WHAT I SAW IN BERLIN
AND OTHER EUROPEAN CAPITALS DURING WARTIME
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BY

"PIERMARINI"

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NOTE

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WHAT I SAW IN BERLIN AND OTHER EUROPEAN CAPITALS

INTRODUCTORY

The golden days of the war correspondents have long since passed away; the unlimited freedom allowed to newspaper correspondents during the 1870 war, the fact that Germany could know every move, every change of front, even the exact figures of the different contingents of troops, by the simple method of getting the Paris papers, and the many instances during both the Spanish-American and Russo-Japanese Wars, in which supposed war correspondents turned out to be dangerous spies, have made the commanders of the fighting armies extremely
careful; and the war correspondent is kept so far from the firing-line that even if he manages to get near to the front, he is allowed to see practically nothing, and his report is based only on what he can get out of soldiers back from the line of fire.

Moreover, the enormously wide front of the modern battlefield makes it absolutely impossible for the war correspondent to gain anything like an exact idea of what is going on. His work is essentially a work of analysis, analysis of the section in which he moves, but the synthesis of the whole movement is bound to escape his observation.

But though war is undoubtedly decided on the battlefield, it is no less certainly reflected in the life of the capitals of the belligerent nations. As long as hope, money, food, fresh supplies of men and ammunition are forthcoming, a nation retains a normal appearance; but a reverse on the battlefield is almost immediately transmitted throughout the country. Especially in the large towns, where bad news always manages to come
through quickly, one can detect, from a thousand and one signs, to what degree the population has been affected.

We have only to remember how London and Paris looked in September last, and to compare the practically “Business as usual” life of to-day, to appreciate what a sensitive thermometer is the population of a great city.

The task I have essayed during the last five months has been to look at these thermometers with the eye of a doctor—sometimes anxious, sometimes unsympathetic, but always, I trust, impartial. The great capitals of Europe have been the aim of my journeys.

Upon my desk lies a cheap war-map cut from a daily paper. It is scribbled all over with blue pencil marks—marks which represent my wanderings across Europe since the beginning of the war. The atlas I have just consulted tells me I have travelled fifteen thousand miles; fifteen thousand miles of travel, during which time I met continuously new people, people of different tempera-
ments, different nationalities, different religions; but all interested in one subject, and talking about one subject only—the war.

I have visited eight large capitals of European States, lived their lives, felt the intense wave of their sympathies, hates, sorrows, and joys, strong, of course, in a terrible crisis like the present.

From London to Paris, from Berlin to Amsterdam, from Vienna to Brussels, from Rome to Athens and Constantinople, all the European capitals show more or less the effects of the war. Curiously enough, Rome, Amsterdam, and Athens—capitals of States as yet neutral—are among the cities most altered, while least changes are to be seen in the town which has given to the war almost the whole of her adult sons—Berlin.

When one wishes to obtain, during a short visit, as true and as many impressions as possible of a town, the best thing to do is to sit in a café where the literary-journalistic element resorts. In the large room of the Café Royal in London, or under the deer-heads
of the Bauer in Berlin, on the horrid yellow velvet sofas of Aragno in Rome, or on the verandah of the Ianni in Constantinople, the people talk freely. In such places the opinions of the different classes are reduced to a common denomination—public opinion; tongues wag more freely, loosened by the favourite drink, be it whisky and soda, beer, coffee, or sherbet.

London is decidedly optimistic; there is certainly a little apprehension on the score of Zeppelins, and the probability of a lengthy war; but every Briton knows that England will ultimately come out on top.

Amsterdam is, at the present moment, the town of half words and of compromises of all kinds. "We want to please England, our friends, but we wish to avoid trouble with Germany . . ." is a sentence one often hears there.

Paris has given all that she had—her children, her money, and her commerce. She is waiting and hoping, for the memories of 1870 are still fresh.
But Berlin—Berlin is full of astonishment. She was certain that the war would be over and Paris taken in less than a month. She does not yet admit that the campaign is going badly, but she is very much surprised that her carefully prepared military machine has not worked perfectly.

Rome watches the war with almost morbid interest, as a woman of Madrid watches a bull-fight. She is aching to do something; she wants to follow the call of her strong sympathies, of her still stronger hates, and to break off the neutrality her diplomats have imposed upon her. Everywhere a word of hope is repeated, full of promise and of menace—"To Trieste, soon!"

Athens is waking to something of her old spirit now heroic times have come again. She is confident in her clever diplomats, and already regards Southern Albania as an essential part of Greece.

Vienna has long since begun to feel the grip of famine, defeat, and, what is worse, political dissolution. With her shops closed,
her darkness, her beggars with the real accent of hunger in their tones, the town is even more sad than Brussels, that capital which is no longer a capital, that beautiful city which had to shelter in her best palaces all the bureaucrats and military cohorts of the invaders, but which still has ideals and a beloved king, and looks full of hope at her sons and her friends fighting in the near west. Brussels waits the day of resurrection.

As for Constantinople, the town is displaying truly Oriental fatalism. "The Germans took the trouble to give us money, to organise our army, to augment our navy, and we hope that everything goes well. If not—the sky will be blue all the same, the figs will ripen at the right season as they did before, the world will not have changed."

Thus might speak the Turk if he troubled himself to speak at all: but he is silent. All the talking there is done by the Germans.

A curiosity of the war is the way the street
crowds have altered in composition in the different capitals.

In London there are the refugees, dressed in clothes of all shapes, colours, and dimensions, the special constables, and the crowds of recruits. In Paris—patriotic Paris—one meets many crippled people, for almost every other man not wearing a uniform has a physical deformity. In the Paris underground, at the Metropolitan Railway Station, a new figure, a sympathetic and admirable figure, has appeared: the woman who works while her husband is at the front. Often she has babies clinging to her skirt as she pierces your railway ticket.

Brussels is overrun by German uniforms; Vienna by refugees from Galicia; Rome by continuous pro-war demonstrations; Constantinople by any amount of Germans, and also by a curious class of Turco-German official who is, for the moment, the real master of the situation.

My journeys will be found in this book in their chronological order, but before I start
the record of my war-time travels I should like to set down a conversation I had at Craig-Avon, near Belfast, in April, 1914.

One of the officers of the Ulster Army had just taken me round the camp and shown me everything: the new uniforms, the guns, the commissariat and sanitary arrangements, the men at drill and at play.

We were sitting in the lofty winter-garden of Craig-Avon, and beside our charming host—Captain Craig—Sir Edward Carson, the Archbishop of Belfast, and a few officers of H.M.S. *Pathfinder*, which was anchored off Carrickfergus, were present.

We talked about the situation, and about the organisation of the new troops, and I remember asking Sir Edward Carson the question, "Do you think all this preparation indispensable? Do you think there will ever be any actual fighting?"

"There will be, if we cannot obtain what we want without fighting," came the answer. "In any case, we are training here some jolly good troops, and it is always better for a
nation to have trained than untrained men. England will know where to find a few thousand good soldiers in case of need," he concluded smiling.

Then a young officer, wearing the blue naval uniform, said in a light voice, probably for the sake of saying something, "And she will probably need them sooner than any of us think."

The old tradition that the gift of prophecy brings misfortune to the prophet, as it did to the unfortunate Cassandra, has been fulfilled. The young officer went down with his ship, the Pathfinder, without the consolation even of having fought for his country.
CHAPTER I

MY FIRST WAR-TIME JOURNEY TO BERLIN

Since the war broke out I have visited Berlin twice; the first time at the beginning of October, the second at the end of December, 1914. It was my intention to compare in these pages the different impressions I received in the German capital during my two visits, the second made less than three months after the first; but now I see that this would almost completely destroy the sensation of sincerity and freshness, realised only when one is able to write immediately after having visited a country.

My readers will easily see how the last three months have changed the German
capital, by reading after this chapter the one entitled "My Second War-time Journey to Berlin."

The following journal has been written partly on board the small steamer which brought me from Amsterdam back to England, and partly immediately after my return to Great Britain.

* * *

October 10th.

"Your nationality?"
"Italian."
"Where do you come from?"
"Berlin."

The fatherly-looking Custom House officer who was examining our passports dropped his glasses and looked at me in astonishment. "And what were you doing in Berlin?" he asked, after a moment's pause.

"Just a pleasure trip," was the answer, which perhaps did not satisfy him completely.

He looked again at the passport, which was in perfect order, at the half-a-dozen seals, signatures, and Consulate stencils, Italian,
IN BERLIN

Dutch, and German, which have occupied, during the last two weeks almost all the room left for the purpose on the dirty-looking, official piece of paper, and concluded philosophically, giving it back to me: "After all, some folk have got curious hobbies."

Well, I really don't know if to go to Berlin from England in war time just to know what's going on is a curious hobby or not. But, when two weeks ago I read in some London newspaper wonderful stories of starvation and symptoms of panic in the German capital, and in some others that things in Berlin were going on just as usual, I thought the only way to know the truth about it was to go there myself.

I was warned that I should get into trouble, be arrested, kept prisoner, treated as a spy, etc., and the few persons who knew of my journey thought it was a very foolish thing to do. As a matter of fact, the trip was carried out without much difficulty.

Here is a summary of it: three days from London to Berlin (arrested once at Goch, a
German frontier town, and once at Hanover); three days in Berlin (had to report to the police every morning and was arrested twice); three days from Berlin to Amsterdam, the only exciting diversion being a short arrest at Stendal. I would not exactly recommend an elderly lady to leave her easy chair in her Kensington sitting-room to start off on such a journey. But I enjoyed every moment of the trip.

"What is then the present condition of Berlin? Did you find out the truth about what's going on there?" Everybody keeps asking me these questions.

The answer cannot be given in a few words. Berlin, on the surface, is as usual; the life did not appear to me at first sight much different from what I saw during my last visit four years ago. London has changed her habits more on account of the war than Berlin.

The theatres in the German capital are mostly open, the crowds in the street do not look much different from the peace-time crowds, the food-stuff prices are very little
higher than usual. The women driving taxicabs, the starving queue outside the butchers' shops in the morning, and the potatoes sold at high price—these exist only in the dreams of newspaper correspondents.

Everything seems pretty normal. The enthusiasm for the Emperor, for the Army, for the Fatherland is as strong as ever. The confidence of the people, fed on false news, on fantastic reports, on gigantic illusions, is unbounded. These people have a keen relish and delight in the fact, as they admit at once, that the whole world is against them; they seem to be proud of their isolation and despise infinitely their only allies, the Austrians.

One hears in the street people talking like this: "We are bound to win; it is fatal and it is ridiculous to see a few decrepit nations trying to stop God's Will," or "We are the only race of dictators; we will have the whole world at our feet and impose our laws on every nation"; and very often this more simple and utilitarian, "When I will be able
to get a concession for a maize plantation in Algeria . . ." or "When, next year, we shall start ostrich farming in South Africa," . . . etc.

Most of the people I met in Berlin willingly admitted that the methods of war of their troops in Belgium and France were very wrong, but they invariably concluded: "If this is the only way to give Germany her definite position of queen of the world, you perfectly understand that the life of a few thousand men, the pillage of a few cities, the tears of a few women, cannot be an obstacle worth considering."

They don't admit for a moment that success will perhaps not crown and, to a certain extent, justify their deeds; they don't consider the possibility of disaster. If they have the worst of the struggle it will certainly not be for lack of self-confidence.

Only the military circles seem to realise fully how terribly strong is the enemy Germany is fighting, and how very small are her chances in the long run. But they keep their
sentiments and feelings as secret as possible, and, helped by their wonderfully organised Press, they manage to keep alive the Berlin public’s illusions.

During my short stay in Berlin, thanks to a few acquaintances in the military world and to a fair knowledge of the German language, I managed to mix with different classes of people, from the man in the street to the officers of the cavalry regiment still in Berlin for the drill of the 1914-15 recruits; from a very well-known writer on military science to the working people unemployed on account of the war crisis.

* * *

At about nine o’clock on the morning after my arrival I woke up still tired after a late night in the gayest circles of Berlin. I had been to one of the numerous cabarets, which are the equivalent in Berlin of the London night club. The gay life of the German capital was being carried on just as in peace time. Students, officers, viveurs, and the indispensable feminine element, among which
the French was, as usual, much in evidence (Dumas used to say, "Le demi-monde n'a pas de patrie!")], were crowding into the large, brightly-lighted rococo room, trying hard to dance one-steps and maxixes with the latest Paris or London swing.

I was looking at my Baedeker map, trying to refresh my memory of Berlin topography, when the waiter shouted at the door, "Ein Herr wünscht Sie zu sprechen!" I did not know who the early visitor could be, so I finished dressing as quickly as possible, and went out into the corridor.

A man was standing there waiting for me; he stepped in without saying a word, and, when in the room, asked me where I came from and what my business was in Berlin. I showed him my passport. He said he would see to that afterwards; meanwhile he had to examine my luggage.

The man, I knew later on, was a police-inspector; he looked at all I had with me, and copied into a pocket-book my address and the address of my tailor, which he dis-
covered on a small piece of white silk inside the breast pocket of one of my jackets. He then took possession of a few very innocent papers and letters, and looked underneath the lining of my hat, opened the alarm clock to see if something was concealed in the case, and was very much puzzled by a black box, which he opened most carefully, with the result that he found a manicure set.

Then he asked me to follow him to the police station. A taxi was waiting, and we reached the sombre building after a long drive. There I had to undergo a second cross-examination. I was asked to give all the references I could in Berlin, and after three hours' detention, I was finally released, having promised to report myself every morning to the police-station, and not to leave the Kaiserhof Hotel without letting them know about it.

I must say that the Police Commissair behaved quite decently, and apologised for the trouble he was forced to give me. He even offered me a bad cigar and a worse cup
of coffee, which I couldn't refuse, and for which I was certainly more annoyed with him than for the arrest itself.

I stepped out of the decrepit building and found myself in a narrow, tortuous street of old Berlin, without the slightest idea of the direction I had to go to reach the modern part of the city.

After some wandering in narrow streets and irregular squares, which reminded me of some old Flemish town much more than of modern Berlin, I was lucky enough to find a taxi to drive to the post office. I began to ring up some of my old friends in Berlin. In four cases I was unlucky; three were at the front; one had gone to America last year, and though called to arms could not, or did not, trouble to come back. My fifth call was for a lieutenant friend in a cavalry regiment. I had not seen him for years. His sister answered the call, and when I asked for Otto she said, "Why, don't you know he is in hospital? He has been wounded in Belgium, and has been back over five weeks now."
She offered to take me to see him in an hour's time, and so it was that I managed to get into a German military hospital. I lunched in a large restaurant, in which the places of the waiters called to the colours had been taken by Kellerinnen. To judge from the food I had the cook's place must have been taken by a shoemaker.

