

Following the War in Ruhleben

British Prisoners' Sources of News.

By Israel Cohen.

The writer of the following article spent nineteen months in the German detention camp, and was chairman of the Ruhleben Literary and Debating Society.

There are few people more interested in the progress of the war than the British civilians interned at Ruhleben. For, although rumor has often heralded their wholesale release, they feel that only the end of the war can make it a certainty. They therefore use all the opportunities at their disposal for studying the march of events, discuss with one another daily, and even hourly, the prospects on the various fronts, and compare with one another their varying estimates of the duration of hostilities. Their opportunities for forming a judgment are more plentiful than are commonly supposed, and certainly more numerous than those at the disposal of the average Englishman at home; for, although living in confinement in the enemy's country, they know more of the conditions in Germany than they can read in the German paper.

The three newspapers that are allowed to be sold in the camp are the "Berliner Tageblatt," "Vossische Zeitung," and "Berliner Zeitung am Mittag," which are given here in the order of their value as channels of intelligence. All these papers publish, as a rule, not only the official reports of the Central Powers, but also those of the Allies, though the latter are generally printed in an obscure corner when they record a conspicuous success. The two former always devote considerable space to political affairs in England, and thus we were able to follow very closely the developments that led to the introduction of compulsory military service, and likewise the disturbances in Ireland. Germany naturally rejoiced at the Irish rising, and devoted whole pages, with bold headlines, to stirring descriptions. In the early period of the war the "Tageblatt" published a series of articles on conditions in England by Dr. Hans Vorst, which I have subsequently learned were pretty accurate as regards facts, and which were quite temperate in tone; whilst the Amsterdam correspondent of the "Vossische Zeitung" appears to waver every "neutral" traveller from England and squeeze miscellaneous bits of information from him, which he dishes up into spicy articles.

Socialists and Ruhleben Evils.

But these were by no means the only German papers at our disposal. For a great number of the men at Ruhleben, previously domiciled in Germany, were in regular receipt of the local newspapers from the towns in which they had lived, and thus we were able to follow the conditions and opinions in Hamburg and Breslau, in Cologne and Frankfurt, in Munich and Leipzig. We found that the Reichstag reports in a Socialist daily were often much fuller than those in the "bourgeois" papers, especially in the case of Socialist speeches disclosing censorship caprices and military abuses, and we were particularly interested on one occasion to read a Socialist exposure of Ruhleben. That the Reichstag should have listened to a denunciation of our hardships was somewhat comforting; and there was even something hopeful about it, as the heartless conduct of one of the subordinate officers, who had the authority to grant leave and exercised it all too sparingly, was mercilessly criticised. Through the same medium we also learned that the Reichstag was informed that Ruhleben prisoners of pro-German sympathies were pressed into the service of the German army.

Books, brochures, and maps were also procurable through the camp bookseller; and on the walls of many a horse-box or in the passage of the stables there were pasted large maps of the various theatres of war, upon which the course of operations was followed from day to day. Many men also cut out from their papers the small maps illustrating particular campaigns, and preserved them for future reference. As these various publications had to be ordered through the camp bookseller, the authorities could keep a check upon them and prevent the entry of any printed matter that was considered dangerous.

The Ruhleben Camp lies just opposite the main line that runs from Berlin to the west, and we were thus always able to see in what direction the troops were marching. If they went west in large numbers we knew that another offensive was developing in that region; if east, we concluded that the Russians were becoming troublesome again. We saw hundreds of trains daily, truck-loads of ammunition, and cannon of various sizes. We also saw the Red Cross trains coming back from the west with their helpless burdens. The most remarkable spectacle that we ever saw was some trucks bearing immense church-bells to the west, doubtless to be melted down for their copper in some foundry. The tallest of these bells appeared to be at least eight feet. By a curious coincidence, the train stopped just when the trucks with the church-bells came opposite the main gate of the camp, and as the railway line is on a raised level, we were all able to see and wonder. Along that same line are also regularly conveyed the trucks overflowing with the English tin-boxes that are collected in the camp, after they have been emptied of their food contents, in order to be used afterwards for ammunition purposes.

