

BEST STORIES OF THE BIG WAR; INCIDENTS OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Dramatic Scenes Along the Firing Line—Conspicuous Acts of Heroism.

Side Lights In the News That Touch Many Sides of the Human Emotions.

ANY a paragraph in the news from the European war zone is a story in itself. Some of the best of these side lights in the armed conflict of nations are given herewith. They include stirring deeds of heroism on the battlefield and unusual incidents.

A letter to the king of the Belgians written by General Leman, the heroic Belgian commander of the Liege forts, just after he was taken prisoner has been made public. Referring to the destruction of Fort Loncin, General Leman wrote:

"That I did not lose my life in that catastrophe is due to my escort, who drew me from a stronghold while I was being suffocated by gas from exploded powder. I was conveyed to a trench, where I fell. A German captain gave me a drink, and I was made a prisoner and taken to Liege. I would willingly have given my life, but death was not granted to me."

"Noise Was Infernal."

Quoting from a letter received from a French officer, a Bordeaux correspondent tells how a French cavalry division held in check two German corps for twenty-four hours:

"When the Germans were advancing from the north we were ordered to hold a certain village at all costs with a few quick firing guns and cavalry. It was a heroic enterprise, but we succeeded."

"The German attack began in the morning. A terrific bombardment was maintained all day. Shells destroyed every building, and the noise was infernal. We had to scream and shout all orders. The church tower was struck by a shell at the stroke of midnight and collapsed."

"Early in the morning we retreated under a hail of shells after mowing down masses of German infantry. We gave our army in the rear a whole day's rest, and our exploit is mentioned in many orders as a historic rear guard defensive action."

Decorated on Battlefield.

The bravery of a wounded young French officer, Albert Palaphy, on the field of battle won for him the Legion of Honor. As a corporal of the Tenth dragons at the beginning of the war Palaphy took part in a recent fight with the Germans. In the thick of the battle, finding his colonel wounded and helpless, he rushed to his aid, hoisted him upon his shoulders and under a rain of machine gun bullets carried him safely to the French lines. The same day Palaphy was promoted to be a sergeant.

Soon afterward, although wounded, he distinguished himself in another affair, leading a charge of his squad against the Baden guard, whose standard he himself captured. Wounded by a ball which had pierced through the lower part of his stomach and covered with lance thrusts, he was removed from the battlefield during the night and learned that he had been promoted to be a sublieutenant and nominated to be chevalier in the Legion of Honor.

This incident of decorating a soldier on the battlefield recalls Napoleonic times.

A Boy Scout Wonder.

The hero of Belgium is a boy scout, Laysen, decorated by King Albert for his valor and devotion to his country.

This young man, who was born at Liege, is described by Le Figaro as of almost uncanny sharpness, with senses and perceptions as keen as a savage. He was able to find his way through the woods and pass the sentinels of the enemy with unerring accuracy.

Laysen made his way through the German lines from Antwerp for the tenth time, carrying dispatches to secret representatives of the Belgian government in Brussels. He has discovered eleven German spies in Belgium and performed a variety of other services and all without impairing his boyish simplicity.

Thrice Shot, Dug Refuge.

A remarkable story of a soldier caught in a trap amid a rain of bullets, who dug his way to safety with his bayonet, was told in a hospital at Petrograd.

"A body of Russian troops was lured into the open through the flying of a white flag," the soldier said, "when the bullets began to rain upon us. There was no cover in sight, and I began to dig a hole with my bayonet. Either it would be my grave or my protection from the rifle fire. One bullet hit me, but I continued to dig. A second bullet hit me.

"The hole was half finished when a third bullet struck me in the leg. Finally I finished the hole and tumbled into it just as a fourth shot hit my other leg. I became unconscious and remember nothing more until I woke up here."

A German Officer's Diary.

A Rouen correspondent has obtained possession of the diary of a German officer, who surrendered to a party of stragglers, and quotes the following from it:

"Aug. 5.—Our losses today before Liege have been frightful. Never

mind: it is all allowed for. Besides, the fallen are only Polish beginners, the spilling of whose blood will spread the war lust at home—a necessary factor.