I was rather surprised to find that the hospital was a luxurious private house. I learned afterwards that the proprietor, a wealthy officer, had equipped it as an emergency nursing home for officers, and offered it to the Government. There was no difficulty in being admitted, as my friend was quite out of danger, his wounds being a light one in the face and a serious one in the knee-cap. The little white camp beds were arranged in two lines on both sides of a large sitting-room. The nurses were ladies of the best Berlin society, and seemed to add to the skill of a perfect nurse the tactful ways of a lady of quality.

After the natural surprise of my friend at
our meeting in such extraordinary circumstances, he told me how he had been wounded at the very beginning of the campaign, practically without being able to do any fighting. He said that the Germans only realised that they would have to fight in Belgium when they were already on Belgian soil. The cavalry, marching in front without any artillery support, received the most serious shock. The German Government was so sure that the intimidation of Belgium would be successful that the siege guns had been sent in the direction of the French frontier.

I asked him what he thought of the position of his country at the present moment. He smiled sadly and said:

"Here, in the hospital, we only know what the newspapers say; and, of course, they are very optimistic. We officers know perfectly what our forces and the forces of our enemies are. It is certain that we are going to struggle to the very last. You know how I, personally, love France; but, of course, I
will go to fight again as soon as I am better—if I am ever in condition to fight.”

He said this sadly, showing me his leg, which perhaps will be crippled for ever. And he concluded in French, the language we used to speak at a time we both thought an officer was only a kind of sportsman who wore a uniform. “Enfin même si c’est un suicide il faut l’faire et on va l’faire!” He gave me some introductions to officers still in Berlin, and we parted; our last word was au revoir.

Where and when we shall meet again, what our country will be then, the blood of how many thousand men will be wasted before that day is in the hands of a mysterious future.

* * *

I devoted the rest of my afternoon to a long walk through the town.

Processions of unemployed like we used to see during the great coal strike in some cities in the North of England were coming from the east part of the town. Women and children were in very large numbers, but there
was also any number of men, old, crippled, or somehow unfit for military service. Unemployment is really the most striking symptom of the war in Berlin.

Many manufacturers have had to stop their works owing to the lack of raw material. The wool, silk, leather, and cotton industries are almost completely paralysed. Other works have been stopped because Germany cannot get any fuel. All the reserves of coal have been taken up by the Government for naval and military purposes. Also the toy, furnishing, and fancy trades have had to be completely stopped, as there are no customers for such goods.

Under the patronage of Kronprinzessin Cecilie, who, by the way, is very popular during this war, a movement has been started to assist the unemployed. But the crowd of out-of-works seems to increase daily, and the twenty thousand free dinners given away every afternoon by the relief committee don't seem enough for the innocent victims of the war.
Down the endless Friedrichstrasse I saw a company of a few hundred boys still in civilian clothes, marching stiffly, and trying to keep the compass-like Prussian step. Officers and sergeants in uniform were with them. Some of the recruits did not look more than fifteen or sixteen. Most of them, with large gold or tortoiseshell spectacles, represented the classical type of the German Gymnasium and Lyceum.

The crowd cheered the boys, and they marched away as stiff as possible, without even turning their eyes to the people in the street. An old man explained to me that they were boys a few months short of seventeen, who want to be perfectly ready when, in February, they will be accepted in the army as volunteers. There are apparently over fifty thousand boys of this class, who intend to volunteer as soon as the military authorities will allow them to do so.

To get out of the Sunday crowd I walked along the Spree. Here is one of the largest barracks in Berlin. I wonder how many men
of the Kaiser Alexander Garde Grenadiers will come back to their beautiful home. It seems to have been one of the regiments most severely cut up in France lately.

On a large poster at the corner of Eberts Brucke, amongst many affiches of music-halls, boot polish, and tooth paste, I read the announcement of a special evening service and sermon at the cathedral at five o'clock.

I walked down to the Lustgarten, just in time for the service.

The large church was full of people. The crowd of over two thousand perhaps was chiefly composed of women and old men. I noticed that an extraordinary number were in mourning.

The dark crowd contrasted curiously with the aggressive bright gold of the dome lighted by a number of electric lamps.

The minister began his sermon. As I was right at the back of the church I missed at first most of his words, but, little by little, I began to understand better.

"We don't know how many of our sons
have lost their lives up to now,” he said, “but be sure that they have found the way which leads straight to eternal happiness. He who dies in war for his country and for the Kaiser is certain of the sight of God. The Lord has put a sword in the hands of our Kaiser. He knows where and how to strike in this war. Glory on our sons who have died; they died like heroes, all of them, and every mother, every sister, every wife, must be proud to have lost the man they love in such a noble way. Be sure that our soldiers have never done anything less than noble. They are fighting in a treacherous country, but they are fighting for a right, holy cause, and they are bound to win.

I felt like shouting at him: “Malines, Rheims, Louvaine, Termonde! What do you say of these? Is that the way the favourites of God should fight! Is that the way to fight for civilisation?”

I could not stand it any more, and walked out. In front of me was the Schloss-Brücke, with huge groups illustrating the education,
life, and glorification of the warrior. This is one of the many proofs of how Germany has been preparing her children for war for generations and generations. I thought of the sentence, "The war into which we have been driven," I had just heard from the priest's lips, and I wondered if that man of God, in the House of God, was lying, knowing that he did so, or if he, too, was simply consumed utterly by the mad wave of military exaltation which seemed to have covered the whole of Germany.

* * *

Sitting round a large corner table at the Café Fürstenhof with huge glasses of beer in front of us and a good after-dinner cigar, the reticence of the two officers who were in my company melted away slowly. Even the latest German atrocities will not make me deny the wonderful convivial effect of a large glass of blonde cervogie.

"Spies!" said one of the two young fellows, who looked like bursting out of his tight green-grey tunic every time he laughed.
“Why should we worry about spies? All the men and women, especially women, who were supposed to be spying for Russia in Germany and Austria were playing a double game.

“Russia was persuaded they were spying for her, and they were spying for us instead. A few useless and fantastic reports sent to St. Petersburg were good enough to put them in the confidence of generals and archdukes, and so they could get for us very important secrets. France never had a proper secret service worth talking about, and the few attempts of England in this direction were so clumsily done that it was really pathetic to see how the poor chaps got into trouble for sending home information and plans they could easily have copied from railway maps and tourist books.”

We are the only nation on earth who know how to organise a secret service!”

“You seem most proud of your spies,” I remarked.

“Spies is a very ridiculous word; Napoleon used to have spies; we have informants.
They mix with all classes of society; they manage to get everywhere, from the Royal Palace to the small country shop, from the barracks canteen to the Premier's house.

"Be certain that nine-tenths of those who have been arrested as our emissaries in France, England, and Russia, have nothing to do with it, and that most of the real ones are still doing their job, and doing it jolly well too.

"We know everything that happens in England," he continued, after swallowing half his glass of beer. "We know the exact number and destination of the troops sent from Britain to the Continent; we know of everyone who goes in or out of England, and also of his business and of his intentions."

"Oh, do you?" I could not help exclaiming, and I nearly burst out laughing.

"Yes, we do," he continued with unshakable assurance. "For instance, we know that Lord Kitchener is struggling to raise his Army; that London is in darkness for fear of the Zeppelins; that the King and the Royal
Family have left Buckingham Palace for a small private house, afraid of bomb-dropping.

"It is really very childish of the British authorities to think that we shall send a lonely airship to drop a few bombs on London. They would not do much harm, and they would produce a panic, with the result that Kitchener would, perhaps, get on better with his recruiting. We know perfectly the Englishmen and their quiet nature. They are still asleep and it would be very foolish of us to wake them up."

The night was wonderfully fine; the Tiergarten, which we reached in a few minutes, was full of light, and of couples of lovers.

We walked up the Sieges Allee, spoiled by a childish decorative scheme of the Kaiser himself, with a multitude of marble benches and statues, and we reached the Königs Platz.

"Those are the men we need now. They were the right men in the right place," exclaimed one of my companions, pointing to the statues of Bismarck and Moltke at the two ends of the square.
"Yes, but thank the Lord you don’t have them," was my mental answer.

* * *

A military band wakes me up with the eternal sound of "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles," and does not leave me for a second the illusion of being in a friendly town.

The clumsy furniture of my large bedroom at the Kaiserhof Hotel, and the sight of the intensely German-looking front of the house which bounds my horizon at the other side of the Wilhelmplatz, make me realise that I am in Berlin, right in the heart of the great monster who is lacerating Europe with his steel talons from east to west.

I am seized by a sort of fever. I want to see straight away how the war has changed these Germans, among whom I have many friends, in peace time excellent organisers of commercial enterprises as merchants, as scientists, even as soldiers, but soldiers whose chivalry, as I thought then, seemed to transcend the natural grimness of the soldier.
I dress as quickly as possible. Leaving the hotel, I walk right along the Wilhelmstrasse, full of busy people. I am now in Unter den Linden.

Flags are hanging from every balcony; others wave at the top of the high masts which crown the gigantic commercial buildings; many shops display draperies with the national colours and the clawed black eagle is everywhere—on the cap of the messenger boy and at the breast of the lady, on the banner which dominates the corner turret of the Bauer Café, and on the silk handkerchiefs in the shop windows.

The Austrian colours are completely ignored. I have not seen a single Austrian flag during the whole of my stay in Berlin, and it is really curious the Olympic indifference the Prussians affect towards their ally—Germany's only friend.

A German officer whom I met later on declared to me candidly that he considered that the Austrians as allies were a drawback rather than a help.
Companies of soldiers come out from Luisenstrasse following the drums; other troops march along the Charlottenburg Chaussée through the Brandenburger Tor, on which, gilded by rays of the sun, is the Quadriga of Victory, by G. Schadow. I recollect that exactly a hundred years ago, in 1814, the heavy brass group was taken back to Berlin from Paris after seven years at the top of the arch of the Champ Elysées. How soon before its next trip to Paris?

Near one of the side colonnades a gentleman standing on a chair shouts the latest war news through a megaphone to a crowd of listeners. Everybody is anxious for news of Antwerp, because I understood it was clearly realised when that city capitulated or was taken by the Germans the besieging army would be released. Then on to Paris!

At the Pariser Platz I see wounded officers being taken into the large private houses which are used as Red Cross hospitals, and a large crowd receives them with sympathetic cheers.
One of the most remarkable things in Berlin is the number of private houses, hotels, and museums turned into hospitals; and the conclusion I came to is that the British estimates of the number of German casualties are not at all exaggerated. Berlin is a city of wounded and distressed, gay as it is on the surface; only the authorities are careful to keep this fact as dark as possible. No official list of dead and wounded is issued, and the families are generally told by means of printed letters that Hans or Fritz will not come back.

Some papers started at the beginning of the war to give lists of dead officers and men, which they drew up by means of private inquiry. Now this has been stopped, and only now and again do the papers talk of the glorious death of Captain or Lieutenant So-and-so.

The censorship in Berlin is much more strict than in London. Some newspapers have disappeared; some have reduced their dimensions; others, that tried to be coherent...
with their past political ideas, have been boycotted even by the section of the public which used formerly to support them.

For instance, to read *Vorwaerts* in public in Berlin is an action which requires a certain amount of heroism. The newspaper which in the last two months has been suppressed three times by the Censor, and three times allowed to appear again on the promise of good behaviour, is almost the only one which shows any independence of the military Press office, and dares to tell news other than optimistic to the Berlin public.

Wishing to read something fairly truthful about the war, I was scanning this newspaper while riding in a tramcar on my way to the War Fund garden party, which was, at the moment, the great attraction of all Berlin.

An elderly gentleman, sitting opposite me, after looking suspiciously for a long while at the paper and at myself, addressed me with this extraordinary remark: "To be a Socialist at the present moment is to be an enemy of the Fatherland. You should be
ashamed to read a paper like that when you
should be fighting for the country."

I answered that I read what I liked best
and that he need not worry— I would gladly
fight for my country as soon as she was at
war. When the old man heard I was an
Italian he commenced, tactless as only a
German can be when he is of the tactless sort,
a long talk about the treacherous politics of
Italy, the punishment Germany is going to
give her, and other similar nonsense.

I got out of the car to avoid a useless
dispute, and entered the large courtyard
of a sumptuous private residence in which
the garden party was being held.

All that Berlin has left in the way of
Society was there, chic little ladies dressed
in the French style, drinking Russian tea,
lounging about or sitting at small tables in
true English fashion. Without a doubt, this
is the ideal setting for a garden party in
favour of the German War Fund!

A smart young girl came towards me and
put a small silk flag in my buttonhole—a
German flag, of course; I had to give her a ten-marks note for it, as other people at my side had just done.

Of all the little sins I had to commit to carry out successfully my Berlin trip, indispensable white lies, and misleading silences, the one which I have the most on my conscience is certainly the contribution of ten marks to the German War Fund!

Through a wide arch we passed from the courtyard into a fairly large garden, in which different tents had been erected for the sale of flowers, small china pieces, and all the other useless, ugly little things one is prepared to buy at a charity bazaar. The picture postcard stall specially attracted my attention, as most of the cards referred to the war. I got a large selection of masterpieces of bad taste, cheap symbolism, and antediluvian humour.

I carefully kept far from the buvette in which the Princess of Thurn and Taxis was selling by auction glasses of Moselle wine at fantastic prices. One of the officers in my
company the previous night bumped into me while trying to escape from a persistent flower girl.

He was the man so well informed about London life in war time, and as he, too, seemed to consider the garden party a very dangerous social function (probably from different motives from my own) we left of common accord without being caught again.

He gave me some news about the war, and said Antwerp was about to capitulate.

"We shall get into the town in one or two days," he said. "It is the intention of the Kaiser to occupy the whole of Belgium and to advance on the north coast of France, so as to cut the usual lines of communication with England." He said also that the official reports from the eastern theatres of operation were very satisfactory (for Germany), and concluded: "The Russians don't trouble very much about us; their main objects are the southern Austrian provinces and, if possible, Turkey."

We sat down in an old-fashioned café,
celebrated in all Berlin for its excellent "Weiss-bier," the old all-Prussian drink stuff which is going quite out of fashion and is now obtainable in very few restaurants. Huge piles of newspapers and reviews were laid on a large table in the centre of the room, as in every café in Berlin. The foreign publications, generally very largely represented, were reduced to a few soiled issues two months old. People sitting round the centre table were enjoying and laughing loudly at the jokes of the humorous German and Austrian papers.

