

Life in a German Civilian Prison Camp

By Professor W. Lochhead.

APPARENTLY the Britishers in Germany did not anticipate in the critical days before the outbreak of war that their country would become involved, and for this reason they remained at their posts too long before making an attempt to leave the country. As a result, between four and five thousand were interned in the different prisons throughout Germany. During the first week in November these men, including more than thirty Canadians, were gathered together into one large camp at Spandau, just outside Berlin. This camp is known as *Ruhleben*, as it occupies the stables and grand-stands of the *Ruhleben* race track, the great holiday resort of aristocratic Berliners.

The Germans, however, were not prepared to receive such a large number of prisoners in this camp; nothing was ready for them, not even bedding. The rows of horses' stables, now called "barracks," were used as sleeping quarters for the prisoners, each box accommodating about five men. The lofts above these stables were also used as lodgings, but these had no partitions, and but few windows.

It did not take long, however, for the British prisoners to settle down and to make themselves as comfortable as possible. They realized that they were

likely to remain a long time in their new quarters and that they had better make the best of the new situation.

All kinds of enterprises sprang into existence in the *New Bond Street* of *Ruhleben* camp—tailors, cobblers, barbers and bakers all began to ply their trades, and, more wonderful still, the majority organized themselves into a teaching institution where instruction was given and received in almost every conceivable subject. It should be remembered that the camp contained



Grant Lochhead (McGill '11, Leipzig '14) (From a crayon sketch made by an English artist in the *Ruhleben* camp).

a very motley crowd of actors, musicians, artists, university students, commercial men, and about 1,100 sailors taken from merchant shipping at Hamburg.

The success of the *Ruhleben* camp as a prison camp may be attributed to two factors:—first, it has a wise, humane commandant in charge who takes a great interest in the welfare of the camp; and second, the natural tendency of Britishers to unite in self-government. With the consent of the Commandant, Count Schwerin, the camp was organ-