

Against Germany

EVIDENCE of German breaches of Belgian neutrality by construction before the war of concrete foundations for their heavy guns has accumulated. About Namur and Antwerp property had been acquired by some individual and prepared for the approach of the howitzers. Evidence of similar work was found about Maubeuge preparatory to attacking France. But they did not stop at the boundary. Similar work has now been found in France in the hope of capturing the coast. The Times' correspondent is authority for the statement that last year the foundations of a private villa began to be laid on the dunes near Coxyde, 11 miles from Dunkirk and just over the Belgian frontier. The identity of the purchaser of the site remained a mystery. The villa was evidently designed on a most magnificent scale, and all sorts of stories were current about its owner. Some said it was Prince Victor Napoleon. Those who knew best said that it was a wealthy manufacturer from Liege, but his name was never known.

At any rate, the work took a long time, and was done with great care by special gangs of workmen, who all appeared to be Germans. The foundations were in solid concrete, and each section had to be left some time to dry before the next could be begun. Thus the work lasted all through the winter, and was still going on in July. When the war broke out the workmen ceased to come, and the concrete foundations were left to themselves.

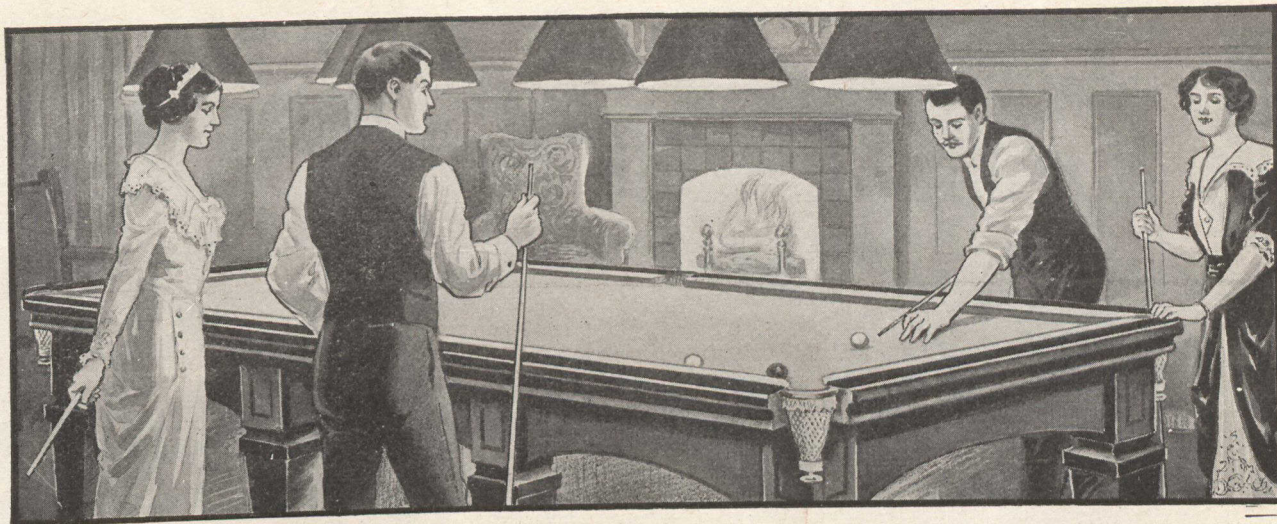
It was only after the revelations of the preparations made by the Germans years before for their guns outside Antwerp that the Belgian engineers began to suspect the mysterious villa. It was noticed that the site was just about the distance of the range of the German heavy guns from the forts to the east of Dunkirk among the dunes. The site was carefully examined, and a party of sappers marched out from Furnes and blew up the concrete blocks with dynamite. "We had to send for an extra supply," said the captain who commanded. "I've never seen such solid stuff in all my life."

Russian Soldiers

THE physique and temperament of the Russian soldiers are winning encomiums from British correspondents who have been with them in this campaign. Mr. Harold Williams, correspondent of the Chronicle, has been struck by their fine quality. He writes: I have seen Cossack patrols in warm-hooded overcoats cantering through forests in the twilight or at early morn; Cossacks in camp smoking round their bivouac fires; and have come across long military trains at wayside stations, where the soldiers stretched their legs after almost interminable journeys, and where they bought bread and cigarettes, and asked for the latest news of the war. One cannot help being struck by their fine physique and their hearty open manner. They are cheerful when marching through the streets of a town, when strolling along in charge of transports, munching turnips, within the sound of cannonade, and even cheerful when suffering from wounds.

A few hours ago I saw a regiment marching off into the firing line. They were little fellows, bronzed and sturdy. During the bustle before the start they chatted and joked. One soldier joked that he had two Williams in his pockets, and produced two pictures of the Kaiser. His mates laughed. Then the word of command was given; the men formed up, shouldered rifles, and, with the band playing they marched off at a swinging step, with a look of shrewd determination in their eyes, out across the field to take their places under whistling shrapnel and bursting shell. Some of them will come back!

When I have talked with wounded men I have always been surprised at their natural intelligence. They are rough-looking fellows, and many of them can scarcely read or write; yet they are fully aware of what they are doing and can describe a battle clearly and minutely.



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