The dominant note in the caricature is the monotonous repetition of a few coarse, common figures—the drunken Russian loaded with stolen loot, the tall, thin, red-haired English soldier, who cares only for the pay he gets; the sloppily-dressed Frenchman, who talks much and does nothing. Kitchener, Poincaré, and Joffre seem pet subjects, and they appear dressed in all possible clothes over and over again in monotonous succession.
One of *Ulk*'s last issues was almost entirely devoted to Kitchener and to his recruiting scheme.

Some of the drawings are really clever and bear the signature of well-known artists, but the rest of these papers do not seem humorous even to the Germans themselves.

"They really don't know what to say," explained my companion. "All the possible subjects of humour about our enemies have been exhausted long ago, and even our best comic artists are forced to repeat themselves."

"Do you believe in this 'dum-dum' story?" I asked, showing him a drawing representing a French and an English soldier preparing the murderous bullets, and, at the back of them, Death looking very pleased at this sight.

"Well, 'dum-dum' stories take wonderfully well with the public. People simply adore to hear that the enemy are using illicit methods of warfare. In mediæval times they used to say that the enemy had the help of the evil power, or a magic sword, or some-
thing else of the kind. In modern times 'dum-dums' are a wonderful survival of the old tales. Why not give dum-dum stories to the public if they like them?"

"But do you think 'dum-dums' have really been used?" I asked.

"No, they are cruel and of no use at all. The 'dum-dum' bullets to be effective must be of fairly large size, and we cannot use anything of the kind with our modern rifles. In military circles we don't attach any importance to these rumours. In all the wars of the last fifty years the 'dum-dum' legend had a resurrection like the Arab phoenix."

"But I have seen photos of 'dum-dum' bullets," I insisted.

"So have I, but who can tell that the bullets have only been made 'dum-dum' after the cartridges have been served out? A soldier may individually, without any officer telling him to do so, cut with his pocket-knife across the part of the bullet which protrudes from the brass part of the cartridge. The result is not that of a real
‘dum-dum,’ of course, but it is quite a good imitation. In a case like this the Government to which the individual soldier belongs cannot be called responsible for the violation of the Hague Convention.”

We walked out, as he had to get back to the barracks. I had no programme for the rest of the afternoon. I walked straight on and found myself in the Linden.

I noticed that the few shops of English firms in Berlin were closed, as were also the agencies of British ship companies.

The first night of a great military drama was announced for the evening, and curious little carriages covered by a sort of large square box with the sandwich man completely concealed inside, showed large posters with scenes of the drama. One exhibited a wonderful allegoric picture with a bulldog, a bear, and a cock transfixed by the large sword with which they had been killed. Needless to say, on the top of it was a large Prussian eagle.

The crowd of shoppers and idlers was
going mostly towards the Schloss Brücke, and having nothing better to do I followed the current of the people.

In the Lustgarten a large crowd was waiting with an expectant air, gazing at the central balcony overhanging the main entrance of the Schloss. Before I had time to ask the reason of the excitement, one of the French windows was opened by valets, and a tall lady, accompanied by three children, dressed in white, came out and bowed smilingly to the crowd.

An enormous cheer received the Kronprinzessin. After remaining on the balcony for a few minutes, during which she repeatedly bowed and kissed the fair head of her eldest son, she retired, loud cheers being again raised.

I asked the reason of the demonstration, shivering at the idea that a big success had been obtained by the German and that this was the way the Berlin population expressed loyalty to its rulers.

"Why, she appears every afternoon!" I
was told. "A crowd comes here every day at four o'clock. It has been so since the beginning of the war."

"Even when the war news was not very good?" I asked.

"The news has always been very good," said my informant in a contemptuous tone, and away he walked, disgusted at my disrespectful remark.

The crowd had now melted away slowly, and the Lustgarten had resumed its air of aristocratic calm. In front of me was the huge mass of the Imperial Palace, with the large bronze groups given to the Hohenzollern family fifty years ago by the grandfather of the present Tsar.

The balustrade of the balcony on which the Kronprinzessin had just appeared is "decorated," to use the complimentary word of my Baedeker, with the statues of German emperors and empresses in mythological attire. Wilhelm II. is dreaming, I am sure, of putting there in a few years his own effigy, of which he seems so extremely fond. What
disguise he will choose I cannot imagine; possibly he will dress as Janus, the god of peace, Kaiser Frederich having already taken the armour and shield of Mars.

As for his son, everybody will agree that Mercury would be a suitable rôle. Mercury was considered in old Rome the protector of the thieves.

* * *

The most astonishing thing I heard during my trip was that the price of beer is going up steadily, and that maybe the classical types of German beer—Pilsener and Münchener—will have to give place to other drinks to make which oats are not required. Most of the oats supply is imported, I learn, from South Russia and America, and the importation, of course, is now completely stopped.

I can easily fancy Berlin without the Linden, or the Sieges-Säule, the most insolent monument I have ever seen—even without the Kaiser, but not without plenty of beer. I am trying to think what the
Berlin cafés will look like at night without the national drink. Probably they will get as dull as the teetotal London night clubs in war-time!

I found myself walking down the Gendarmen Market, perhaps the only fine square in Berlin.

Here is the Schauspielhaus in which during one of my former visits Moissi, an Italian who is one of Germany's best tragic actors, was appearing in *Hamlet* and *Othello*. I remember an old German professor telling me of his almost exclusive love for the Shakespearean theatre, and comparing it with the old and modern German theatre to the total disadvantage of his countrymen.

I wonder if the Chauvinistic influence of the war has made him love Hauptmann and detest Shakespeare!

Here is also the old French church, spoiled by recent restoration. Till the outbreak of the war there used to be here a daily French service and a Sunday sermon. Now the church is closed, most of the priests have
gone back to France, and one of them is said to be fighting against Germany. Only an old French lady and the sacristan are there in a small house at the back of the church.

I knock for some time at the door, and finally I am admitted to an old-world sitting-room, furnished with quite a number of plasters, bronzes, and prints of all the saints who have blossomed during the past centuries on the fertile soil of France.

It takes me quite a time to persuade the good old lady that I am not German, and not there to find out anything, but I finally get all her confidence when I offer to carry a letter for her son, one of the French church priests now in France. She tells me that they had inquisitions over inquisitions by the military authorities since the beginning of the war.

“They went to look even in the church; they respect nothing, the brutes,” she went on, forgetting her prudence, and, pointing to the picture of the Rheims Cathedral cut
out of an illustrated paper, "This, Monsieur, was no human work. Men can construct churches, of course, and beautiful ones too, but the Cathedral was more than that; it was divine, and they have destroyed it.

"They have shelled God's house," she said, "just because Germans are, and will always be, jealous of all that is beautiful and gentle and refined. I should not talk like this. I am too old to hate anybody, but I can't help it. I have been in Berlin ten years now, and I am afraid I will never see France again. Perhaps it is better so. I could not stand seeing the eagle where the tricolour was. But we must win; the world will never have peace until Germany is beaten."

I tried to persuade her that this was also my opinion, and I got her to speak about the condition of the foreigners in Berlin. "I don't know about the others," she said, "but the French are having an awful time of it."

"Have they been put into Concentration Camp?" I asked.

"No; only the young fellows are detained,
and they are, I believe, the most fortunate. A lot of French women and children are starving, as the fathers are refused work everywhere, and even the shopkeepers refuse to sell stuff to them.”

I waited for her to write the letter to her son, and I left the little bit of France in German territory with a sense of distress. The last words of the old lady were, “Walk out quickly, if you please; and don’t stop outside the door. A polizist is generally there, and if you are seen walking out of this place there will probably be trouble for you.”

No polizist saw me leaving the presbytery; I walked down Jäger Strasse to the house of a well-known writer on military subjects, who holds a high position at the Embassy of a neutral Power in Berlin, and who was the only person who knew the reason of my visit. He was rather surprised at the way I managed to get on, and when I gave him my impressions he agreed on most points.

“I believe,” he said, “that the war will in a month’s time or so assume a sort of defen-
sive character as far as the Germans are concerned. They will occupy the whole of Belgium, and cover at the west a front strengthened with temporary fortification works like those which are being fully carried out at the back of the German fighting line. Then the war will assume a more careful character; I daresay the Kaiser will start economising the lives of his men, which he has freely spent up to now. The attempt to take Paris by storm with a daring march forward, *coute que coute*, which was not the plan of the German military command, but the Kaiser's, has completely failed."

"Germany realises that her soldiers are none too many, and wants to make the best of them. That's why they will use any amount of temporary fortification, and will abstain from the compact formations which were quite all right forty years ago, but have proved complete failures on this occasion.

"When the Germans are on their fortified line they will wait for a fresh supply of men and guns. The guns used in Belgium are
mostly done for, and have gone back to Essen to be repaired, and in many cases to be melted down again.

"As you have noticed, Germany seems to despise the Austrians' help. That is very wrong; if nothing else, Austria has taken away from Germany the shock of the largest part of the Russian Army, at least for the present moment.

"The war will only come to an end for one of the three following reasons:—

"(1) The Triple Entente obtains successes in both theatres of operation and breaks the line of temporary fortification I just told you about; then France and England would have the way open to Berlin, and if the Russians were successful in the East, Germany would be forced to ask for peace.

"(2) The Germans hurry up and break the Franco-English resistance before the new English Army and the Colonial forces (which seem to be of real advantage only in hot weather) step in next spring. This will be now very difficult, as there are two large
factors in the problem: the Franco-British Fleet and the Russian Army.

"(3) A neutral Power steps in and makes the scales go down at one or the other side. If this intervention should be in favour of the Entente the crushing of Austria would be almost immediate, and all the forces could be concentrated against Germany, so that the latter would be forced to ask for peace.

"What is certain is that the war will have a sort of steady character up to March or April, and that Germany reckons she will have to make her maximum effort at that moment.

"Somebody says the end of this war will be hurried by financial reasons. I do not think that these will, alone, be strong enough to settle this gigantic struggle. They are certainly an element worth considering, but only after the military one."

"And what will be the consequences of this war?" I ask.

"I don't think the difference on the European map will be big in either case."
Germany has fully realised what a mistake was the cession of Alsace-Lorraine by France. The colonies will certainly be the most affected by the future peace; but, of course, nowadays a war like this has hardly any pretension of leading to the annexing of new territories. What Europe is struggling for is supremacy of the economical interests of one nation over another.

"The idea that the largest Empire is the most powerful is childish, and if this had not been proved a long time ago the present European war would be enough to do so."
CHAPTER II

POTSDAM AND HAMBURG

For my trip to Potsdam I had a bright, sunny morning. Potsdam, the favourite residence of the Kaiser, and one of the most intensely Prussian towns of Prussia, owing to the enormous number of barracks, military buildings, and academies she has in proportion to her size, attracted me for two reasons.

First, I knew any amount of military drill was daily going on in the large drill grounds, and that Potsdam, the cradle of the Prussian Army, would be specially interesting to see in war time.

Secondly, the only concentration camp in the immediate vicinity of Berlin in which British prisoners are kept is Doberitz, quite close to Potsdam.
Potsdam gave me straight away the impression of being absolutely full of soldiers. The regular garrison has gone to the front, of course, but the first classes of the Landsturm, just called to arms, are drilling day and night in the grounds of the artillery barracks.

Some of the new guns (for the Russian frontier, I learn) are being tested, and the military academy has been converted into a huge hospital. The ugly, pretentious little town, full of copies of old Italian and French buildings, seemed to be populated by an extraordinary number of people in mourning, probably owing to the fact that Potsdam being a garrison town, quite a number of officers' families reside there.

The entrance to the castle of Sans Souci, to the New Palace, and to the Marble Palace is verboten. I asked the reason of this, and I was told that the buildings are now being devoted to military purposes.

I was losing all hope of being able to see something of interest when the noise of a
powerful engine made me look over my head. A gigantic Zeppelin was performing different evolutions, dropping and rising again hundreds of feet, changing the direction, and pointing a massive nose now to the earth, now to the sky.

I could see from the stability planes and from the shape of the tail that it was one of the very latest models; also a sort of silvery paint, probably the aluminium varnish which has been in use for years in the Italian aerial fleet, had been adopted instead of the old grey or copal varnish. I easily managed to find out that this was the first test of a new machine, that two airships exactly alike were being equipped in the flying grounds on the west side of the town, and that old Count Zeppelin himself was looking after the operations.

From morning to sunset there was an enormous activity in the whole of the aerial park. Over a hundred aeroplanes of the Taube type were under construction, and I was told that in every one of the German towns which
possesses aeroplane works, flying machines are being built in large numbers. Apparently the idea is not only to supply machines in place of those lost or damaged on the frontiers, but to have a very large number of aeroplanes ready for next spring.

The figures I heard varied very much, but a well-informed officer said that Germany will have in March-April over a thousand new machines, and that the engines of the whole air-fleet are already finished. I asked what was Germany's object in getting such an enormous number of machines ready, but I could only get the answer, "You wait and see!"

As for the balloons, the largest workshops are in Posen and Hanover.

The hangars erected at Potsdam are only four, but they are very large, and a new system of concrete has been used in place of wood or corrugated iron.

The new Zeppelin seems very agile, considering its huge volume. The cigar-like shape seems to me to be thicker than the old
model, and the distance between the gondolas carrying the engines and the body of the air-
ship has been very much reduced.

A kind old lady lent me her good field-
glasses, and I could see that the crew num-
bered over a dozen, and that a general in uniform was on board. The new airship did not, for the moment, show any number or mark of any kind. After a few more evolu-
tions the Zeppelin disappeared, concealed by the trees of the Brauhausberg.

I gave back the glasses to the old lady who lent them to me, and she said that she was a widow of a captain who died in the 'seventies near Sedan, and had now two sons and two sons-in-law at the front. "They are at the right wing fighting the Englishmen, at the place of honour. Do you know England at all?" she asked me, and then went on without giving me time to answer her question.

"Oh, I do hate that country! She had no business to come into this war, and without her we should at this time be in Paris. Our
fleet would have destroyed the French fleet, and everything would be over."

I asked her if any of her relations had been wounded.

"Yes, she answered, "one of my sons last month. He was sent back here for two weeks, but now he has recovered and has gone to the front again."