What always interested us keenly

was Germany's supply of food and of men. When the list of German parcels began to diminish, and the wives of prisoners resident in Germany wrote that they had difficulty in getting butter, meat, eggs, rice, sugar, soap and other articles from time to time we realised that the country was beginning to feel the effect of the blockade. The letters which were received from writers in Germany, whether officially or otherwise, invariably told the same tale of distress—the difficulty to get food and the desire for an early peace. The German soldiers with whom we were able to converse made no secret of their discontent; and it was because relations between us became too friendly that they were all removed to barracks outside the camp. We felt that things had come to a pretty pass when German

THROUGH GERMAN SPECTACLES

The Real Crime of Serajevo—Torturing Fear of Zeppelin Raids.

Germany is admittedly in sore food straits, while her Austrian ally is in an even less enviable position. What, then, must be the existence of the people of a town captured by the Austrians when a local newspaper speaks of hungry crowds waiting patiently for hours at the doors of a municipal sales depot, only to be told by a police inspector that the "visible supplies" of fat are bespoken?

City of Misfortune.

This episode is the more sad as it happened at Serajevo, that unfortunate city, once Serbian, now Austrian, the scene of a crime used by the Hohenzollerns as a just cause for plunging the nation into this world-war. The "Neues Wiener Tageblatt" tells the pitiful story in these words:—

Our own Austrian housewives will come to the conclusion, on reading what follows, that, despite their continued waiting over food restrictions which cannot be avoided, their case is no worse, and, indeed, in certain respects far better, than that of their sisters in our Bosnian dependency. In a recent issue of the "Serajevo Tageblatt" we read:—"It is exactly half past six in the morning. About a hundred persons are assembled in front of the sales depot of the municipality provisioning department. Through the open windows the staff are to be seen in casual conversation around a stock of 1-2lb. packets of fat. The hopes of a speedy, adequate supply of fat, therefore, revive among the crowd. It is seven o'clock. The crowd has grown. The staff continues the social amenities among each other with an ineffable sweetness and calm. An official approaches the door and opens it.

"A sigh of joy escapes the patient throng. The joy is short-lived, for the official in question, after curtly announcing that no fat can be sold before nine o'clock, closes the windows and the door and disappears. The sounds which thereupon rise up from the multitude are not such as would be correctly described as blessings on the official's head, but there is nothing for it but to wait. "Nine o'clock strikes; so does half-past nine. Then the door is opened once more, and on the threshold of the building appears a police inspector, who now graciously treats the assemblage which has in the meantime grown to fearful proportions to the following admonition:—'No fat available today; what stock we have is already bespoken. Now shut up your dirty mouths, all of you. For him or her who doesn't hold his row I've a good snip place elsewhere. Off with you, then, back to your kennels!'"

Food General's Failure.

Herr von Batocki, the food dictator, whose appointment was the cause of such high hopes, has failed to supply the people with food which he cannot obtain. This is not remarkable, but it is a sign of new times in Germany to find the "Kölnische Volkszeitung" attacking the luckless food general—who is not a Hindenburg nor a Bismarck:—

We believed that our authorities had reached the limit in the perpetration of fatal mistakes. In view of the considerable increase in their yield it was thought possible that potatoes might again be placed for sale on the open market. Herr von Batocki, however, had plans of his own. Undoubtedly he had made a profound study of his campaign. Like a second Hindenburg, thought the people, this great man was about to pour forth millions of good tubers in hundreds of well-thought-out directions.

The results of this piece of alimentary strategy were blazoned forth loudly long before its adoption, and the disappointment at the lack of any result whatever is therefore the more bitter. "He knows how to command, to organize, to foresee, this great new Bismarck of the kitchen and the store"—thus people comforted one another, and everybody felt assured about the immediate future. The food general, however, has proved that he is neither a Hindenburg nor a Bismarck; for nothing has been changed except it be for the worse. It is not surprising that Germany, which has been led to expect untold

soldiers wounded at the front were sent to Ruhleben to convalesce! The site of our camp was somewhat strangely chosen, for we were within a mile of the garrison town of Spandau, and from the race course we could see the long array of tall, smoking chimneys silhouetted against the sky. It is there that munitions are manufactured in great abundance without pause, and the town is guarded so carefully that the wives who visit their husbands at Ruhleben are not allowed to approach it via the Spandau station, but must make a detour. At various times in the day we saw Zeppelins, balloons, and squadrons of aeroplanes; and as we took our monotonous constitutional in the evening we saw fireballs shot-up into the heavens and a restless searchlight that pierced the clouds.—London Chronicle.

