

The Confessions of a German Deserter

Written by a Prussian Officer Who Participated in the Ravaging and Pillaging of Belgium.

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I went to Aix-la-Chapelle to a hospital. I met many more wounded men who had fought in Belgium. All were of the opinion that the Belgian dead numbered as many civilians as soldiers. Even if the German soldiers who fought in Belgium do not admit the cruelties committed against the Belgians, it cannot be denied that at least 80 per cent of the cruelties known to the world to have been committed in Belgium were only too true.

A young soldier who lay next to me in the hospital told me that his company, during a street fight in Liege, was given orders to kill everybody without discrimination. Systematically, one house after another was set on fire. The inhabitants either fell in the flames or became the victims in the streets to the gun barrels of the German kultur-bearers.

At the time I doubted the words of my neighbor, even though I had seen what German warfare meant. After a few days I was released from the hospital and again restored to my detachment. Partly by auto, partly by foot, I reached my detachment by ten o'clock in the evening. Our transport moved this time over Trier to Luxemburg. The little grand duchy of Luxemburg was overrun entirely by German soldiers. The Germans who had made their homes in Luxemburg had everything taken away from them, especially the farmers, all food, without thought of payment, so that in Luxemburg at this time there was a shortage of food. The people here as well as in Belgium were very friendly, yet they harbored a terrible bitterness against the German government, which had looted its troops like a band of robbers and murderers over their peaceful country.

Belgium and Luxemburg, the two first unhappy victims of the damnable German politics and its drunkenness with power!

That the Luxemburg citizens detested Germany an incident showed me which happened in the village of Mar-moth. We were in a friendly conversation with a Luxemburg farmer. Two officers approached and listened. One officer, a captain, asked the Luxemburg farmer, "What do you think of the war, and of the quickness of Germany? There is only one Germany, isn't there?"

"Yes," replied the farmer. "Thank the Lord."

For those four words the farmer was arrested at once and transported to Germany as a court prisoner. I could never learn what became of him.

The same evening we were transported in automobiles and on the evening of August 20, 1914, we reached our detachment, which was about 35 miles from the Belgian city of Neuve Chateau. The regiment to which I belonged did not take part in any operations after the fall of Liege, but was transported to this part of Belgium. Now I learn for the first time how heavy was the loss in my company in the Liege fighting. We lost 157 men in dead and wounded.

This night we slept in an open field. At five o'clock the next morning we marched again until four o'clock in the afternoon, when we were given a rest.

It was about ten o'clock in the evening when we received orders to advance. We were all ready to proceed when another order came for us to remain at our bivouac overnight. During the night we heard thundering of cannon which became more violent. The battle of Neuve Chateau, which had continued from August 22 to August 24, 1914, had begun.

At four o'clock on the morning of August 22 we resumed our march. At Neuve Chateau the French army had encountered the Fourth German army. First there was, as always, a minor outpost and patrol fighting. By and by larger masses of troops participated, and as we took our part in the battle

on the evening of August 22, the fight had developed into one of the most sanguinary of the world war.

When we arrived the French occupied almost three-quarters of the town. The artillery had set the main part of Neuve Chateau on fire and only the beautiful residence section in the western part of the city escaped at that time. All night long the house-to-house fighting continued, but when at noon of August 23 the city was in German hands the enormous cost to the Germans could finally be determined.

Residences, cellars, streets and sidewalks were heaped with dead and wounded. The houses were in ruins—empty shells, in which hardly anything remained undamaged that was of any real value. Thousands became beggars in one terrible night. Women and children, soldiers and citizens were lying where the pitiless shells and bullets had hurled them from life into death's dark void. True impartiality reigned in the killing. There was a Belgian woman lying next to a Belgian baby which she had borne from house to street. Close by lay a man of uncertain years before an empty house. Both his legs were burned to the knees. His wife lay on his breast and sobbed so pitifully that her grief could not be endured. Most of the dead were entirely or partly burned. The cries of agony of the animals fighting incineration were mixed with the groans and sobbing of the wounded.

But no one had time to bother with them. The French were making another stand outside the city in an open field. As the enemy vacated the town the Germans made an error which cost them hundreds of lives. They had occupied the entire town so quickly that the German artillery which shelled a part of the city did not know of the change in the situation and threw shells into the ranks of the infantry. Finally our soldiers were compelled to give up some of their gains by the pressure of our own as well as the French fire, but regained this ground afterwards. Strangely enough, the residence section previously mentioned had not suffered seriously. All the houses flew the Red Cross and were used as temporary hospitals.

Here it was reported that Belgians mutilated German soldiers. Whether this was true, or only a rumor, similar to others being constantly started by German soldiers, I cannot say, but I do know that on August 24, after the French had retired, it was made known through an army order that German soldiers had been murdered there, and that the German army could not leave the scene of these outrages without first avenging the victims.