I could not help admiring the old lady; she was only thinking of the success of the campaign, and very little of the danger that her sons might never come back. The German woman has remained, in this way, the wife of the fierce, barbarous warrior of Attila, in peace time counted as a slave, or at best as a nurse for the children, but ready to buckle the breast-plate of her man and to kiss him good-bye with dry eyes when the moment for fighting comes. In peace-time one has the impression that this type of woman has disappeared from Germany, and that her place has been taken by the provincial type—sentimental up to her wedding-day, practical after, or by the coquettish
city type of woman, who tries to copy the Parisienne or the Viennese, and only succeeds in being the caricature of a smart woman, handicapped as she is by a certain clumsiness of body and spirit.

Now her country is at war, the German woman has become again the descendant of the Valkyrie, of the wife of the mediæval warrior, of the nursing woman of the 1870's.

This war, sweeping away the paint of more or less real culture, of social convention, of borrowed ways and manners, brings to the surface the wild qualities of men but also the good ones of women.

I asked the old lady to whom I was talking if she did not feel terribly anxious and upset about her sons, and she answered:—

"I really haven't time to think much about them. Everybody is so busy just now. We have got miseries of all kinds—wounded, refugees from the Russian frontiers, lonely children to look after—and everybody is trying to do his very best in helping the country."
I asked her the way to Doberitz, and having crossed by the ferry boat a small branch of the Havel, I went on in the direction of the village. In a very large field at the back of the Potsdam's cavalry barracks I saw a couple of thousand horses arranged in large circles of about one hundred each, round huge piles of saddles.

A number of reservists were busy showing some of the animals, and cleaning and looking after some others. The horses, seen in the distance, seemed perfectly fresh, and some of them looked exceptionally fine. They seemed to belong mostly to the Hungarian type, and had long hairy manes and tails, and strong muscles in their legs.

I was very astonished, as I had read, and not in English papers only, that the German Army was short of horses, and that the full cavalry contingent was at the frontier.

Those horses, I learnt, were a fresh supply, just received from Austria and Hungary, as the southern Allies apparently have got many more horses than soldiers to ride them.
Other very large depôts of horses, which will be ready for military service in a month or so, were at the south side of Berlin and Eisleben and Leipsig. The Government are also trying to get horses from Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, but the steps taken in this direction don’t seem to have given very good results.

Germany is trying to get horses from everywhere, even at very high prices, but, like the aeroplanes, not so much for immediate use, but to have them ready for next spring. It is fully realised that cavalry at the present moment, with winter frosts and conditions prevailing, would be of hardly any use.

After a fairly long walk on the muddy road I reached Doberitz and asked for the concentration camp. I was told that it depended on whether I wanted to see the new or the old one. The new one consists of large temporary constructions, which are being erected on the manœuvring grounds on the Spandau road, and which will not be
complete for some time. The old one is at the extreme west side of the town, and is really a large, lofty country house, with large green houses attached, and a chapel, formerly inhabited by Carmelite nuns, standing in a spacious garden. Only about two hundred English prisoners are kept there, but many French prisoners are quartered in another building half a mile distant. The large concentration camps are not here, but in the North of Germany. The Tommies (I don't know if there are any officers quartered with them) are made generally useful; they cut wood for the trenches, sew and prepare sacks for the same purpose, and anyone who has ability to do extra work receives a small payment for it, with which he can purchase tobacco, etc.

I asked if it was possible to talk with the prisoners, but was told that not even German people are allowed to do so, and that no permission to enter the camp was ever accorded, whatever the reasons.

I thought it would be useless, and probably
dangerous, for me to try and get in, and I had to be content with walking close to the long, white wall which separates the grounds of the old convent from the main road. I heard voices talking in the purest Cockney accent, laughter, and popular English songs hummed at the other side.

At the south of Doberitz there is a small hill less than 100 ft. high, covered with thick vegetation. From its summit I managed to get a good look into the Concentration Camp.

Forty or fifty British soldiers, in khaki trousers and shirt-sleeves, were smoking and sitting about outside the main entrance of the house. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, and they were evidently enjoying their after-dinner rest.

Two seemed to be in rather friendly conversation with one of the German soldiers who were looking after them, and another was listening to an old officer who was giving him some instructions.

I noticed that the Tommy stood at atten-
tion, as though he were in front of a British officer, and that, when the German went among the soldiers, they saluted him in the regular manner. All along the inside of the high wall of the garden Prussian soldiers were walking up and down as stiff as if they were mounting guard at the Imperial Palace.

"What would I give," I said to myself, "to be able to talk to them, to give them fresh news from England, to take home their letters. A scrap of paper with their names only would probably be enough to bring happiness to hundreds of English families which are now mourning them as dead. It seemed ridiculous not to be able to get somehow into contact with those men who were only four or five hundred feet distance from me."

Of course, it couldn't be done, and I walked sadly down the little hill thinking of the poor young fellows, probably worried by false news about the war and forced to prepare material for the trenches which
will stop their pals' bullets and protect their gaolers.

* * *

The few days I had decided to spend in Berlin coming to an end, I set out upon the return journey through Hamburg, in which town I wanted to see as much as possible of Germany's naval preparations. Though I fully realised that it would be much better to have gone to Kiel for this purpose, or even better to Wilhelmshaven, I did not attempt such a journey because of the terribly slow railway communications, and also because of the improbability of getting anywhere near the arsenals.

Hamburg, the largest town in Germany after Berlin, the oldest shipbuilding city in Europe (she was already rich and powerful when Glasgow was unknown and Liverpool was but a small fishing village), is probably the most representative town in the whole of Germany.

Here the prosperity of Germany after the proclamation of the Empire shows itself in
a mighty way; the words of August Bebel have found the right kind of soil, and have produced the wonderful organisation of workmen which was powerful enough to erect the Gewerkschaftshaus.

A question which has puzzled me since the beginning of the war is, what are the German Socialists doing? What happened to their international sympathies; what do they think of this war and of the way Germany is treating the Belgian and French population? When I asked these questions to a well-known Hamburg Socialist, the only answer he could give me was this:

"We are reduced to a very small number at the present moment; when a Socialist workman is called to arms, not only he immediately forgets all about his Socialist beliefs, but even his family, his father, and his brothers—not to mention women, who are absolutely war-mad, seem to lose all interest in what is not war. Of course, I firmly believe that as soon as the war is over the
Socialist Party will become even stronger than it was before, but for the present we are so few that we don’t dare to say a word, nor to criticise that which ought to be criticised.”

Waiting for the resurrection of Socialism, the Labour Party is indirectly helping the common cause. Three entire floors of the Workmen’s Institute have been transformed into hospitals, and nurses, doctors, sanitary appliances, etc., are supplied by the Trade Unions’ League.

All shipbuilding firms, from the enormous concerns of international fame to the smallest, have been taken up by the Government, or are at least working for it.

Godeffroy, Stülchen, Weichhorst, etc., are now specially occupied in the construction of submarines. The strictest secrecy is observed about the plant, and the number of ships under construction is not known.

The enormous Vulcan Works on the other side of the town, the commercial Altona, and
the still larger Blohm and Voss works, are turning out at present four battleships, and
the former firm has nearly finished a new floating dock which is said to be the largest in existence. Hamburg will have altogether six large floating docks, which will certainly prove of great help in the work of rescuing damaged warships. In less than two hours they may be taken right down to the open sea, through the Elbe, and from there reach at full speed any ships too badly damaged to steam by their own means and convey them to the Hamburg dockyards.

To say that the shipbuilding concerns have been "taken up" by the Government is really inexact and superficial; nearly all of the firms have furnished the German Navy with some ships during the last few years—Blohm, for instance, is responsible for the Von der Tann, the Moltke, and the Goeben.

A Hamburg firm that specialises in light-houses, etc., is now constructing an enormous number of searchlights, which are to be added to those already possessed by the Navy, and
which are mentioned here as specially made for the attack on the British coasts. Other searchlights, almost equally powerful, but not quite so heavy, are fixed on all balloons and aeroplanes.

The unemployment plague, which is very serious all over Germany, especially among women, is worse here than anywhere else; nearly all the factories, mills, and works having been closed long since. While great activity reigns in the dockyards, the Asia and America quay, the Petroleum-Hafen, and the quays of the great steamship companies, which generally present a picturesque and busy scene, are deserted. The big ships, bereft of all their goods, have a sort of sleepy look about them, and they give the impression that not a soul is on board.

Near the Ellenzhobz-Hafen one of the large steamers of the Hamburg-America line is being converted into a Red Cross Hospital. The gilded furniture, the carpets and pictures are being taken away and deposited on the bank by a large steam crane, and the Red
Cross mark has already been painted on the ship.

* * *

I would much rather not go over again my return journey. It is a sickening story of slow trains, stopped at every station, of annoyances of every kind, of hurried meals in bad railway station buffets, of hours and hours of waiting because a train was cancelled at the last minute and the next one was full of soldiers or wounded, and did not take ordinary passengers, etc.

At Bremen I am stopped as an alien enemy, insulted by a drunken crowd and taken to the police station, where I am detained the rest of the night. In the morning the inspector comes, looks at the mysterious passport I got in Berlin, apologises and releases me just in time to have missed the morning train. This identical scene is repeated at the Dutch frontier.

My mind is naturally full of recollections, recollections a little chaotic owing largely to the fact that to have taken a single note would
have been very dangerous for me during the search I had to undergo.

There was certainly an enormous difference between London and Berlin after three months' war. The optimism which in Germany is very strong among the people in the street and very moderate in the army is here in London exactly in opposite proportions.

As for the economic position, the commercial possibilities and industrial crisis, no comparison is possible between the two countries; the geographical position of Britain and the action of her Fleet give her an enormous superiority over her enemies.

Signs of financial distress, it is true, are not very evident in Berlin; the increase in prices has been small, and has begun only during the last few weeks. I don't know if things will go on like this when the winter has almost paralysed the production of German foodstuffs, the reserves are exhausted, and the importation through Denmark and Holland has somehow been stopped.

It is needless to say that Germany has no
Colonial contingent to put on against our Colonial troops, and that the fighting power of our enemies, owing to the strictly applied recruiting system, and to the above fact, is essentially limited, while Britain's can have no end of resources. Certainly this war will be very, very long.

The high spirit of the German nation, the decision of the Army to fight to the very last, the fact that the Kaiser knows perfectly that the débâcle would be the end of the Prussian hegemony and of his family's power, and the military education given to the German people during the whole of the last century, make of this nation an extremely difficult enemy to tame.

Endless sacrifices of comforts, of money, of life, will be needed not only from England, France, Russia, and Belgium, but from all other nations on earth who have simply been considering Germany as a huge latent danger during the last forty years.
CHAPTER III

CONSTANTINOPEL, October 31st, 1914.

Here I am, after all! From the large window of my room at the Tokatlian Hotel, the wonderful city, the Bosphorus, and, far away, the woods and the mosques of Scutari, look like a dream-vision in the blue, transparent light which seems to come not from the sky only but from the trees, from the sea, from everywhere.

It is midnight, and everything is perfectly quiet.

If an artist had to choose a landscape which should symbolise the perfect peace of men and things, he would choose the one on which I am now looking. And yet even here there is war!
On my way from Dedeagach to Constantinople I got news of the declaration of war by Turkey. Perhaps if I had tried to cross the Turkish frontier only a few hours later I should not have succeeded; as a matter of fact, to-day I saw any number of foreigners, English, French, Italians, Russians, and Greeks, trying to leave Constantinople by train.

Only very few of them could manage to get away, as Turkey is busy sending troops to the western frontier, and only a few seats are available for ordinary travellers.

The foreigners who could not get away to-day had to content themselves with booking seats for next week, seats which, though they had to be paid for, were not guaranteed.

The Dardanelles are closed, of course, and the only communication with the rest of Europe is this fantastic railway service. French and English people can, in theory, leave the town. Not so Russian people.

A special concentration camp has been arranged in a large old bazaar near the
Odoun Kapou, and quite close to the military gaol. There is room for seven thousand prisoners, and I am afraid the young Englishmen and Frenchmen who don't get away pretty soon will have to go and keep company with the Russians.

Of course, the concentration camps are copied from German models. Everything, in fact, in Constantinople is copied from a German model. During the last four or five months Enver Pasha, "the soul of the new Turkey," according to his newspaper—*Le Jeune Turc*—"le trait d'union entre Allemagne et Turquie," according to the perhaps more correct definition of *Le Stamboul*—which, by the way, has been suppressed—assisted by a large staff of German officers, has been arranging for the wholesale Germanisation of Turkey.

There is no doubt about the result; it is excellent, at least from the German point of view. It was not a hurried job; since Algiers Germany has redoubled her military activity in Turkey. This work has gone on
steadily for years, while alongside of it Germany has carried out a careful and far-sighted commercial expansion.

To take at the present moment only Constantinople, and to say nothing of the rest of European or Asiatic Turkey, you find the water, the gas and electric light, the railways, the importation of wheat, the motor-bus services, most of the shipping companies, and the tramcars all belong to German companies or to companies which, if Turkish or French in name, are controlled and financed by Germans.

The German Government has assisted in every possible way in these enterprises; many German firms were taken up by the Turkish War Office during the last few weeks. A typical case was that of a very large German fireworks firm, which was established about three years ago, and never turned out any fireworks to the knowledge of anybody in Constantinople.

Now the large German staff of the firm is producing any amount of ammunition, and if
what is said here is true an enormous quantity of nitre and cotton-wool, and also lead and other metals, has been stored in the firm during the last few weeks.

It is absolutely ridiculous to talk about a Russian aggression in the Black Sea, as most of the Turkish papers are doing. Everybody knew here that Turkey meant to go to war.

Such was the view of Germany and of Enver Pasha. Not only was the Turkish Army, under the direction of about 200 German officers, along with Turkish officers trained in Germany, getting ready as fast as possible since the beginning of the war, but two months before the war broke out the Turkish War Office began to get busy, to change generals and substitute for the old decorative officers a more efficient staff, to order new uniforms and boots.

It is difficult to say what were the intentions of Turkey at that moment, but the fact remains that during the past forty years the Turkish Army has never been in better
condition and less lacking materials than to-day.

This does not mean that the army is strong or well equipped; far from it, but it is certain that very much has been done lately and a fair amount of money spent.

What were the reasons of all this activity, and where did the money come from? It is easy enough to answer these questions—Germany expected to be at war and wanted Turkey to be ready.

* * *

I have spent my first day in Constantinople in a long walk through the old town. I wanted to see how the declaration of war had affected the population. To tell the truth, it does not seem to have affected the people at all.

The manager of the hotel told me it was better to substitute my western headgear for a fez if I wanted to go into Stamboul or Scutari, and he advised me also to speak German if I had to ask for some directions.

It is the only foreign language which is
not likely to wake up the anti-Christian sentiments of the crowd.