successes by the aid of Zeppelins, should receive imaginary accounts of their prowess. It has been left, however, to the Leipzig "Tageblatt" to present the most glowing picture of fear and devastation in England that has yet appeared in print:—

On a few nights in succession the English were left in peace by Zeppelin's steel-grey airships, but very few of them, we should think, enjoyed the blessings of care-free slumbers. The torturing fear of fresh raids must have followed them in their dreams.

Amid shuddering terrors they must have awakened many and many a night when their heated imagination played them its grim tricks. We gladly grant the English people these mental torments, but we rejoice even more when those nightmares are converted into gruesome reality.

This was the case on the occasion of the raid of August 9, when thirty-four attacks were made on the land of our chief enemy, when explosive bombs of the heaviest calibre and incendiary bombs in vast numbers rained down on coast towns spread over an area of more than 200 miles.

This is wondrous music for German ears. The entire coast, from the mouth of the Tyne to the Wash, was colored red with the glow from terrific fires.

Victory of Defeat.

The same imagination which has made possible this horrible picture of England set on fire by Zeppelins has contrived to find solace for the fall of Gorizia, according to the "Kölnische Zeitung":—

The ruins of Gorizia will remain as monuments for all time of the shame of Italy—of that same Italy who, under the pretext of liberating her compatriots, committed the most dastardly breach of faith in history—ultimately giving over to devastation the very city which she alleged she came to rescue from the barbarians.

The appearance of Italian troops in Gorizia will have no decisive effect either on the war or the future fate of that city.

The spirit, however, that inspired its defenders, and which lives in the Austro-Hungarian army, gives us the assurance, as the Vienna Fremdenblatt points out, that no numerically superior enemy forces are capable of crushing our armies.

The fact that the English press, in its views about the Italian and Russian "victories" still busies itself in peering over the darksome present with the rosy lines of the future is for us the best sign that we have no grounds for dissatisfaction.

Wanted: The Earth.

The Vorwärts publishes an article by Carl Peters, the notorious explorer and pan-German agitator, who declares that the object of the war will not be attained until Germany has taken Egypt, the Suez Canal and Thina.

"I want to get this check cashed," said the young wife to the paying teller at the bank. "Yes, madam; you must indorse it, though." "Why my husband sent it to me. He is away on business." "Yes, madam. But just indorse it. Sign it on the back, please, and your husband will know we paid it to you. She went back to the desk and in a couple of minutes came back with the check indorsed: "Your loving wife, Edith."

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The Padre

By John D. Irvine.

To all his brother officers the chaplain is known as the padre. His profession is that of a minister of religion. It is primarily as a spiritual guide and comforter to the troops that he is attached to the Army. But while he keeps religion in the forefront, as befits his sacred calling, our padre is a man, who sees the essentially human side of war, who realises that in moments of physical suffering the welfare of the body has paramount claims, and that in his leisure moments the soldier craves for instruction, amusement—and sport. The padre honestly panders to these tastes—whether in times of stress or in moments of recreation and relief.

I have seen him at work in the many different phases of his strenuous and anxious life. Watch him with the troops in the trenches. Shells fall thick and fast. Men are wounded; some are dying. To them the chaplain whispers words of spiritual comfort and hope.

Gateway of Death.

Watch him a moment later, when the troops swarm out of their flimsy shelters, mount the parapets, and advance against the enemy. The ground is now strewn with wounded. The chaplain crosses with his comrades of the Royal Army Medical Corps into this shell-wet gateway of devastation and death. He steadies waverers among the stretcher-bearers by his cheery words and the force of his own example, as he helps to carry in the wounded to some place where hell is not being raked out of the earth.