"Aug. 11.—And now for the English. Tonight William the Greater has given us beautiful advice: 'You think each day of your emperor. Do not forget God.' His majesty should remember that thinking of him we think of God, for is he not the Almighty's representative in this glorious fight for the right?"

"Aug. 12.—This is clearly to be an artillery war. As we foresaw, the infantry counts for nothing.

"Aug. 14.—Every night now a chapter of the war of 1870 is read to us. What a great notion! But is it necessary?"

"Aug. 15.—We are on the frontier. Why do we wait? Has Russia really dared to invade us?"

"Showers of Falling Stars."

Speaking of the fighting on the Marne, a French sergeant said: "I began to count the dead, but soon found that impossible. I suddenly heard a great shout and saw a sight that made my heart stand still.

"Our cavalry were charging down on the enemy's cavalry in the bright sunshine. Their lances and sabers looked like showers of falling stars. There was an avalanche of men and horses and cold steel.

"Huge gaps were torn in the enemy's ranks. German horsemen seemed to vanish into the earth. There can, I believe, be no doubt that the tide then turned in our favor."

Swarmed Like Ants.

"The more we killed the more they seemed to become," said an officer who described some of the earlier phases of the battle. "They swarmed like ants, coming on in masses, though rarely seeking close contact, for they learned to respect our rifles and bayonets. On this point there is unprejudiced testimony.

"A noncommissioned officer of the hussars asked me to translate a letter he found on a German officer who was killed while defending his battery. In the letter are these sentences: 'German infantry and cavalry will not attack the English infantry and cavalry at close quarters. Their fire is murderous. The only way to attack them is with artillery.'

Caress Seized Horses.

That sorrowful as are the partings between husbands and wives and parents and children in the countries involved in the great war, the separation of peasants from the dumb brutes that have served them long and faithfully and which are commandeered for the armies is almost as touching to watch, is the declaration of a Washington woman who has recently returned to her home. She was in Germany en route to Munich when war was declared, and all through her journeyings in the Kaiser's dominions she witnessed what were evidently real bereavements of this kind.

"I saw stolid appearing peasants," she said, "leading to the depots the sleek farm horses which had been the means of making their little farms prosper and which, in many cases, were the pets of the family. After turning them over to the officers in charge, they would still cling to them, rubbing and patting their noses and, in some cases, they would sneak back again later in the day for one more caress and to leave a few lumps of sugar or an especially succulent carrot."

Order of the White Feather.

How the women of England are urging the men to fight for the union Jack is indicated in expedients adopted in several towns recently to shame able-bodied men who have so far not answered the call. At Deal a group of pretty girls distributed white feathers to a crowd of young men, who accepted them jokingly as "favors" and wore them in their buttonholes.

They were greatly discomfited a little later when the town crier announced throughout the city that the men had been "decorated with the order of the White Feather for shirking their duty and failing to respond to the call for defenders of the union Jack."

Ferocious Bayonet Attacks.

The wounded Germans in Paris declare the British have resorted almost exclusively to the steel in the recent fighting. The majority of the Germans admit they have been unable to withstand the ferocity of these attacks. Especially terrifying are reported to be the Irish and Scotch regiments. The rivalry between these two nationalities is acute, and every time that a Scotch column distinguishes itself the Irish can be depended on to attempt to eclipse it at the next opportunity.

Scattered His Kisses.

"A magnificent Gordon Highlander recently attracted attention at the Gare du Nord," telegraphs a correspondent from Paris. "He was in fine humor, although he had been wounded in the side in the fighting on the Marne. He had a sword in his hand which, he explained, he had captured from a ghilan directly after the German had struck

him with it, and he had shot his assailant dead.

"Some women of the French Red Cross on their way to the front caught sight of the Scotchman and hurried up to see if he was badly hurt. An animated conversation followed. The Highlander, anxious to express his gratitude to the French Florence Nightingales, hesitated a moment, then he kissed all of them on the cheeks. The crowd cheered delightedly, and the nurses were not in the least abashed."