It was ordered by the commander of the army to level the remainder of the city and to show no mercy. As we took a short rest from our pursuit of the enemy and looked backward clouds of smoke to the eastward showed that the order had been executed. A remaining battery of artillery had reduced the city to ashes.

The French had made a stand outside the city and resisted to the utmost, but they were outnumbered. It was simply impossible to resist the pressure of the German war machine. When the German columns, with fixed bayonets, attacked to the accompaniment of their blood-curdling yells which, like their steel, penetrated to the bone, they resembled in every respect American Indians going into action, flinging themselves with blood-curdling yells upon their enemies. After a three-hour fight many Frenchmen gave themselves up as prisoners. With uplifted hands they sought mercy.

At last, on the night of August 23 and 24, the enemy's ranks were thrown into confusion and they retired slowly. I was in the first detachment which pursued them. To the right and left of the road, in the field and ditches, were dead and wounded.

The red pantaloons of the French showed brightly on the ground. The field gray of the Germans could hardly be discerned.

The distance between us and the retreating French became greater. Our soldiers became happier over the outcome of the battle and seemed to forget their past hardships. The corpses which filled the roads and ditches were forgotten amid the jokes and songs on every side. The men were already accustomed to the horrors of war to such an extent that they unconcernedly walked over the corpses, not even considering it necessary to make a slight detour.

At noon we halted and were served with dinner from the field kitchens. We were surely hungry enough and our canned soup was eaten with the utmost relish. Many soldiers set their dishes on the bodies of dead horses lying about and ate as gayly as if they were at home at their own tables. The few human corpses near our camp

failed to disturb us. Only water was lacking, and after the dinner our thirst became very acute, even torturous.

We soon marched on, under a burning mid-day sun, the dust of the highway lying thick on our uniforms and skin. Now, no more cheerfulness was evident anywhere. Our thirst became more unbearable and we grew weaker from minute to minute. Many in our ranks fell, unable to go further. Nothing remained for our commander except to halt, as he did not wish to exhaust us all. As a result of this halt we were left considerably in the rear and lost our place among those pursuing the French.

About four o'clock we finally saw before us a village. In the certain expectation of getting water there we quickened our pace. Fugitives and empty munition columns passed us. Among them there was a farm wagon upon which were several civilian prisoners, apparently franc-tireurs. A Catholic priest was among them. He, like the others, had his hands tied behind him with a rope. To our curious questions as to what he had done, we were told that he had incited the farmers to poison the water in the village.

Soon we reached the village and at the first well at which we might have satisfied our thirst we found a sentinel posted. He drove us away with a warning that the water was poisoned.

Disappointed and terribly embittered, the soldiers cursed and gnashed



Cursed and Gnashed Their Teeth.

their teeth. They hurried on to the next well, but everywhere sentinels forbade our taking refreshment.

In an open space in the center of the village was a big well from which there came water clear as crystal that emptied into a big trough. Five soldiers stood guard here to see that no one drank. I was just about to proceed with my comrades when a large part of my company threw themselves like men possessed onto the well. The guards were completely overcome and, greedy as animals, all the men drank. They quenched their thirst, but not one became ill. The priest, as we learned later, was punished because the officers said, the water in every village had been poisoned, and we were told that only by a happy chance had the lives of our soldiers been spared. The God of the Germans had kept true guard. It appeared, but the God of the Belgians was not there to protect his.

In most of the places we passed we were warned not to use the water. This, of course, had the effect of making the soldiers hate the people from whom they could expect only death. In this way the vicious instincts of our men were aroused.

The water, of course, was nowhere poisoned. These lies were told to arouse hatred of the Belgians among our soldiers.

In the evening, at dusk, we reached a village east of the Bertrix. There we found poisoned water also. In the middle of the village we halted and I could see through a front window of a house before which I stood. In a miserable home of a laborer we saw a woman. She clung to her children as if afraid they would be torn away from her. Suddenly a stone as large as a fist was thrown through the window into the room and a little girl was wounded on the right hand.

In this village we were billeted in a barn. With some comrades, I went to the village to buy food. We obtained ham, bread and wine at a farmhouse, but the people refused any payment

because they considered us guests. They only asked that we should not hurt them. We paid them nevertheless for everything, in German money. There, as everywhere else we went, we found the population in mortal terror of us. The people trembled whenever a German soldier entered their home.

(To Be Continued.)

HOUSTON JOINS THE DEVIL DOGS

Traffic Manager for The Shevlin-Hixon Company Leaves on This Evening's Train.

(From Tuesday's Daily.) D. A. Houston, formerly freight and traffic manager for The Shevlin-Hixon Company, has tendered his resignation to the company and joined the Marines and will leave this evening for Mare Island navy yard to commence training.

