that belonged not alone to the Belgians but to the world.

Wrought Havoc

I have seen Germans at work. For a time I was a prisoner and forced to march with them and the destruction they wrought was not the havoc that war always brings.

In six other wars all I have seen that was outrageous was not so terrible, so unnecessary, so wanton, as the outrages of the German army in the short distance between Brussels and Liege.

The Allies asked of the Belgians to hold back the invaders only for two days. They held them back for fifteen. It is for that they are being punished, not because the townspeople are firing upon the Germans. No one who has been in Belgium this last month believes that charge.

People Disarmed

I passed on foot through many villages, and in all read the proclama-

tions issued by the Burgomaster, commanding the people to turn over to him every firearm in their possession, and the date of each of these proclamations antedated the entry of the Germans. The Germans were the aggressors. They approached non-combatants always gun in hand.

Again and again have I been told the same story by Belgian shopkeepers and the proprietors of cafes and hotels. "They put a gun at my head." "Why?" I asked, and the Belgian would shrug his shoulders and say, "Because they wanted eggs or a note changed, or a bed. But why shoot me for so small a matter as a couple of eggs?"

Personal Experiences

My own experiences were the same. They never demanded my papers without sticking an automatic pistol in my face. Once, when I was seated by the road engaged in eating a sandwich, five of them rushed at me from the rear, each waving an automatic pistol. They seemed to me like men on the verge of hysteria, officers and privates alike.

When I was a prisoner with them, one of their own aeroplanes passed over us. They thought it an English machine, and Count Von Schwerin, commanding the 7th Division, and all his staff at the same time began shrieking commands, some to shoot, others not to shoot. They were like men gone suddenly crazy. It was a most pitiable exhibition.

Their conduct throughout can be explained in only one way. They are men who know they are in the wrong, that their case is unlawful; and like a man who enters a house as a burglar, they do not hesitate at murder. In no other way can you explain their casting floating mines among innocent fishermen, their dropping bombs from airships upon sleeping women, their wrecking churches, universities and libraries and their execution of non-combatants.

Just for Comparison

In comparison, let me relate one incident to illustrate how the plucky Belgian wages war. When our Secretary of the Legation at Brussels, Hugh Gibson, returned from Brussels to Antwerp, which was the day after the Zeppelin had hurled her bombs into that city, the Belgian Government gave him a package to be delivered to the German Governor of Brussels. It had nothing at all to do with the Germans' infernal machine, but contained letters to German prisoners in Antwerp, where the Belgians were forwarding them to their wives and children. Belgians do not wage war on women, nor do their Allies.

Between them and the Germans, one who has seen what I have seen at Louvain, Tirmont and Liege finds it hard to preserve an attitude of mind correctly neutral.

HEROIC ACTION OF SOLDIER DUKE

London, Sept. 9.—Another incident is reported regarding the Duke of Westminster, who was recently mentioned as among those whose bravery on the field of action had attracted attention.

The Duke, it is said, is serving as aide de camp to Field Marshal French. He encountered a patrol of Uhlans while he was carrying orders by automobile. He put on the utmost speed, but numerous shots from the Germans struck the machine and mortally wounded his companion, an officer.

The wounded officer, half rose, attempting to salute and fell back dead. The Duke, seeing his companion collapse rose in the car, saluted the dying man and said "Good-bye my boy."

"TEACH THEM TO SHOOT," SAYS KITCHENER

London, Sept. 6.—"Never mind whether they know anything about drill. It does not matter if they don't know their right foot from their left. Teach them how to shoot and do it quickly." These are instructions which Lord Kitchener gave the officers who are engaged in the work of getting his second army into shape. They throw strong light on the situation. It's a race against time.

RUSSIANS FIGHT THE AUSTRIANS

And if Russia Wins, it Will Mean the Absolute Crushing of Whole Austrian Army

London, Sept. 7.—A correspondent of The Times at Petrograd, under date of Sunday, referring to a battle just begun which, if as successful as the Russian operations against Lemberg, will overthrow the Austrian forces and practically open the road to Berlin, says:

"Reliable information as to the progress of battles enables me to state that the outlook is no whit less promising but that several days may elapse before the final overthrow of the Austrian army. The enemy has at his disposal at least thirty divisions, besides several German corps and will fight with the courage of despair.

"On the east Prussian frontier, there is news of the appearance of part, if not the whole, of the third Bavarian army corps. These troops are installed at Allenstein, which is being reconnoitered by the Russian cavalry.

BOTHA SAYS S. AFRICA LOYAL

London, Sept. 10.—A Capetown despatch says that General Botha, Premier of South Africa, delivered an eloquent speech in Parliament in which he emphasized South Africa's determination to assist in maintaining the integrity of the Empire.

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400,000 GERMANS NOW IN E. PRUSSIA

Paris, Sept. 5.—Five German army corps have arrived at the Vistula River, according to the Rome correspondent of The Paris Matin. These corps are mostly from Belgium and the North of France, the correspondent says, brought to oppose the advance of the Russians.



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