Pera, the modern and civilised part of Constantinople, gives the impression of a big spa out of season. The large hotels are mostly closed, the cafés, the restaurants, the shops which generally sell only to the tourist had no customers this year and did not open at all.

I noticed that the few shops open had taken away from the windows the little boards announcing that English or Russian is spoken. "On parle français" was still in evidence, but the other languages were apparently extinct. Constantinople at the moment speaks only German.

Protected by my red fez, I crossed the long bridge which leads to Stamboul and found myself in the old city. The crowd seemed to be occupied with anything on earth but the war. There was the usual noise, there were the usual cries, the usual slow-going traffic.

This seemed rather curious to me. Was
it possible that nobody could realise what a terrible move the Turkish Government had made the day before? Did they even know that Turkey was at war with Russia and that to-morrow probably all the Allies would be against her?

Only the night before the key to the enigma had been given me by a dragoman who, though in a lower social scale, could nevertheless speak German:—"We did not want this war," he said. "We did not want either the Balkan War or the war against Italy, but, after all, we know perfectly that the more silly things our rulers do, the sooner they will have to go, and the sooner the better.

"We are tired of the so-called Young Turk Government. It is worse than the Government of Abdul Hamid. Things being as they are, we keep quiet and hope it will be over as soon as possible."

"But you would not like to have a Russian Government, for instance?" said I.

"It would not be worse than this one," he
answered. "None could be worse. One fine day, when things go badly, Enver Bey and all the Young Turks will clear off with the money they have made at our expense, and leave us to settle the account. They don't care at all for Turkey. They only care for their private ambitions. Most of them are not Turks either, but Greeks or Armenians or Levantines or Jews.

"The Turkish people have realised long ago that Turkey, as a nation, resisted as long as she did because the European nations could not agree on her partition. The only thing to do was to keep quiet and try to avoid any struggle. We should have done that if Abdul Hamid had not been deprived of his power; our new rulers had the dream of making Turkey once more a Great Power. But their efforts had quite an opposite result."

All this may sound rather tragic, but it was spoken as if it was the most natural thing in the world for a modern Turk to regard himself as simply the citizen of a country that was up for sale by auction.
My informant did not even seem to care to know who the buyer might be.

The dragoman represents the most patriotic part of the population of Turkey—the Turks. As for the other elements—Greek, Bulgar, Armenian, Serbian, Wallach, Gipsy, and Jewish, which are in numbers ten times superior to the Turks—they have different aspirations, and naturally look for a change in the direction of their own nationality or, at least, of their own religion.

The only people who have sympathy for Germany seem to be the Jews and Gipsies, the former, who live mostly on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, being closely connected with Germany by commercial interests.

It is in this attitude of complete passivity that the population of Constantinople is waiting. The attempt to wake up the Islamic feeling is not likely to have a great influence in European Turkey.

To-day in most places meetings have been arranged, and muezzins have started promising the paradise of Allah, the Houris and all
the rest, to those who are ready to die for the Motherland and the true God.

My dragoman told me they did not arouse much enthusiasm amongst the population. I heard a Moslem preacher myself address the Mevlevis, the dancing Dervishes, who were giving an extra performance.

Of course, I could not understand a word of the sermon, but the Mevlevis, if not the public, got much excited, some wounding themselves with swords as they offered their blades to Allah.

The cry of “Damour Kaffir” (dogs of infidels) and a few suspicious glances in my direction persuaded me that it was better to leave the Dervishes alone, and I made my way out of the dense crowd.

In the little square outside, standing on the steps covered with green and blue china tiles of a wonderful old sacred fountain, was a sort of recruiting sergeant with two soldiers acting as helps, one carrying a large book, the Koran, the other the green standard of the Prophet.
Around them half-a-dozen filthy-looking children were standing in astonishment, but there was no sign of a recruit.

To-night, when my indispensable dragoon translated for me a leading article from the Tanin, the Turkish official newspaper which is the mouthpiece of Enver Pasha's pan-Islamic ideals, I was much surprised to hear the following paragraph:—

"The whole of Turkey is ready to take up arms against the infidels. The enthusiasm awakened in Constantinople by the declaration of war against Russia is almost unbelievable. Turkey is ready to take again her place amongst the great European Powers. We are now members of the New Triple Alliance, and with the help of Allah and of our powerful Allies we are certain to get back again all we have lost through the fault of our late Government."

*   *   *

November 2nd.

I think that what happened this morning is really too extraordinary even for the
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Turkish Diplomacy, too curious even for one who knows the extremely curious systems of the Turkish Government.

Yesterday all the Constantinople newspapers were talking about the declaration of war against Russia (the Ambassadors of the Entente having to leave very soon) and the resurrection of the Turkish Empire; the muezzins were preaching the war, the recruiting sergeants were trying to get new men; to-day the Tanin, the newspaper of the Turkish Government, says that Turkey is not at war, and that she will only defend herself if the Powers of the Entente move against her. How delightfully Oriental!

Of course, Turkish papers have an excellent habit of never contradicting themselves. What was said yesterday is completely forgotten to-day; not a word about it. So Turkey is not at war.

That is why, perhaps, some signs of war have begun to appear to-day in Constantinople. Turkish logic!

This morning there has been "a sort of a
demonstration” in favour of the war. A couple of thousand people with Turkish and German flags, and under the very eyes of the passive police, wrecked two or three Russian shops and also the windows of a French bookseller who dared to exhibit Russian and English books. Afterwards the crowd came down the Avenue des Petits Champs, where the Embassies are, and hissed the Russian and the French.

The beautiful Florentine palace, the residence of the British Ambassador, had a few windows smashed, and two large hotels owned by French societies were also damaged.

This Jingo crowd was mostly composed of people wearing the fez, but of rather Western appearance. Some of them, fair haired, and of true Teutonic bearing, did not leave any doubts about their nationality, some bore the mark of their Jewish descent, some belonged to the international mob of all big seaports. I don’t know if amongst the crowd there was a single real Turk.
As I write, in the large square outside the Arsenal, military exercises under the command of Turkish and German officers are going on. The Germans attached to the Turkish army or to the Embassy in Constantinople have organised all the young Germans into a regular troop. Now every one of them is acting as an instructor, and probably before long they will have a uniform and an official status in the Turco-German army.

During the last two weeks trains loaded with arms, ammunition of all kinds, Red Cross requisites, and even guns have been arriving from the north. An enormous quantity of sea mines has been sent down—evident sign that the Germans intend to follow in the Dardanelles the same tactics of naval war they are following in the North Sea.

A large part of the Fleet, I really don't know if I have to call it the Turkish fleet or the Allied fleet, or perhaps the German fleet, has come back into the Bosphorus.
The names of the vessels are, of course, quite Turkish. The *Goeben* was re-christened *Sultan Selim*; the *Breslau* got instead the new name of *Medilla*, which means *Mitilen*, in Turkish.

The bridge on the Golden Horn is open, and yesterday the *Goeben* went right across the long bay and dropped anchor outside the Arsenal. Then on the ship began a sort of feverish work. A number of large flat-bottomed boats were sent out from the Arsenal loaded with workmen, who proceeded to do some mysterious repairs on board. It was possible to hear the continuous hammering, but the distance did not allow me to see what kind of work was going on.

Certainly no great damage had been done to the ship because, while the repairs were going on, a large quantity of ammunition and numerous cases which looked as though they contained foodstuffs were lifted on board with the help of two big cranes.
The afternoon I made the acquaintance of a German officer who had been on board the Goeben during the last three years. He told me that the ship had not suffered any damage; something went wrong with the helm, but it would be all right in the morning.

My new friend seemed most proud of the events of his ship during the last month, and when I flattered his vanity by telling him that the Goeben and Breslau had been the talk of all Europe for many weeks, he was so pleased that he willingly told me all that had happened on board since the outbreak of war.

"It is a wonderful story," he began. Nothing before the outbreak of hostilities
operator was ill, and had to be left in the hospital at Fiume, but luckily enough we had somebody else on board who understood wireless as well as he did. If not, I don't know how we could have managed it, as when we were in the Ionian Sea the meeting-place with the Breslau was suddenly changed on account of some English ships which were reported leaving Malta that day, and likely to discover our route.

"As the declaration of war was expected at any moment, we were trying to go as far westward as possible in order to be able to do some damage either on the Algerian or Tunisian coast. We got another wireless message, and the order to show ourselves on the African coast, and to retreat as soon as possible to the Dardanelles. If necessary, the Turkish fleet would have protected our retreat into the Straits.

"We went straight to Bona and Philippeville, which were the only places of importance not too far from our position at that moment. You know what a lot of damage
we managed to do in a few hours. Of course, the most important thing was not to destroy the towns, but to call the attention of the British and French fleets to that spot so that they would rush down there and leave us free the route to the Dardanelles.

“We left the African coast in the afternoon and made our way eastward as fast as our engines would allow us to go. Twice we saw British ships scouting, but we managed to avoid being seen and coming to an engagement which would have brought all the united fleet against us in a few hours’ time. Later on we met two more British ships, which started to chase us.

“We were far superior in speed, and would have left them behind us but for a third ship which appeared on the horizon down south. The only thing for us to do was to rush forward. We had to seek an asylum in the bay of Messina.

“The neutrality of Italy at that moment
was not a certainty. Our move would really have helped her to take a decision, and to keep faithful to her allies as well as protect her own real interests. Our Government thought so too, but Italy did not move, so we found ourselves under the necessity of leaving Messina in daytime.

"The British fleet, sure of our capture, was waiting outside the Italian territorial waters. We really did not hope to get out of the Bay without engaging in a battle under very unequal conditions.

"The weather, which had been wonderfully fine for over a month, came to our help. In the afternoon it began to get cloudy, and at ten o'clock it was pitch dark. This was quite an exception in the Straits of Messina at that time of year.

"We can thank that darkness for our escape. With no light on board, we went right across the bay; on both sides we could see the lights of the British warships, and the searchlight often explored the sea at a few metres' distance from us. We were all
on deck waiting to be discovered, and to engage in a fight which could not possibly result in our favour.

"At a certain moment a light, probably belonging to a fishing boat, attracted the attention of the British ships, and all the searchlights were concentrated on that spot. This almost certainly saved us. Slowly and silently we passed at a few hundred metres' distance from an Italian warship on sentinel near the Calabrese coast. If she had seen us we should have answered the signals, and that would have attracted the attention of the whole British squadron.

"We thought we were quite out of danger, but when the morning broke we discovered a British ship following us. We increased our speed, but the other ship seemed to be as fast as we were. Then we decided to get rid of her, and while we went on by the side of the Greek coast the Breslau got farther down in the open sea. The British ship stopped undecided; we opened fire on her, and she answered with a lot of shells,
none of which reached either of our ships. Always fighting, we made our way forward.

"Near the Greek Island of Cerigo we must have hit the boat with one of our torpedoes, as she seemed to lose speed and then suddenly stop. We lost sight of her, but after a few hours we came in sight of a ship hoisting a French flag. Before she saw us we changed our route and hid ourselves behind one of the Cyclades Islands, in a sort of triangle of sea from which we could see, unseen, in every direction.

"We were very short of ammunition, coal, and everything else owing to the hurried departure from our base, and also to the long ride across the Mediterranean. There were also some urgent repairs to be done on board of our ship. The Breslau was untouched.

"We stayed in our refuge two days, and in the evening of the second day, hearing from some officers who had been sent out scouting with motor-boats that the route was
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free, we made our way to the Dardanelles. You know the rest of our story.”

“And what about the sale of the two ships to Turkey?” I asked candidly.

“The sale was a very simple operation. We got our carpenters on board to paint the new names over the old ones. That was all. The job was not neatly done, that’s true, as the old names were in embossed letters, and they always showed through, although they were painted grey!” he said laughingly.

“We didn’t even trouble to change the name on the lifeboats, etc., as we knew that in a few weeks’ time that would not be of any more importance.”

“I suppose you have had rather a busy time in Constantinople during the last two months?”

“Terribly busy. We had to train quite a number of Turkish sailors, who were quite all right for an old-fashioned fleet, but did not know what to do on a modern warship. The artillery men were only used to very old materials, and had no idea of our modern
guns; anyhow, we have done it, and done it very quickly too. Now they are as good as any sailor in any other navy. The five principal units of our navy in the Bosphorus are now commanded by German officers, and have a mixed crew which is likely to prove very efficient."

"And what about the fight in the Black Sea?"

"About that, dear sir, I cannot say a word. The news for the public was given by the Orient Bureau to the Press and the rest has to be kept secret, at least for the present."

"So you are converted, more or less, into a Turkish officer?"

"Into a Turkish officer? No fear. We have converted the Turkish ships into German ships; that is what we have done. In a few days the world will see that the Turkish fleet would never have been able to perform what we are going to do."

And with a vague gesture full of obscure menace and foretelling wonderful deeds, the
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hero of the Goeben left me to go back on board.

*   *   *

I devoted my afternoon to a visit to Aya Sophia, the wonderful church which is still gorgeous and majestic, in spite of the Turkish attempts to disfigure it.

There was a special war-time service going on. One of the large old carpets, which are supposed to have belonged to Mahomet, had been taken down from the wall, on which they generally hang, for display on the floor under the centre of the big dome. At the carpet’s corners four imans were praying with fervour, and at their side four censers filled the air with clouds of smoke and strong perfume. On the carpet lay the sword of Mahomet the Conqueror, the Sultan who has dedicated St. Sophia to the Mahomedan cult. He constructed the higher of the temple’s minarets.

A thick crowd of kneeling figures covered the whole floor of the large cathedral. The sacred sword is only exhibited on very im-
Important occasions. Since the Tripoli war it has never been taken from its jewelled case. The news that this time the famous arm has been exposed will spread all round the Islamic world, and the Germans seem to hope that this sign that the religion of Allah is in danger will wake up all the followers of Mohammed. But the high priests themselves do not seem too sure of the fact. During the last few years the prestige of the Sultan as supreme religious head has been greatly shaken; it is feared that the present attitude of Turkey may lead to a new and stronger schismatic movement. It is almost certain that the day Turkey loses Constantinople, the Mahomedans will cease to consider the Sultan as chief of their religion.

While I was admiring the really imposing scene, made even more fantastic by the flashing lights of hundreds of lamps, which emulated the light of the sun coming in copiously through the windows, wide open, four new imans took charge from the old
ones. The sword will be exposed a whole week, and during this time four of the highest *cheiks* of the temple will be in continuous prayers around it.

