

BREAKING OUT OF GERMANY

Letters of a Canadian European Buyer to his firm, in which he describes the kindly aid given him by Mephisto, in getting out of Germany via Holland, to England, after the war was under way

MR. GEORGE D. HARPER is the European buyer for a prominent firm of millinery importers with head offices in Toronto. He is also unconsciously an author and a humorist. From August 6th until September 8th Mr. Harper's letters to his firm, as published below, form a serious rival in news and human interest to many of the famous letters of history. For brevity they may not equal Caesar's military despatches to Rome; for diplomatic sagacity they may be inferior to the psychic letters of Bismarck to his friends in the army; and for intimate description they may not be quite up to the standard set by Bob Ingersoll's celebrated letters from hell. But as a picture of what happened to a Canadian caught in the web of war in a hostile country they are by far the best thing as yet come to light on this side of the water.

Some time before war broke out Mr. Harper was in Berlin, Dresden and Sebnitz, busily selecting samples of ribbon, artificial flowers and numerous other articles of millinery for his firm. While

BIDING HIS TIME

Berlin, August 6th.

I AM in Berlin under the protection of the American flag. Don't know when I can get away. Nobody or anything can get out, but I am in good health.

I must abide my time until I can find the opportunity of getting away. Can't say when.

WHY HE LOST FAITH

Berlin, August 29th.

The British are a laughing-stock over here. Fancy sending a few thousand over here to beat millions and no word of the British navy doing anything. What under the sun is going to happen to England when these people here get started? Of course the British fleet is hiding or waiting and trying to muddle through. We British over here have to just be patient, as we hear everything one-sided, but it is time we heard of the navy, who are, I hear, in hiding and afraid to make a try at the German ships. Their army is the finest in the world, and their navy, so far, is what they say, but what in thunder is the British navy doing? It will have to wake up—too late—and then the three little isles will make good watering places for Germany.

Keep the folks in Toronto posted as to me. Expect to be away from here when the invasion of England takes place. What a blundering lot you are. Of course I could take a chance and perhaps rot in a German prison, or get in a little pill in my hide, but I am too healthy for that as yet. Possibly I may have a chance next week. If you want to wire me, do as before, through the American Embassy.

The American Embassy are doing all that they can to exchange good Britishers for, they say, better Germans. Possibly we will be away next week.

NOT QUITE SO "CHESTY"

Friday, September 4th.

ABOUT completing arrangements for getting away on the special train either Monday, the 7th, or Tuesday morning, the 8th inst. All indications point to a successful getting away from the hotel at last.

The feeling around Berlin is growing quite bitter against British subjects; I have noticed it coming on in the last two or three days, particularly after a reverse of the Austro-Hungarian troops, which had to retire from Ruttrulle. Down at the office this morning, at 10.30, and received the usual batch of mail to be posted for American friends. Took a walk through the Tiergarten this afternoon and noticed there were not so many people about as usual. In the evening the boulevards were less crowded and the people more subdued, the restaurants being half empty, particularly Unter den Linden; the people, the waiters and the various officers I came in contact with not quite so "chesty." Long lists of killed and wounded are being posted up on the side of the General Post Office, and many grief-stricken women are perusing them for news of their lost and wounded relatives. Numbers of wounded soldiers are arriving in Berlin. Thinking it advisable to retire early, went to my room at 10.30.

BEGINS TO "BUCK UP" AGAIN

Saturday, September 5.

KNOCKING about Saturday morning early heard rumours of German defeat on the eastern border, also defeat of the Austro-Prussians by the Servians on the south. Weather fine and very warm. On reaching office at 10.30 find that the Russians are permitted to leave Berlin. Each individual Russian who is able to pay for his passage is required to take two poor Russians with him and pay for them, the



Mr. George D. Harper.

penalty for their being allowed to leave the country. No British subjects receive any such good news; they are all housed up in the country somewhere, and it seems almost impossible to get word of anybody, as the authorities are very bitter against the English. During the afternoon I endeavoured to go out to the camp and visit the English prisoners. It is stated that at this camp there are a thousand of our Scotch Highlanders, which is very good news to me, as I had feared they were all killed. Persistent rumours reached me that the entire British army was either smashed up, captured or killed after their arrival in Belgium. This news is very depressing, but after hearing again of the defeat of the Austro-Hungarians in Servia, or that neighbourhood, begin to buck up again. More wounded soldiers continue to arrive. Called at the American Embassy and saw the American Ambassador, Mr. Gerard; he reports to me that no British subjects whatever will be allowed to leave the country—advising me to be content, as under their protection all is perfectly safe. Saturday evening I visited a restaurant called "Habels," one of the oldest and best known restaurants on Unter den Linden; Emperor William I. used to go there and sit at the window enjoying the sights, particularly that of the ladies walking up and down Unter den Linden. On walking through the Friedrichstrasse, a little later, I was accosted by some ruffians who demanded to know my nationality. With a laugh I pointed to one of the policemen in the middle of the street and walked over towards him, which seemed a good reason for them to scatter. Then I thought it advisable to make for the hotel, which I did at double quick time.