Mr. Houston was nearly disappointed in his desire to become one of the "devil dogs." Several days ago he appeared at the local recruiting station, 26 O'Kane building, and expressed his desire to enlist. He passed the examination satisfactorily but was compelled to wait several days until a new man could be secured to take his place at the mills.

During this wait, on August 8 the order went out from the war department to accept no more men in any branch of the service. Mr. Houston had about given up his aspirations, when a second order was received by Sergeant Brooks announcing that any men who had previously passed the examination or had before the order was issued expressed an intention of enlisting could still be taken into the service. Upon receipt of this word Sergeant Brooks immediately got in communication with Mr. Houston, with the result that arrangements were made for his leaving tonight.

It's in the Air.

Windblown pollen, carrying the germs that cause hay fever, is abroad in the land. One remedy is known to give relief and comfort from choking, gasping asthma and tormenting hay fever. Foley's Honey and Tar spreads a healing coating on inflamed membranes, stops coughs and colds. Sold everywhere.—Adv.

One cent a word is all a little Want Ad will cost you.

FIRE PROPERTY IN BAD SHAPE

CARLON DISCOVERS MANY NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS IN HIS INVESTIGATION OF THE CITY'S EQUIPMENT.

(From Friday's Daily.) The equipment for the protection of the city in case of fire is even in a more deplorable condition than has been reported to the Commercial club and council, according to T. W. Carlon, who was appointed at the last meeting of the Commercial club to look into the matter of organizing a volunteer fire department in the city.

Mr. Carlon stated this afternoon that he had made a personal investigation of the fire fighting apparatus during the past two days and had found out many things which he did not believe could exist. The chemical truck, now stored at the Modern Garage, is without tires, or nearly so, the ones being used at the present time being in a state of decay where less than 50 pounds of air can be carried without a blow-out. The machine needs oiling and cleaning and other repairs.

Hose conditions were slightly better. There is approximately 1,000 feet of hose available for fire fighting purposes, but much of this is in poor condition, being improperly kept and permitted to dry on the coil.

Hydrants have been found which were full or rocks, probably placed there by mischievous youngsters after the caps had been loosened.

No definite action has yet been taken toward the organization of the department, but it is expected that a joint meeting of the committee and the city council will be held either this week or early next week. At this time it is hoped by the committee that some action can be taken whereby better facilities can be temporarily planned until such time as a fund has been provided for the purchase of adequate equipment.

One cent a word is all a little Want Ad will cost you.

LAKE BED MECCA FOR HAY CROPS

FARMERS IN VICINITY OF SILVER LAKE WILL BE WELL PREPARED FOR THE COMING WINTER MONTHS.

(From Friday's Daily.) There is to be no shortage of hay in the vicinity of Silver Lake during the coming season, according to reports which are being received here from that place. While it is feared that the hay crop in other sections of the country may not be sufficient to feed the stock over winter, Silver Lake farmers will be able to fill a great part of the demand.

The condition which gives Silver Lake an abundance of hay this season is peculiar. For the first time in about 15 years Silver Lake is dry. The water disappeared early last spring and the farmers immediately took advantage of the opportunity afforded them and planted their crops on the lake bed.

The rich soil, caused by the decay of vegetable matter for centuries, has added the planters in fertilizing the crops, and as a result of this some of the greatest hay crops ever taken off the land in that vicinity are being harvested from this season's planting.

Further plans for the feeding of cattle in the valley during the coming winter have also been perfected. Contracts have already been let, it is stated, for feeding several hundred head of stock from the range at various places in the valley, and for this reason there has been no attempt made to ship hay out of this territory.

WALKER DOING WELL ON FARM IN CANADA

(From Tuesday's Daily.)

A. O. Walker, a former Alfalfa man, and well known in Crook and Deschutes counties for his activity in the county division contest, now located at Crossfield, Alberta, Canada, has written to Judge J. A. Eastes of this city stating that he is prospering in his new home. Mr. Walker, with his family, moved to Canada in March, 1918. He purchased 320 acres shortly after his arrival there, and has since been devoting his time to growing crops. In his letter he states that he paid \$12,500 for the farm, but has since refused an offer of \$16,000 for the property.

Mr. Walker remarks about the Canadian boys returning wounded, and expresses the hope that the Yanks will soon be over in sufficient numbers to enable the allies to gain the victory.



Packers' Profits — Large or Small

Packers' profits look big— when the Federal Trade Commission reports that four of them earned \$140,000,000 during the three war years.

Packers' profits look small— When it is explained that this profit was earned on total sales of over four and a half billion dollars—or only about three cents on each dollar of sales.

This is the relation between profits and sales:

Profits ■ Sales ■

If no packer profits had been earned, you could have bought your meat at only a fraction of a cent per pound cheaper?

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