It is not laid down as part of the chaplain's duties that he shall act as an auxiliary to the R.A.M.C. in the thick of battle. But he does it. Very often the padre is the coolest of all the men under fire, and it is impossible to appraise at too high a ratio the value of his personal example. To the men he is a hero rather than a parson. Before they entered into this fight they may have heard him speak of holy things. Perchance he may have reminded them how man in the midst of life is in death, or he may have spoken of the glorious reward which comes to those who lay down their lives in a great and sacred cause. He may even have administered to them the Sacrament of their Church. At this moment they see in him only a man—a brave man, who is one of themselves, their equal in every risk and every sacrifice.

At casualty clearing stations the chaplains are there to receive the wounded, who already have obtained first aid before being handed over to the Red Cross transport. Each man is docketed with his name, rank, and the nature of his wound, and while the surgeons of the R.A.M.C. are engaged in professional inspection and classification the padre goes round among the men, speaks to them cheer-

ly, and attends to their creature comforts. Practical Religion. The other day I came across some four hundred men—ragged, bloodstained, and weary—at one of the C.C.S.'s, as they are called. They needed nothing so much as sleep. They stretched themselves out on the cool grass. Some of them, parched with thirst, asked for a drink of water or a cup of tea. This was speedily brought to them.

"Now then, boys," shouted a lusty-lunged son of the Church, "what do you say to a cigarette? All of you who would like a cigarette please sit up." They all sat up, and the padre went round the crowd, handing out packets of "fags." It is in comparatively trivial incidents like these that one observes the fruits of "practical religion" in this war. They explain, popular with the men. "The padre is a trump always," said a wounded soldier to me on this same occasion. "He doesn't force religion upon you. He will pray with you if you ask him to. If you don't he will just trot off and fetch you a rag or a cup of tea as quick as winking." Then he added, without the least intention of being profane, "God bless our chaplains. They're damned fine fellows."

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NEWCASTLE

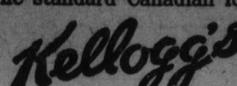
Newcastle, Sept. 1.—A very pretty wedding was that at the manse, Redbank, Wednesday afternoon, when Miss Evelyn A. Simpson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Simpson of Redbank, was united with Allan Alexander MacTavish of the Loinnburgh Co.'s staff, Newcastle. Rev. J. F. McCurdy, B. A., performed the ceremony at 3.30. The bride was charmingly dressed in a gown of black and white striped silk, with hat to match. Her bridesmaid, her sister, Miss Dorothy, was dressed in a brown and white suit, with hat to match. After the wedding, Mr. and Mrs. MacTavish motored to Newcastle, and took the Limited for a honeymoon to Montreal, Niagara Falls and New York.

Mr. and Mrs. John Williamson announce the engagement of their daughter, Miss Lillian Forsythe Williamson, to Dr. J. D. MacMillan, marriage to take place on Monday, September 11th.

Mrs. John J. Morris will be at home at her residence, on Henry Street, next Wednesday afternoon and evening, Sept. 5th.

Mrs. Ernest McNair of Jacquet River, and Miss Edith Clarke, teacher in Montreal, spent last week with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Clarke. Mrs. S. Houghton and children, of Moncton, are visiting Mrs. Walter Morrell. Miss Jennie Morrell has returned from a visit to friends in Woodstock and Fredericton. Mr. Norman of Campbellton, his two daughters and their friend, Miss Stout of Bathurst, spent the week-end with the former's cousin, Norman Anderson. Mrs. Keith and daughter, Miss Mabel of Campbellton, visited Messrs. E. A. McLean and A. B. Leard, this week.

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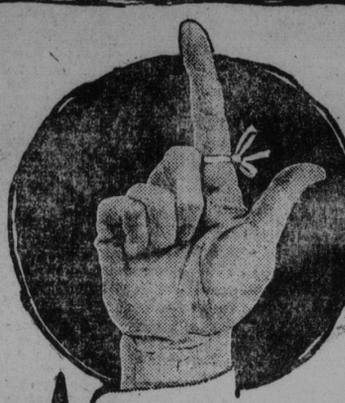
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