While leaving the Temple I crossed the side passage of the Gyneceus. Here is the old door through which the priest who was celebrating the mass when, according to Greek tradition, Mahomet the Conqueror rode on horseback right in the middle of the church in 1454, disappeared with the altar cup and his sacerdotal ornaments. The Turks ran after him to kill him as they had done with thousands of people who had sought asylum in the temple, but the door was immediately closed by a stone wall.

When St. Sophia is given back to the Christian cult, continues the Greek tradition, the priest will reappear and continue the service at the very point at which he was interrupted.

It is one of the finest of popular beliefs, quite worth keeping alive for its own sake.

I wonder if the moment when the Greeks
will have to admit that their beautiful tradition is only a legend is not coming sooner than they thought.

* * *

November 3rd.

I have now been two days in Constantinople; I have compared the present condition of the Army, of the Navy, and of the different Services with their condition four years ago, when I came first to the Turkish capital. I have recalled to my mind what I saw at Tripoli, three years ago, when the Turks demonstrated their worth from a military point of view; and, finally, I have taken into consideration the lessons to be learned from their conduct in the Balkan War.

There is only one possible conclusion: there is a big change in everything; there is the evident mark of somebody who pulls the strings, and pulls them with a definite object, and with strong and delicate hands.

That somebody is Enver Pasha.

Till a few weeks ago the question: "Is
Enver Pasha really a clever politician and a first-rate military man?" would have had one answer only—"Of course he is; he is the only great man of Turkey; as long as he lives Turkey will have some hope of resurrection."

This man, who has the celebrity and the ambition of a little Napoleon, is, at the bottom, nothing more than a child with a large dose of vanity. He worships publicity, he loves to see his photographs in the big foreign papers, to read the gossip about his private life, in which he used to pose as a blasé man of the world, surrounded by a full score of wonderful princesses wanting only to marry him. His vanity went as far as to make him proceed legally against a photographer who dared to publish a picture postcard showing Enver as he really is, short and stoutish.

As for his character, he is neither capable nor determined. He takes up everything with great enthusiasm, but never accomplishes his work. The only deed of his
mighty career was the ruin of Abdul Hamid; Europe looked at him as at a novel Brutus, and Enver made at once a world-wide fame and a fairly large fortune.

From his gilded cage, the beautiful Villa Allatini, on the Bosphorus, in which he is kept prisoner, the former Sultan has written repeatedly to the man who has dethroned him and led his country to take the most foolish of steps, asking that neutrality should be observed as long as possible, and saying that only by keeping friends with the great Mediterranean Powers and Russia could the Sick Man of Europe obtain another lease of life.

Enver took no notice of the advice of the old Sovereign, who is certainly one of the most Machiavellian and tactful politicians of modern times. If anything, Enver tried to rush by personal action the Turkish intervention.

Here, in Constantinople, one imagines that he must have the gift of ubiquity. He is everywhere. He traced personally the
route of a new railway line, which will connect directly the Arsenal with the main line; he fixed the place where the platforms for the new large guns from Germany were to be erected; he selected the houses which were to serve as temporary barracks, hospitals, and depôts; he was seen on one day at the two extreme points of the Dardanelles (a record considering the leisurely Turkish communication), arranging for special protective trenches to be constructed in defence of roads and railway lines exposed to the fire of the naval artilleries. And while doing all this material work he had all the diplomatic arrangements completely on his shoulders, and had to carry out, as though not pretending to do so, the orders from Berlin.

A Diplomat who had many years of Turkish experience, having been connected with one of the Embassies in Constantinople for over ten years, tells me that, during the last month, and especially after his marriage with the Sultan's niece, Enver Pasha has
affected a sort of private Court, and surrounded himself with truly Imperial luxuries. Audience with him was more difficult than with the Sultan.

"Enver flatters himself to act independently," said my diplomatic friend. "He tries to play the great diplomat and the great captain, but really he is only a toy in the hands of Germany. He has reorganised the army and the navy with German officers, German arms, German money, and he seems to believe that he has been very clever and got very much for nothing. He does not realise that acting as he did has completely ruined his country, whatever the result of the war.

"I believe that Germany's plan is this: She hopes that Turkey, with her fleet reinforced by the two German warships, will obtain an initial success in the Black Sea. In this case she reckons on the Pan-Islamic feelings waking up all over the Mussulman world, which will mean serious trouble for England and France in North Africa, neces-
sitting the withdrawal of a part of their troops from the principal theatre of operations.

"If Turkey does not succeed in her action against Russia, the latter will see her way open to Constantinople, and will probably not be able to resist the temptation of sending down a large part of her troops, and so press with less force on the Austro-German frontier.

"Moreover, Germany hopes that this will break the perfect accord which, up to the present, has lasted between the nations of the Entente. As you see, Turkey in the German plan is reduced to the modest proportion of the victim which will serve her in the matter of settling accounts at the end of the war."

To-day the general service decree issued three days ago takes effect, and the newspapers say that Turkey will be able to raise an army of over two and a half millions. The uniforms of the soldiers are extraordinarily like those of the Germans, the
only difference being the substitution of the fez for the cap.

The troops look fit, and have brand-new uniforms and boots; the cavalry, which has been taken over from the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, possesses exceptionally fine horses.

But the weak spot of such troops lies in the officers; some of them, belonging to Asiatic families, are ignorant and hardly understand the use of modern arms or the systems of modern warfare; others, German-trained, have absorbed a large amount of the grimness of their instructors, and the soldiers have neither sympathy with nor confidence in them. The Turkish soldiers are said to be good fighters, but in all probability their fame still rests on the Crimean campaign. During the Tripoli and Balkan wars they proved to be less than mediocre soldiers.

These soldiers, who are going to fight an unknown enemy for a reason of which they are ignorant, are in Constantinople in great numbers, and every day new contingents
arrive from the other side of the Bosphorus. They walk about Stamboul with a sort of surprised look in their black eyes. The officers prefer Pera and Galata, the European parts of Constantinople, and are mostly seen accompanied by Germans.

Pera offers really very little in the way of attractions just now.

All the theatres have been closed by order, probably for the reason that the third-class Italian opera company and the still worse French vaudeville company, have refused to risk the lives of their actors. The only thing to do at night is to go to one of the interminable café chantant shows. Galata has over fifty such establishments, and often the programme lasts till daybreak.

I entered one of them and for a moment I seemed to have gone suddenly back to Berlin. German officers in uniform, other German people talking loudly in front of huge glasses of beer, and a little orchestra of Tsiganes playing Viennese tunes made my illusion almost complete. The waiters were,
of course, German, and the so-called artists, of uncertain nationality, sang only German and Turkish songs.

A gommeuse risked a little Parisian refrain, but her voice was drowned by the public hissing and shouting. The public began to sing patriotic songs, and the girl only won her way back to public grace by dancing a sort of furious cake-walk which seemed to please her audience immensely.

This number was followed by the great attraction of the programme—a "revue," as it was pompously announced on the posters.

The story of the play was highly symbolic; a young lady in feathers and a three-coloured scarf (France) and her protector (Russia) tried to rob a respectable gentleman and his wife (Germany and Austria).

A struggle began, accompanied by lyric, which must have been highly amusing and patriotic, as everybody clapped and laughed, while in the background a Scotsman made a terrible noise, but kept away from the fight.
An Alma, with a fez on her black wig, rose at this moment from a pile of cushions among which she had been lying while indulging in a quiet smoke. At the sight of her Russia dropped to the floor, France did the same, England flew away into the wings, and the three victorious nations danced a sort of jig on a special pot-pourri arranged from the music of the three national anthems.

This most idiotic pantomime was so highly appreciated that it was completely repeated. At the conclusion the girl who played France achieved a great personal success by coming out draped in the German flag—to show that she was only impersonating France for stage necessities, and that she was actually of true German feelings.

The few Turks amongst the audience clapped enthusiastically, and, in contravention of the Koran’s laws, drank large glasses of beer, probably in honour of their masters and protectors.

Outside the night was full of stars, and at the eastern side of the quiet Bosphorus a
group of luminous spots showed the position of the fleet going back into the Black Sea. One by one the lights disappeared, hidden from sight by the thick woods of Therapia.

* * *

**November 5th.**

The news that the Sultan is to review a large detachment of troops leaving for the front, on the enormous drilling ground on the hill of Pancaldi, fetches me out of bed very early this morning.

When I reach the grounds a large convoy of troops tells me that the Sultan must be coming. Numerous Zapties (Turkish *gendarmes*) are pushing the crowd aside on the pavement. Now the Sultan arrives in a closed coach preceded and followed by a number of other Zapties on horseback.

Everybody bows deeply, but the Sultan does not show himself. His carriage drives between the double ranks of troops once only, and then disappears under the large arch of the Artillery Barracks.

The new Sultan is said to detest appearing
in public. He has abolished, for this reason, all the traditional ceremonies, all the luxurious habits of the old Court, and lives quietly like a private citizen in the Dolma-Bagtche-Serai. The wonderful palace of Abdul Hamid on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus is much too imposing for his simple taste. Mohamed the Fifth is neither loved nor hated; the Turkish population simply ignores his existence.

After the departure of the Sultan the troops get on with their drills. There are about 10,000 infantrymen, fifty field guns, and not more than a dozen pieces of Horse Artillery of a fairly old model. The field guns are the famous ones bought from Krupp at the time of the Balkan War, which arrived at Constantinople after the peace was concluded.

At the back of the Artillery Barracks is a large Turkish cemetery in which numerous tents have been erected to shelter the Asiatic troops coming through Constantinople. A large and curious crowd watches the dark-
skinned, oily-haired soldiers cooking their own food or making, with a sort of religious concentration, a drop of coffee in a copper saucepan not larger than a small egg.

Here is the German Embassy, where there is a great movement of Turkish and German officers, and where a long line of motor-cars waits outside the door. From the balcony over the main entrance hangs a picture of the Kaiser and a large German flag. To the left side of the Embassy is a powerful wireless station.

This may be considered as the real War Office in Constantinople at the present moment. Near the door, on a large blackboard, is exposed the latest news from the theatres of war.

Stringent police regulations allow nobody to pass near the wireless station.

I am just passing on, when a coach, similar to that one in which the Sultan reviewed his troops, stops in front of the Embassy. A little man in fez and morning coat alights. At the first glance I recognise him as Enver
Pasha. This was the only glance of Turkey's great man that I could get during my stay in Constantinople.

I walked down the great road of Pera, generally full of tourists, motor-cars, and carriages, where smart European society in Constantinople meets.

Since last Sunday half of the few shops and hotels which were still open have closed. The war has completely spoiled the most flourishing of Pera's industries.

A large building on the left-hand side, over which the Red Cross flag waves, attracts my attention. It is the German school turned into a hospital, and placed under the direction of Princess Najieh, Enver Pasha's wife. Only a few years ago it would have been impossible to imagine a Turkish woman doing useful work, still less nursing soldiers; but now old Turkey is dying.

The German ladies in Constantinople have organised another large emergency hospital in the Skating Rink a few hundred yards lower down the same street. Over a hundred
wounded have already arrived from the Russian frontier, I am told. All the Red Cross materials have been ready here for a long time, and doctors and nurses came from Berlin three or four days before the declaration of war. A curious coincidence that they should know exactly when their services would be required!

Down the great route of Pera, near the Tunnel, the crowd is getting thicker, a crowd, as usual, composed almost exclusively of German or Germanophile elements. Here is the German Club, the famous centre of the Pan-German movement in Constantinople.

I easily mix with some of the impromptu politicians; all the Germans in Constantinople who are too old to bear arms try to do what they can for the Fatherland by carrying out a sort of advertising campaign. They can fight no more, but they can talk.

In a few minutes I learn that the Russians are "no good"; that the British Fleet was
“all bluff”; that the French soldiers are running away like rabbits,” and other interesting revelations. But my fat little man, who is, I learn, the manager of the German Bazaar near Andria’s Passage, begins really to attract my attention when he describes what will happen on the day of final German victory.

“Austria will probably be added to the German Empire, together with Hungary, Russian Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each would have the present system of the German confederation, by which every State has a certain autonomy but only one Emperor, one administration, and one army. It will be the largest Empire ever seen since Napoleon, but we are certain, with our organising capabilities, to be able to make it last a long time.

“Take Turkey! She is certainly the most practical nation in Europe; she has seen that it was no use trying to resist us, and she has accepted our quiet superiority. We are the brains, and she is the hands, and you can
be certain that it will be all the better for her to have taken this step in time.”

“And what will happen afterwards to Constantinople?”

“Oh! we shall always be friends with the Turks. They know our superiority, and they respect us. It is really of no importance for us to have Constantinople as long as we know that Russia will never be able to have it.”

While my companion is telling me the modest German aspirations and the future plans for the wholesale Germanisation of the world, we have walked slowly across the Perchembe-Bazaar (Thursday’s market). It is market day, but the business is next to nothing. Most of the merchants have not come at all, others are sitting philosophically amongst mountains of carpets, embroideries, and potteries, waiting for the customer who does not come.

The Turkish commerce has such deep roots that it did not stop even three years ago, when the Allied troops were a few miles
from the town. Now it is completely paralysed.

Perhaps even the Turks begin to feel that the crisis is, this time, bigger than ever before.

Always chatting, we reach St. Peter's Church, and my attention is attracted by a white marble tablet, on which I read: "André Chénier naquit dans cette maison le 30 Octobre, 1762." Under it, on the brown painted wall, one of his verses is written with chalk by a hand evidently used to German characters:—

"Ces Anglais, Nation tout à vendre à qui peut la payer." (England, the nation that always sells herself to the best bidder.)

I wonder who is the learned German who knows Chénier's work well enough to get out of it just the line which, in his opinion, suits the present situation?

I show the stone tablet to my companion, and he explains, very proud to show me that he knows all about the poet of Charlotte.
"Oh, yes, he was a great Frenchman, and, of course, they have had him hanged."

I don't insist on the fact that the poet-encyclopædist was not hanged, but beheaded, and he goes on, "France could be really a great nation. She has genius, she has initiative, but she does not know how to organise her moral and material means, so as to get the maximum effort out of them."

I feel that he is going to describe to me what a wonderful nation France would be under a German Government, so I leave him to his dreams of megalomania. Let us hope he will wake up soon!
CHAPTER IV

BULGARIA AND GREECE

Thanks to the kindness of a member of the Chilian Embassy, I managed to get out of Constantinople in his car without having to wait my turn. The booking-office at the Adrianople station was besieged by a crowd impatient to leave the town, and a sleepy-looking clerk wrote down the names, received the money for the tickets, and told the unfortunate travellers to call in a couple of days, when he would perhaps be able to let them know by which train they might leave. Some took the thing philosophically, some tried to protest; but nobody, unless of Turkish or German nationality, was allowed to travel by military trains. No cars or
vehicles of any kind were allowed on the road unless carrying officials.

