

UNDER FIRE

had a miserable luncheon, and at five—four, our time—started back for Brussels.

We made a *détour* and stopped for tea in a pretty little cottage built in the English style, where some young officers of aviation were living. The tea proved to be coffee, and the young officers all very gay. They were strong, good-looking young chaps of aristocratic families who had taken to aviation, which in our day replaces the cavalry as the smart branch of the military service. They liked the life of the villa, where they lived like a college fraternity, and they were naïvely anxious to have the war go on indefinitely.

"*J'espère,*" said one of them, who spoke a little French, "*que la paix n'é clatera pas!*"

He said it seriously, innocent of the charming *mot*, the amusing figure that he had made.

Von der Lancken wished to go around through Aude-
narde, and that involved another *détour*. We drove through Roubaix and raced on to Waterloo—not the historic Waterloo—and then through a village in which every window and every door was closed and not a soul abroad. There in the glare of the afternoon sun it was like a city of the dead, but finally we saw people cautiously peeping at us from behind curtains. There was one person abroad, a boy in the street, who said they had to enter their houses at six o'clock. But a little farther up the road, not a quarter of a mile, the houses were open, the population loafing pleasantly in the street—and we knew that we had entered Belgium. The people were all gazing upward into the sky, and there, looking up, we saw an English aviator. As we rolled along he came after us. For miles and miles he flew as we rode, much of the time directly over us.