TIME HANGS HEAVILY

Sunday, September 6.

MADE final arrangements for my departure Monday morning. Took a stroll through the woods and walked about six to eight miles. Back to the Linden about 2 o'clock and met numbers of Americans who were in a very nervous condition, not knowing whether to risk going over to England or wait quietly, taking the Holland-American line to America. Called round at the Embassy and found it closed. Everything quiet in Berlin. One would not think that war is taking place anywhere but for the numbers of wounded being brought in. The people seem somewhat subdued compared with the previous week, but are all out in their best bibs and tuckers. I occasionally noticed a few people in mourning.

Have just found out that a special train I was going to take in the morning would not leave till Tuesday, which was rather disappointing, as time is beginning to hang very heavily. However, I met a Mr. Loutas, from Niagara Falls, American side, and we had quite a chat together, and he tells me that the news from outside is quite encouraging and that the German people are not having it all their own way.

GETTING READY TO LEAVE

Monday, September 7.

HAVE been to the office, made arrangements and finished up all business. Goods were to come to Sebnitz and to be shipped from Berlin to Rotterdam. From Rotterdam to go by express to New York. At 1.30 left the office with Mr. —, who wished me a tearful good-bye with a glad smile behind it. In the afternoon I took a bus right down through the eastern part of the city and found the factories and all kinds of business places closed up. Very few people on the streets, which

engaged in this innocent occupation he heard no mutterings of war. When war broke out he was in the German factories picking artificial flowers. The shrewd German manufacturers who wanted his firm's orders kept mum about the war. Down at Sebnitz among the factory whistles he was as ignorant about the war as though he had been in the middle of Ungava.

When Harper got back to Berlin he found Mars running amuck. But in Berlin they told him that it was only a flare-up; it would soon be over; the same old story that has been told to millions more in Germany and Austria since August 4th. He sent his samples on via Rotterdam to New York, knowing nothing of the Canadian Parliament's action forbidding the purchase in Canada of any goods manufactured in either Germany or Austria since the outbreak of war. The samples are now in New York. The goods will never arrive. Harper himself, as his letters show, had grave doubts whether he would arrive himself.

looked deserted. I paid my bill preparatory to leaving the next morning and all arrangements were made to get away. Had my dinner at the Imperial Restaurant in the Felix Strasse and being my last meal in Berlin, and having to get up early in the morning, thought German sausages would be a good change, and a glass of beer. Needless to say I had a "Grosse." It was a quarter to nine when I had finished, and I went for a walk to the west end of Felix Strasse and found comparatively few people on the street. Berlin is starting to retire early. I noticed the people around the restaurants were not quite so joyful as they had been, and there seemed to be an under-current that things were not going quite so good with them as at first. I decided to go to bed early, as I had to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning to get away on the special.

Before retiring I packed my three pieces of hand-baggage very carefully, putting all my own papers in my hat-box, which I intended handing over to the family I was travelling with. Having arranged everything to my satisfaction, I retired.

EXIT FROM BERLIN, 6 A.M.

Tuesday, September 8.

HEARING a knock at the door, I was wide awake in a second, and on asking who was there, was told it was "funf Uhr," to which I immediately responded, "Ja wohl." As I had three-quarters of an hour in which to get ready for departure, I took things quietly; went to the office; paid as little money out for tips as possible, which amounted to a considerable sum.

By this time, 10 minutes to 6, the family that I was going to travel with had arrived, and by 6 o'clock everything was put into the taxicab, and we started for the Friedrichstrasse Station, arriving there about 10 minutes later. We got our porter, arranged about our luggage, and went and had some coffee. In the first-class dining-room of the station were a number of wounded Germans who had just arrived that morning. They looked pretty well battered about, being bandaged all over face, hands, arms or legs, and appearing thoroughly worn out.

Having finished our breakfast we went up to the train, found our seats, snuggled our baggage away nicely, and made ourselves comfortable. A number of German officers were busy inspecting the passengers as we went out, and I did not do much looking about myself, as I thought it advisable to stay inside our compartment rather than be too curious. The various members of the American Embassy were down at the train to see that the passengers got away comfortably. I might say here that they have been very attentive to any travellers leaving on American special trains for the frontier. After what seemed to me hours of waiting, we finally left at 7.20 (five minutes late). On our way we stopped at the Zoological Gardens, one of the show places of Berlin, a most beautiful spot, and at Charlottenburg, a few miles further out, the new West End, and a comparatively new district, taking up passengers at both these stations.

After leaving Charlottenburg, our next stop was Spandau. It is here that the German Government have a great many factories for the supply of armaments of all kinds. I noticed that every bridge, culvert, road, or any exposed part of the railway was well guarded by one or two sentries; in fact, this was noticeable all along the line. After leaving Spandau we made various stops at stations, where I saw many hundreds of wounded Germans arrive from the front. They were lying on the platforms on stretchers with their Red Cross nurses and doctors in attendance. At

(Continued on page 18.)