

for severe treatment. Some of the rooms had been made to look quite decent with the aid of brown paper and wall paper, photographs, pictures, etc., and one of these rooms was invariably selected by the Huns. The whole of the paper was torn off the walls, pictures taken to pieces or smashed and everything piled up in the centre of the room. On one occasion when the officer in charge of the search was drunk (a very common habit with the German officers on duty), he drew his sword, cut down some curtains he saw and commenced hacking at things on the wall. Searches of this description took place twice a year and were altogether unproductive.

Everything in our parcels was cut to bits; shaving soap often into three pieces, washing soap smashed up, bread (from the Dutch and Swiss Red Cross) cut into four and sometimes six pieces and as far as possible everything ruined. Our parcels were stolen systematically—I was a very bad sufferer—and our tins also. Occasionally verboten articles were discovered, but if we had received advice letters beforehand we usually got the stuff if it was properly packed. There was no object in all this business as the Germans know as well as we do, that we can get anything we want in the escape line in other ways.

The Commandant, yclept Neimeyer, who has a twin brother in charge at Holzmindenhager, was one of the biggest blackguards it is possible to meet. He spoke excellent English with an astonishing accent; he had lived for some years in America, hence his knowledge of our language. A large part of his time he was half drunk and even at his best he was insane. It is very difficult to give a description of his actions. He was the biggest liar we met in a nation of liars, he was a thief, and in short, what the Germans call a "schweinhund"—the English translation being "pig-dog." He was hated by his own people quite as much as by us, because he used to make them do as much unnecessary work.

He used to spend his day walking round the camp making annoying or insulting remarks to officers, and certain officers he hated he put in jug continually for no reason at all. He was continually devising petty schweineris to annoy us; one of his choicest amusements was to have officers stripped and searched, not because he suspected them of concealing articles, but because he enjoyed it. I can't describe him properly, it is an impossible task, but, if he ever leaves Germany after the war, he will be killed.

As regards escaping, we were extremely unfortunate. No one has ever escaped from Friedberg or Clausthal. Quite a lot of men have got out of the camp, but the distance is so great that they have always been caught. Some camps are ridiculously easy to escape from, as they are within a comparatively short distance from Holland, but so far Clausthal has proved quite impossible. We started a tunnel at Clausthal under one of the huts; the huts were raised two or three feet above the ground and we cut through the floors of various rooms and got below the hut. We actually started another tunnel under another hut, but we had to give it up owing to trouble with water. The big tunnel we started in the second week of May, and we worked daily from 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. without any stops. Towards the end, owing to the winter coming on, the "appels" were altered and we were only able to work during the last few weeks from ten to four. At one time there were eighty of us in it, but we did not finish the show until the 3rd of Novem-