

## Germany's Food Shortage

In a previous issue of The Journal of Commerce there was published extracts from the first three letters of Madeleine Doty who recently returned from Germany. She had been sent there by the Chicago Tribune and the New York Tribune to investigate and report upon social and economic conditions in the Fatherland. Extracts from her fourth and fifth letters follow, and show that the British naval blockade is slowly but steadily forcing Germany to the starvation point:

### LETTER NO. IV.

In my recent investigation in Germany among other things I wished to see Germany's poor at first hand. I had no little trouble in attaining my object, but I persisted. I wanted to expend the money given me by the Christian Work fund properly. But official Germany denies its poor and hides them. The officials of the relief organizations were very kindly and very appreciative, but they insisted on showing me card catalogues, pamphlets, and discussing organization instead of producing hungry babies. I flatly refused to spend money on cataloguing.

My lack of success discouraged me. I appealed to a woman social worker. "Very well," she said, "I'll show you what is happening."

She took me to the north of Berlin. There little children swarmed, dirty, ragged, barefooted, and pale. This is a new state of affairs for Germany. Heretofore there has always been at least potatoes and clothes. No one has gone hungry. Paternalism flourishes only when the family is fed. When father fails to furnish food the children rebel. The spirit of rebellion is abroad in Germany. We visited several tenements. The following is a typical family.

A mother, nine children and grandmother, two rooms and a kitchen. Father in the war; income 144 marks (\$38) a month; rent, \$7 a month. This mother could not afford to eat at a feeding station. One meal at 10 cents a head meant \$1.20. The baby was 6 months old. It has what is termed "Englische krankheit."

It was weak from lack of nourishment. It could not raise its arms. Since Sept. 1 only children under 6 are allowed milk. The allowance is a pint a day. Not enough to nourish a baby. This family was living on tea and potatoes.

We visited many families. I could not but admire my companion. She was very proud, but tears ran down her cheeks. She belonged to the official class. She adored Germany and held every German act right, yet her heart bled for her people. Vainly she was trying to stem the tide. She dashed her tears aside to say: "Do you wonder German women are bitter? But England shall not bring us to our knees; rather we will give our last baby first."

At every home I insisted on laying in supplies. But there was little to buy. Nothing with substance — no meal. We had to be content with pudding powder (heaven knows what that is), tea "ersatz," and some canned goods. My companion had succeeded in getting some packages of meal from the government. When she produced one of these the family went mad with joy. Cereal foods are more precious to mother than diamonds. The thing that is needed is food — not money.

I knew now what was most needed. It was milk for babies. I dislike quoting figures, but a reliable and well informed Social Democrat told me that in the big babies' hospitals the increase in mortality was 50 per cent.

### The Card Food System.

The following items are to be had only with government cards: bread, meat, potatoes, butter, sugar, cheese, milk, eggs, meal, flour, soap and cheap clothes. Each person has to trade at the store assigned. Working people have to buy at noon and in the evening. This results in long lines in front of every shop at these hours.

One Saturday evening I went to a big market in the poor quarter of Berlin. This market covers an entire block. In it are sold meat, groceries and dairy products. I arrived at 6. There was little meat visible. At one booth a butcher presided over a wholly empty counter.

I pulled my companion's sleeve: "Look!" I said. "There's meat on that other counter, couldn't we buy some?" But no, of course not, the little old woman could only get meat with her meat card from her particular butcher. This time it was I who said: "Curses on the military."

Conspicuously over many counters flapped the sign "ersatz." "Ersatz" means substitute. Sausage ersatz was a pale edition of the real article. One's speculations run riot.

But there were few meat purchasers. The people were out for potatoes. The potato counter crush was as bad as a bargain day. At 6 o'clock there was a line stretching through the entire market and far out into the street. At least 2,000 people were in line. I stood and watched for three hours and the line never decreased. As fast as some left, others arrived. There were old men and women, mothers with babies and tiny children clinging to skirts and young children carrying huge baskets.

The crowd swayed and muttered. It stood on one foot and then on the other. Women who had worked all day looked ready to drop with fatigue.

### Dealing Out the Potatoes.

At the counter three or four women employees were dealing out potatoes and punching cards as rapidly as possible. Occasionally little commotions broke the monotony. Once a baby cried. We hurried toward the sound. In a baby carriage a tiny creature sobbed drearily. Standing beside the carriage and clinging tight to the baby was a 5 year old also weeping. Brother, 12 years old, had been standing in line three hours for his potatoes. Meantime the babies had grown hungry. They had had nothing to eat since noon. Some kindly women gave them bread, which was devoured eagerly. Presently mother arrived, just released from the factory. She was tired and worn. She shook and scolded brother for being so slow. Then the little procession moved off. The babies, the little boy, all dirty, ragged, and barefooted, and the worn mother, with a bag of potatoes between them; all they had. Father was in the war.

### No Potatoes; Go Hungry.

Once I left the market and went with my friend to sit on a street bench nearby. Close to us was a pale, sickly man and his wife and child.