Children Wanted to Fight.

A Bourges correspondent says: "Among the spectators acclaiming the French artillery passing through here were four lads, the eldest about thirteen. Several marches later the boys were found in a circle of the troops partaking of the mess.

"They swore to follow until they came in contact with the enemy and to lay down their lives for their country. A collection was immediately raised among the soldiers. The boys were terribly depressed at being compelled to return home afoot, charged with vagabondage under the military law. The magistrate, with tears in his eyes, acquitted them."

Woman Fought in Battle.

Among the wounded arriving at Naisy-le-Sec, France, a town in the department of the Seine and near the Ourcq canal, was a young laundress in a soldier's uniform. She had followed a company of zouaves and had fought alongside of them in the trenches. Her identity was not discovered till she was wounded. Before sending her to the rear the commanding officer complimented her on her bravery.

When fighting was general about Brussels, women of the Belgian capital motored out to watch battles in the cool of the afternoon as unconcernedly as though going to the races.

Child Played Amid Dead.

Here is part of the description of scenes on the battlefields on the banks of the Marne as told to a Paris correspondent by an eyewitness:

"In the blazing sunshine I saw a little boy, son of a Turk—the Turks often bring their wives and children on or near the battlefield. He had a rifle of some wounded soldier which he was hugging in his little arms as if it were a toy. He was perfectly happy surrounded by evidences of death, destruction, suffering and blood. His father was lying wounded in a village close by. The child had strayed away."

Oddities in the News.

The scene is a village on the outskirts of Muelhausen. A lieutenant of German scouts dashes up to the door of the only inn in the village, posts men at the doorway and, entering, seats himself at a deal table.

He draws his saber and places it on the table at his side and orders food.

The village waiter is equal to the occasion. He goes to an outhouse and fetches a hay fork and places it at the other side of the visitor.

"Stop! What does this mean?" roars the lieutenant furiously.

"Why," said the waiter innocently, pointing to the saber, "I thought that was your knife, so I brought you a fork to match."

Prisoners Roped In Bog.

A Petrograd correspondent telegraphs the following: "An engagement at Krinitz, between Lublin and Kholm, where the Austrians lost about 6,000 prisoners and several guns, was decided by a bayonet charge. The Austrians got entangled in a bog, from which, after their surrender, they had to be extricated with the assistance of ropes."

Every French and English name has disappeared in Berlin, according to cables, the Westminster hotel becoming the Station hotel and the Piccadilly cafe the Vaterland. Clocks in jewelers' windows, formerly registering the hour in each capital of the world, now have paper pasted over the names of London, Paris, St. Petersburg and Brussels.

Fighting in a Fish Pond.

Among dramatic incidents in the recent fighting may be mentioned the grim work at the ancient fish ponds near Ermenonville, France. These ponds are shut in by high trees. Driving the enemy through the woods, a Scotch regiment hustled its foes right into the fish ponds, the Scotchmen jumping in after the Germans up to the middle to finish them in the water.

Slain as He Prods Shirkers.

A young reserve officer who has returned to Paris, relating how he captured the sword of a Bavarian colonel, said:

"When charging the Bavarians I noticed that their colonel was striking his own men with his sword to prevent them from running away. He was so occupied in this that he forgot the approach of the French and was shot dead."

Dogs Fight For Masters.

The Belgian newspaper Patriote tells this story:

A battery of Belgian mitrailleurs was surrounded when their ammunition was exhausted, but the men determined to make a rush with clubbed rifles, using their bayonets as daggers. As everybody familiar with Belgium knows, dogs are everywhere used for light draft, and mitrailer batteries are mostly drawn by fine animals. Seeing their masters roughly treated in a hand to hand fight the dogs joined in so effectually as to enable the gunners to break through.

A soldier carried one of these heroic beasts in his arms, for it had a bullet through its paw, but it did not whine and kept licking the man's hand with its great hot tongue.

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