We went across the theatre of Turkey's last war. At Tchataldja the almost tropical vegetation has not yet returned to efface, or even to disguise, the trenches, which were the last defence of Constantinople.

"Here Turkey had her last close shave," laughingly said my driver. "The next one will be more severe, I am afraid; for me, I should not be surprised to see the Russians, or the English, or even both, here before next summer." At Pavlo-Keni I left my courteous guide.

After waiting a few hours in a dirty inn full of soldiers, of pipe-smoke, and of the onion-like smell of Turkish cooking, I managed to get a train to Dedeagatch. There another unpleasant surprise awaited me. Bulgaria had two days ago closed her ports and no boat was allowed to sail.

Dedeagatch, the curious little town in which it seems impossible to meet two people of the same nationality, so mixed are the
races, the costumes, the languages, does not show any signs of its recent change of proprietorship. Dirt and dogs and rags are everywhere, as in a true Turkish town.

I remember an old journalist of wide Balkan experience and of great wit, Vico Mantegazza, telling me two years ago: "You ask a Bulgarian for his political ideas or the designs of his country's diplomacy, then reverse his answer, and you will be just as near the truth as you will ever get!"

As a matter of fact, every Bulgarian I have had occasion to talk to, lately, has told me a different tale. To some the enemy is Greece; to others Serbia. At a few minutes' interval I was told, first, by an officer, that Bulgaria wanted another fight with Turkey, "her traditional enemy"—and then that Bulgaria's relations with Turkey had been excellent since the last war, and would probably continue so for a long time.

The impression I received here was that the Austro-German influence is very strong; Bulgaria is ruled by a German, the German
language is spoken and understood everywhere, and business life as well as private life is strictly connected with Germany. I do not know if the charge of ingratitude generally made against Bulgaria is true, but it seems that the country has forgotten the times of the dreadful, century-long Turkish domination and the help Russia always gave to Bulgaria, who owes to the great Slav nation both her birth as an independent State and her existence after the last war.

The immoderate ambitions of the Bulgarian Government, ambitions of increasing her territory and of becoming the great nation of the Balkans, has made her forget all this. It is certain that no mystery is made in Bulgaria of her bitter feelings against Russia, feelings reciprocated by Petrograd papers, which call the Bulgarians "the Balkan Germans."

The personal influence of King Ferdinand has been very strong; he has Germanised his capital and most of the important towns of his nation, and has tried to attenuate as
much as possible the natural intercourse of Bulgaria with the other Slav countries.

The unnatural relations between Bulgaria and Serbia are a continuous danger to the Entente. Bulgaria is certainly going to keep neutral for some time, but supposing Serbia should one day suffer reverses on the Austrian frontier, who could be sure of Bulgaria's attitude?

The infatuation for the German-Austrian power is such that one often hears sentences like this: "Germany and Austria united cannot be beaten by any nation on earth."

News here is practically all of the "made in Germany" type. At Dedeagatch, besides a few Bulgarian papers, the only foreign papers I could get were those of Berlin and Vienna. The successes of the Serbians in the north do not please the Bulgarians; every day there are incidents on both the Bulgarian and Greek frontiers.

The day before I reached Dedeagatch two Bulgarian sentries had been killed in a fight with Serbian sentries. Of course, such
incidents, which would lead to unavoidable international complications if they happened on the frontier of a great European country, are here considered as merely incidents, and one cannot base on them hurried judgments and deductions.

Regarding Great Britain, she has the sympathies of the Bulgarian diplomacy, which is naturally inclined towards the nations who, like England, protected the small Balkan States; but, I repeat, one feels that Bulgaria will shake off her neutrality only when she sees the chance of immediate gain in doing so, and in no case before having waited a long time; time enough to see "how the cat jumps."

* * *

I have found him.

I am not sorry for the uncomfortable journey; I am not sorry for the days wasted, nor for having missed, for a few hours only, the weekly boat from Salonika to Athens; for it was in a little town called Drama,
where I had to stop an hour or so, that I met the wonderful man.

I bless a thousand times the hours of unspeakable boredom, the many punishments for unlearned lessons, the terrific anxiety for the examinations which worried my school days while learning the Greek language, for it was in Tessalian dialect, which, luckily, is more similar to old Greek than modern Greek itself, that my precious man spoke. His existence has been denied by most. He has no equal in England, I am sure, nor in Germany, nor in France, probably not one in all Europe. He is more difficult to find than the white fly or the black diamond of the old Oriental legends. If I had not been afraid of trouble with the British police when I got back to England, I should dare to write candidly that I am glad of Turkey’s declaration of war because, without it, I should never have gone to Drama and never have met him.

“Him” is the man who has never heard of the war.
His look is like the look of any man a little over middle age; his condition is corresponding to the condition of an English gentleman farmer; his education is certainly far superior to the education of an ordinary middle-class man. He knows and still reads daily a few pages of his favourite classic works Homer, Anacreon, Hesiod. He does not read newspapers.

I didn't realise my luck until we had talked a quarter of an hour—at least, struggled hard to do so.

"And what do you think of the war?" I asked him at a certain moment.

"The war! Which war?"

"Yes, the big war; the war between England, France, Russia, and Serbia on one side and Germany and——"

"Is there such a war? But why? What for?"

Then it was my turn to be perplexed. The "Why?" was already a difficult question, which would have required half an hour to be answered properly; as for the "What
for?” I had absolutely no reason to give the old man. Who knows exactly what for? However, I tried to condense my answer in a word. “Jealousy, you know,” I said after a moment.

“Jealousy! Just like at the time of Helen of Troy!” commented my learned partner.

“Yes, just about it.”

“I didn’t think people could still be such fools! When we last heard of war here it was two years ago. Well, the Turks have gone, the Greeks have come, and things are exactly like they were before, only we have to pay more taxes. I suppose the same will happen over there.”

“I am afraid so, too.”

“And who is winning? How long is it going to last? What will be the result?”

“I really cannot tell you all this,” I had to admit.

“You don’t seem to know much more about it than I do,” he said in conclusion, and, after a few seconds, in a relieved tone.
of voice, which clearly meant "Let us go back to an interesting subject:—

"Have you ever read Æschylus’s Persians?"

* * *

I had decided to take the boat at Salonika for Athens, so I took the train from Dedegatch to Salonika. A three hours' stop near Porto Lagos made me realise that it was impossible to reach Salonika in time, so I got out of the train at Drama,¹ and from there, on a dreadful little two-wheeler, a sort of Irish jaunting-car pulled by a horse as thin as a horse can possibly be, I made my way to Kavala, just in time to catch the boat which was to take me back to the civilised world.

I shall never forget my ride to Kavala. I promised a generous tip to the auriga provided he went at full speed. The little horse, under the whip used incessantly by the young man, seemed converted into one of the fantastic animals of the French chansons 'de

¹ Where I had the fortune to come across the man who had never heard of the war.
With neck outstretched, the long mane loose to the wind, he took to a furious gallop, nor did he stop until we reached our destination. The road, if road it can be called, was full of stones and deep cart-ruts, now muddy and now dusty, uneven, and terribly steep. We were crossing the land on which the battle of Philippi was fought. Even now the country retained a sort of tragic look. Not a single house, not a single tree; nothing but stones and bare soil. The sun was hiding slowly behind the hills of Sérès. The great battlefield appeared to me under a sky covered with black clouds edged with scarlet on a sunset of deep orange. And yet this battlefield, the memory of which has lasted so strongly after two thousand years, has swallowed less life than any of the battles of the present war!

I believe optimists call this human progress. . . .

* * *

Travelling on the boat was really leisure; the waters at the side ran so slow that often
they gave the impression that we were not moving at all.

The *Stagyra* was a little cargo boat of Roumanian nationality. I was the only passenger on board, and the crew spoke only Roumanian and a few words of Levantine, picked up during their continuous trips to Asia Minor. The captain fancied himself as a French scholar, but it was very hard to understand him, and still more to be understood.

We left Kavala at night, and should not reach Pireus for nearly two days.

We passed the Isle of Athos and its twenty white convents, inhabited by over a thousand monks. A number of Greeks, who were forced to escape from Turkey, have found asylum in the large dormitories generally offered by the convents to visitors to the Peninsula. A little plume of grey smoke appeared on the horizon, and a few minutes later I could see through the captain's glasses a Greek torpedo-boat, which signalled us to stop. An officer, with a dozen blue-jackets,
came on board, looked at the cargo, at the board books, at my passport, and when he saw I came from Constantinople said in excellent French, "Hope we are going against them soon. It is about time to finish the Turks, in Europe at least. I consider the Turkish intervention fortunate. We can now settle the Constantinople question together with all the others. If Turkey had not moved another war would have been necessary afterwards."

He left our boat, and the Greek torpedo-boat signalled to a few other Greek warships, which we could see in the distance, that everything was all right and that we could go ahead.

* * *

I happened never to have visited Athens when Greece was at war, and I really don't know what the town must have looked like then, since now while she is still neutral the capital shows such excitement, such anxious feelings, and such general nervousness—far
greater than that shown by London, Paris, or Berlin.

Greece feels that she has to go to war again; the two questions of Northern Epirus and of the islands are still waiting solution, and the Provocation of Turkey is such that war is bound to break out.

Athens, as well as most towns of Greece, is full of refugees, especially from Asia Minor. Boycott, requisition, confiscation, and forcible recruiting have made it necessary for nearly all the Greeks, who are the only Christians in the Peninsula, to fly to their Motherland. Their property has been taken by the Turks and often destroyed. Some of the refugees tell the most dreadful tales of abominable cruelty and violence. Torture and death are daily inflicted on Greek subjects by the Mahomedan mob excited by the Turkish officials, who allow all such crimes to be committed with impunity.

The patience of Greece is nearly exhausted, and especially in the army the feel-
ing that something must be done as soon as possible is increasing every day.

Curiously enough, while Turkey seems to be carrying out a regular programme of provocation towards Greece, every time Turkey goes too far and Greece is feared to be about to take up arms, Austria and Germany try to stop her by forcing Turkey to apologise humbly.

Since the war began, a wonderfully organised German propaganda has been set in motion, not in Athens only, but in all Greek towns. Germany purposed by so doing to capture Greek public opinion, and also the sympathies of the countries in which the Greek element is predominant, namely, some parts of Turkey and Egypt. The Wolff Agency overwhelsms Greece with communiqués, news guaranteed to be true, and despatches from Berlin; a tremendous number of German professors, who have spent years and years in Greece, studying and searching every inch of Greek soil, wrote from the Fatherland to all their friends and
acquaintances the most fetching letters, and, lately, news in Greek was printed in Berlin and sent free of charge to every influential person in Greece. The Philadelphie, the German club in the rue d’Homère, has become the centre of such propaganda, and every night there are lectures, kinema shows, etc., to which, as the posters say, “everybody is cordially invited.”

I went out of curiosity to one of these lectures; the audience was not very large, and was mostly composed of Germans. “You know what would happen should the Entente win; which, of course, is almost impossible. Russia would reach the Ægean Sea, the Slavs would be ultra-powerful in the Adriatic, and Greece would never have a chance of fulfilling her aspirations.

“And about England—has Greece forgotten the quarrels with Palmerston and Disraeli?”

The German propaganda is specially conducted against England, France’s interests in the Near East being of little importance,
and German people being very annoyed at the very friendly feeling held by Greece towards Great Britain.

I don't know, for instance, what the numerous German agents felt like at seeing in Athens the most popular of picture-postcards, on which a sentence from a book of Rhaïdes has been reprinted: "Whatever may be the adventures of war, England is always certain to win one battle; namely, the last one."

The confidence of Greece in Great Britain is almost unlimited, and the efforts of Germany to diminish it leads to the opposite result.

During the last year the Greek Army has made enormous progress; the new populations recently annexed have given to Greece an excellent supply of men, out of whom capable and well-trained officers have made some really efficient troops. Cavalry and artillery have also been increased, and new guns have been purchased at Krupps and Creuzot. The same can be said of the Navy, though two new Dreadnoughts, which were
being constructed in Germany and France, are not likely to be delivered now.

The aerial services are also being reorganised, and recently some new aeroplanes were bought in Italy, and it is said that shortly Greece will also have some large modern dirigibles.

The merit of such important reforms belongs especially to King Constantine himself, who remained Commander-in-Chief of the Army even after his assumption of the throne. He understood that the next war would be the decisive one for Greece, and with wonderful activity he has managed to bring his country to the height of the situation.

* * *

On board the Stagyrā.

It is really most refreshing, after having visited a country like Turkey, to spend a few hours in Athens. Everything here seems young and fresh and full of vitality. It seems as though the spirit of the golden
times of old Greece has suddenly returned after a long period of torpor.

The Stagyra has just left harbour, and is now sailing in the Ionian Sea.

A French cruiser has just approached our boat, and has told us to be careful, as floating mines have often been found in this locality during the last few weeks, and now makes her way at our side. Only yesterday, I am told, a Corfu sailing boat had been sunk by a mine, and only two of the crew were saved.

I have been on deck as much as possible because of the scenery, and also because of the fearful smell downstairs. The Roumanian captain is at my side and keeps telling me his worries; this is probably the last journey of the Stagyra, as he has no hope of being able to go back to Constanza now the Straits are closed and there is war in the Black Sea.

"And what are you going to do, now, when you have reached Marseilles, if you can't go back to your country?"
"My men and I have already decided to enlist in France. We are all well-trained and very good shots."

He answered as if this was the most natural thing to do.

* * *

It is just daybreak, and we are going through the Strait of Messina. At our side, instead of the French cruiser, which has left us upon our entering Italian territorial waters, is now the imposing mass of an Italian warship, the Vittor Pisani, anchored in the bay.

On the Sicilian coast Messina smiles, surrounded by woods of oranges loaded with golden fruit. After the terrible catastrophe of four years ago, the former monumental town has assumed the quiet, modest, village-like look of a Japanese seaport.

How far removed we are from those moments when the brute forces of Nature made all nations on earth meet here to relieve the sorrow of the stricken country in the noblest of competitions, and gave the world
the momentary illusion of a wide sense of brotherhood amongst all peoples.

Still, even now, by the side of the Union Jack which floats over the English relief-fund building, the tricolour of Germany waves to the morning breeze.
CHAPTER V

MY SECOND WAR-TIME VISIT TO BERLIN

December 22.

I am just back from my second war-time trip to Berlin. It is about ten weeks since I was last in the German capital, and during the interval a big change has come over the city.