"Have you your potatoes yet?" we inquired. "No," was the reply, "but grandmother is standing in line. It's going to be all right to-night. Last Saturday we waited three hours. Then we hadn't any. They'd given out." "What did you do?" we gasped. Quietly, without bitterness, came the answer: "We went hungry, of course."

Presently we went back to the market. There was still the same line, but the crowd was getting restless. A rumor was afloat that the potatoes were giving out. Women began to talk in angry tones. The crowd was angry. Some women shook their fists.

Then a whisper passed along the line. More potatoes had arrived. A huge wagon full stood outside. Only this word prevented a riot. The crowd settled down; peace came again. Nothing would happen that night. It was 9 o'clock. My friend and I were weary and we left.

The wealthy people do not stand in line. Their servants do this for them. Besides, chickens and birds at high prices are to be had without cards. The egg allowance is one a week. But for the wealthy this also is a farce. I grew egg hungry and demanded two one week, but the waiter was adamant.

In the big cities conditions are worse than in the country. Farmers are expected to pool and sell their supplies of milk, butter, and eggs, but, naturally, they hold back enough for their children. There is no way of knowing how much milk each cow gives each day unless the German army was retired from the field to do the milking and report to the government. Even German organization cannot brook this.

One farmer I discovered greasing the wheels of his wagon with his home-made butter. The price of butter is kept at a fixed rate. Oil was so expensive he couldn't afford it. Soap was not on the card list until late August. Fat had been under control for months, but the government forgot soap was grease. Now one cake a month is the allowance.

I asked the Social Democrats about the food riots. They occurred, I was told, chiefly in the spring when the potatoes gave out. In Hamburg the women ran straight on the soldiers' bayonets in the struggle for food and several were killed. The following day, Sunday, the government had to throw open the Hamburg provision stores and let the people buy to restore peace. Berlin has had several riots. In some cities women have been shot.

"It is quite easy to start rebellion," said a Social Democrat to me. "Several times we went to the market and urged the crowd to riot. But we stopped, for women were put in prison and the children left destitute."

But when there are no potatoes there will be riot. As long as there is food for the children, however inadequate, the women keep quiet. Their hearts are sore, but they dare not rebel. They fear the fate that may befall their husbands at the front if they make trouble. Or, if the husband is wounded, they fear he will not be well cared for. Or they fear their children will be taken from them. But these women when spoken to look wise and say: "Wait until our men come back from the front, then you'll see."

### LETTER No. V.

Miss Doty's fifth article on Germany is written in the vein of the German revolutionists. She was looking for things to criticize and was able to find them.

In the face of official censorship it is not possible to obtain full and accurate news from any beligerent country.

All that can be done is to seek for and print all news obtainable.—Editor Tribune.

I had been in Berlin two weeks. I wanted to see other portions of Germany. I learned there was to be an official tour for journalists. I went to the German press bureau.

"Can I visit some prison camps?" I inquired. "If you allow me and I find they are good I shall be glad to say so."

The young man in charge of the German press is keenly intelligent. He represents the civil authorities—the Von Hollweg group. There is a vast difference between the civil and military authorities. The civil are much more liberal. They are eager to send news to America. I was told of a nine day tour, which included a visit to two prison camps, and was invited to join the expedition.

An intelligent director conducts a group of reporters through the country. All expenses are paid and the journalists feted and feasted. I delayed my departure for a day. It was the moment of the Liebknecht trial, and I wished to be present in case of an uprising. Also by this postponement I avoided the special car assigned to journalists and could pay my own railroad fare to Karlsruhe.

Next day was the Liebknecht trial. No paper announced it, but word had been passed to me by the Social Democrats. That day I was up early. I took a taxi and drove round and round the grim bar racks where Liebknecht was said to be imprisoned. But all was still. No crowd gathered.

Bitterly disappointed by the lack of demonstration, I sought out some social intimate friend. I took two taxis and three trams to elude spies. These radicals were as disappointed as I that nothing had occurred. The factory workers were to have made a protest. A large body was to have gone on strike.

A leaflet stating the time and place for the demonstration was to have been distributed; but the leaflet failed to arrive. A big package reached Berlin, but when opened it contained a soldiers' uniform. The government had gotten wind of the plot and seized the leaflets, substituting the uniform. No one dared make inquiries.

### Munition Workers Strike.

Few people outside of Germany know of the extensive revolt carried on by the radicals. The day of Liebknecht's imprisonment, 5,500 workers in one munition factory alone, just outside Berlin, went on strike for the entire day. There were similar protests throughout the country.

The Liebknecht following grows. The workers more and more flock to his standard to the infinite dissatisfaction of the major wing of the Social Democratic party. The demonstration that caused Liebknecht's arrest will go down in history. Several thousands were gathered in Leipzigerstrasse and Potsdamerplatz. They had come to talk peace. But when Liebknecht appeared a mighty shout went up from a thousand throats, "Hurrah for Liebknecht!"

Liebknecht raised his hand for silence. Then steadily, though knowing the cost, he said: "Do not shout for me, shout rather that we have no more war. We will have peace—now."

### Young Women are Arrested.

Two young women standing near pulled his sleeve. "Don't," they begged, "it means the end for you." But the crowd had taken up the cry. "We will have peace now!" It went echoing down the