Less cheering, less flag-waving, less enthusiasm; the Berliners still tell you that everything is going on all right, the papers are still very optimistic, the short official bulletins keep very dark any bad news and magnify what is good, but the atmosphere is different and one feels the change in almost everything.

I arrived in Berlin on the day the German
Pacific Squadron was sunk by British ships. Since the sinking of the *Emden* nobody in Germany dared hope for any better destiny for the other ships on the high seas. They realised that all they could expect was to cause as large a loss of life as possible on the English vessels before going to their fate.

The news of the affair off the Falkland Islands greatly impressed Berlin.

It had not been expected that the British naval authorities would act so quickly and at one blow demolish a force whose destructiveness had given the people to hope that a longer life was in store for it.

A remarkable thing is that, though Berlin got to know of the destruction of the four ships only through English sources, the Berlin papers printed it before it was published in London.

The *Lokal-Anzeiger* gave the news in a few lines as sent by a special correspondent in London. It was only last Tuesday, when I saw the English papers in Switzerland, that I realised that the *Lokal-Anzeiger* had been
able to print the news in Berlin before the Press Bureau had given it out in London.

In this case the fact has no importance, but does it not show that Germany has still a wonderful information service and telegraph wire or wireless communication with London?

Since last Sunday it was known in Berlin that some sort of raid was to be attempted on the eastern shores of Britain, and that this first appearance of the German fleet would be followed by numerous other visits in different parts of the English, Scotch, and Irish coasts.

Then one fine day Germany might attempt to disembark a few thousand men, who, of course, would be killed or taken prisoners, but it is thought in Berlin that such a landing will stop England sending troops to the Continent and probably force her to recall some of the troops she has already sent there.

My informant said that the Germans would probably make their first appearance on the British coast very soon and that afterwards
a regular programme of raids, both by sea and by air, was to be carried out.

I am sorry I was not in Berlin when the news of the bombardment of Scarborough was served out to the good Berlin people. The papers will no doubt have magnified its effects to cheer up the population, which seems to need it badly.

Most people there seem very keen on bringing the war to English territory, and if this was not done before it was only because it was feared that such a raid would act as a tonic on recruiting, or even give the last blow to England’s traditional form of voluntary recruiting.

Now, however, the desire to attack British shores has become more and more pronounced, as the continuously increasing figures of Lord Kitchener’s Army, regularly sent to Germany by her informers, have dispelled the illusion that the mass of British people were indifferent to the war.

Though ignorant people seemed to believe in a probable German invasion of one or
another part of England, in military circles in Germany it is realised that it is absolutely impossible, and the raids which will take place on the British coast are only meant to plunge the population into panic and to force the British Government to keep troops in England instead of sending them to the Continent.

The feelings of the capital are very complex; disillusion caused by the campaign in France lasting so long without any apparent progress, sorrow for the enormous number of lives lost, hate for every nation on earth save Turkey, and especially for Great Britain.

At first everybody was absolutely certain that the German Army would take all things by storm, that its superiority was sufficient to smash any resistance in a few weeks. Now, however, the Berlin people are beginning to realise that they have been deceived in this respect.

I don't mean to say that Berlin's people, at least the people in the street, realise that
things are going badly nor that they are giving up hope—that would not be true. They still believe in a final victory for Germany, but they don’t seem to be as certain as they were before. They are getting rather tired of the length of the war.

I can confirm everything that has been written about the hate of England. England is called the “jealous, cowardly country,” and all sorts of insulting names, unjustified either by historical or political precedents. What is absolutely certain is that Russia and France are not hated half as much as the English are.

Curiously enough, this hate, which is very moderate in the military class, and not too strong among commercial and industrial people, who have always considered Great Britain as one of their best customers and who are longing to start trading with her again when the war is over, reaches the highest possible degree of violence amongst the upper classes, the sedentary men of the laboratories, the “Professoren,” pride and, in former times, amusement of Germany herself.
"We have been very humane up to now; we have not killed half the men we could; we have not destroyed half the towns it would have been easy for us to destroy," said to me a quiet-looking little man with gold-rimmed spectacles and a white beard, who has for years occupied a high position at the foreign office, "but if we ever manage to reach England in force we shall respect nothing. We shall fully justify that name of Hun which British papers seem so fond of giving us."

This official, who belongs to a class of people who should really know how things are, is so blinded by hate for England that he cannot even detect the monstrosity of this statement.

I always thought the spy mania in England exaggerated, but now I am absolutely persuaded that even those Englishmen who recognise this peril do not realise the lengths to which it goes.

They have been suspecting waiters and servants, while the spies are in high social positions; they have contented themselves
with searching the houses of German barbers
and grocers whilst neglecting the heads
who collect and forward to Berlin the in-
formation gathered by more humble satellites.

It is very sad to have to say such things,
but I think the most dangerous spies still in
England are not Germans, whether natur-
alised or not, but are people belonging to
neutral countries—even to countries actually
fighting Germany—and subjects of Great
Britain herself.

I would not have written this if I was not
sure of it; the diplomat from whom I got
the information assured me that there are
some English and French of both sexes who
come regularly to Berlin or to frontier towns
through neutral countries and have conversa-
tions with officials and then return.

The restrictions as to luggage and pass-
ports, both in France and in England, are
not half as severe as they should be; they are
even slacker than at the beginning of the war.
I know personally of a number of stolen
American passports under the shelter of
which German spies are now travelling, and an Italian Consul with whom I happened to travel a few days ago said he had discovered two fellows with false Italian passports almost perfectly imitated.

In Berlin I heard people, well-informed people, saying that in every English town of importance, on every spot of strategical value on the British coast, Germany has got *a few friends* keeping their eyes open and ready to receive an eventual German raid and to lend their friends as strong a hand as possible.

* * *

The first morning I woke up in Berlin I could not help feeling a bit nervous. The small hotel I had chosen in the Tiergarten was a few minutes away from the Kaiserhof theatre of my rather unpleasant adventures during my first war-time visit to Berlin.

I knew that some quotations from my newspaper articles had appeared in the German papers, and I was certain that the police, who, in Berlin, are wonderfully well
organised, had managed to identify the man who had written them with the man who had awakened their vigilance a week before the articles appeared.

It was true that this time I had entered Germany through Switzerland, and that they would never think that a British newspaper correspondent would take the trouble to go all that way round. I could not help realising, however, how awkward my position would be if I were to meet face to face in a Berlin street one of the men who had arrested me two months before.

The little dreary devil who hides himself at the bottom of every human being's mind impelled me to go straight down the Leipziger-place to Wilhelmstrasse, and from there to the Linden, the very parts of Berlin where danger for me was greatest.

I was impressed by one great change at once; two months ago the streets were full of soldiers idling about amongst the slow-moving crowd. Now I had to walk half-an-hour before I met a single military uniform,
and that was worn by a wounded soldier. Evidently the contingent of troops which had been kept waiting in Berlin had been poured on to the Russian frontier.

As a protest against French and English fashions, the German dressmakers are trying to make German ladies adopt all-German fashions; the shop windows are full of dummies dressed in impossible clothes of stiff, cheap-looking materials. The ladies' hats are in the flat, round shape of the Bavarian peasant woman.

Some of the shops show what they call evening gowns, and touch the extreme of bad taste with curious creations of a half-religious, half-pantomime-like character. But I have never seen anyone wearing these horrors.

Horse vehicles were much scarcer. When the war broke out Germany thought she could get any amount of horses out of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, but these nations could only send a few thousand animals, and Germany was in a terrible plight, as she needed immediately about twenty
thousand. Then she tried to get horses from Austria and Hungary, but owing to the food and the bad quality of the water the greater part of these animals fell sick or died. Lastly, Germany had to take for military purposes all the horses she could find in Germany and Belgium—even those which had formerly been judged unfit for military service.

Taxi-cabs have reappeared in fairly large numbers.

The shortage of petrol, arising from the Russian occupation of Galicia, has been a very severe blow for Germany, especially when one considers that the enormous special reservoirs constructed in all the German ports for the storage of large quantities of the precious liquid were expecting large supplies when the war broke out—supplies which were never delivered.

All the petrol left in the country was seized by the Government for the use of military motor-cars, aeroplanes, and Zeppelins. Lately the rather serious situation was
cleverly dealt with by extracting from coal in a new, cheap and quick way a liquid called benzol, which is a fairly good substitute for petrol, but which smells horribly when used and requires a lot of work to keep the engines clean.

The coal from which benzol has been extracted is converted into coke, and now German railways, works, and private householders are using solely this kind of fuel. The supply of coal is not plentiful, but up to now sufficient, thanks to the strict economy observed by the German people.

Berlin street illumination has been very much reduced on this account, while in some other German towns it has been completely suppressed.

The number of temporary hospitals has increased enormously. I counted more than thirty houses in Unter den Linden alone over which the Red Cross flag flew. These house hospitals depend partly on the large hospitals for support, and are partly kept up by private charity.
As most of the trained nurses are at the front, there is generally only an old nurse as matron, and under her command a number of ladies do all the work without the help of servants. The large hospitals have no more room for new beds. Doctors are very scarce, and those left seem to be working very hard.

Owing to the German habit of keeping ambulances right in the firing line the losses amongst doctors have been enormous, and fresh ones are continually required for active service.

I had occasion to talk to a doctor who was just back from the front for the purpose of organising a new Red Cross column for work in Poland.

"We try to operate as little as possible," he said. "During the last two months we have not made a single amputation, as we believe that it is a crime to take even a finger from a man if it is not absolutely indispensable to do so.

"The wounded are in enormous numbers, most of them suffering from wounds caused
by their being struck by shrapnel or scraps of shell. It is almost impossible to deal with such cases immediately, and we send them back, after temporarily bandaging them, to Germany. During the last fights on the Yser and near Ypres even the rifle wounds were often infected.

"The wounded had to lie for hours, and often for days, in the trenches or on the battlefield before they could be removed.

"The downpour of shrapnel bullets from the artillery gave us no time to take the wounded to the nearest Red Cross department. In such conditions cases of lock-jaw are fairly common, but luckily up to the time I left the front there were no cases of infectious disease."

"It has been said there have been some cases of cholera in your army?"

"Yes, we had a few cases, not amongst German troops, but amongst the Austrians who are fighting with us in Belgium. We have organised a few large special hospitals for such diseases, as we expect that we shall
have more infectious cases when the winter is over.”

“Do you have many English, French, and Russian wounded in your hospitals?”

“Not many. We don’t keep them in the same hospitals with our own soldiers. Generally we send them down straight away to the concentration camps, where there are always infirmaries, and in these they are cured.”

I don’t know if the impression of dullness I got from this visit to Berlin is due solely to what I have seen and heard or whether it is partly due to the weather. During the five days I was there it rained without interruption. The town was completely washed by heavy showers, which hardly ever stopped.

In such weather the only thing to do was to sit and talk. In the numerous cafés women and old men were constantly talking and reading newspapers and letters from the front to each other and discussing the next German move. Apparently the wish of the whole of Germany is now the capture of Warsaw; they give to the Russian theatre of
operations an importance which was formerly reserved for the western theatre. They consider the war in Flanders as a sort of siege war, refuse to believe in an offensive movement of the Allies there, and want to go for Russia before it is too late.

Berlin seems to need a sort of formula, something to shout out, an immediate object to achieve; but the newspapers engaged in supplying a popular cry seem to be rather unhappy in their choice. At the beginning of the war the cry was “To Paris”; later on “To Calais” seemed to satisfy German public opinions; now everybody shouts “To Warsaw.”

The fact that the two former wishes were not fulfilled does not seem to matter much. Not only that, but every good man in the street will tell you that the march to Paris and the march on Calais are only postponed.

The almost unlimited confidence of German people in their army has certainly been shaken during the last few months, and though nobody will frankly admit that things
are going badly, I have observed a difference between the way they used to talk and the way they talk now.

I do not want to be misunderstood; if a Berliner is asked directly, "Do you think you are going to win?" the answer will come pat, "Yes, we are certain of it." But if you go on talking you will detect from the way in which the man tries to avoid certain subjects, and how he sighs when some others—namely, the Navy and the Crown Prince—come into the discussion, that the beautiful assurance of former days is gone, and that some small cracks in the war organisation begin to be evident even to his eyes. He begins to doubt the prestige of the German army, the destiny of the German race, and the perfection of the military organisation of his country. It is not a question of colour, but of shade, and it is evident that something has changed.

As for the officers, the men of the upper classes, and the people who have realised since the beginning of the war how hard was the task Germany had undertaken, they go
ahead in their military, diplomatic, or simply private work, not daring to look too far. They prefer to die, to disappear before the downfall of their country. It is impossible not to admire them. Most of the officers of Bavarian or Silesian descent are fighting for those who have formerly been their oppressors, and for the supremacy of that Prussia which has killed the independence of their country.

Yet they are sacrificing themselves in a war about the final result of which very few entertain illusions.

The officers and non-commissioned officers who were injured at the beginning of the campaign, and who are so mutilated that they would be of no use at the front, are drilling the new recruits, or making themselves as useful as they can. But practically none have left the army or even taken a temporary leave.

A friend of mine whom I visited in hospital ten weeks ago has now had his foot amputated. But his spirit is not crushed, and he is now drilling recruits at a fortress near Stettin.
Everybody feels Germany cannot waste a single man. Most young men who had been refused for physical imperfections in former years have now been accepted. The fact that most classes of the Landsturm have not been called up yet does not mean that there is no need for them, but only that they are composed of men who, on account of their age and lack of experience and fitness would be of no practical efficiency on the battlefield.

I saw in Berlin some sturdy, strong-looking chaps who looked quite fit to bear arms still in mufti and attending to their usual professions. I asked an officer the reason of this astonishing fact.

"Don't you believe it," he answered me smiling; "such fellows follow an employment which must be covered even in wartime, namely, a job in one of the war-office departments, or else they are not as fit as they look and for some reason or other would be of no use to the army. Besides that, all fit men are as keen on serving in the army as we are in taking them up."
To one who knows how reserved and silent German people generally are, at least with foreigners, about their Government, their diplomacy, and especially about the sacred person of their Emperor, the free way in which they discuss them now is really astounding.

"Our army has been a success," said the same officer to me when asked what he thought of the conduct of the war, "but our diplomacy has proved un ratage complet; everything has been arranged clumsily before the war broke out, and managed still more clumsily since then. Our diplomats seem busy making mistake after mistake; we have lost the sympathies of all countries on earth, even of those who were formerly our friends. If we are to have peace on favourable conditions, our arms must win it on the battlefield, because our diplomacy will not be able to. After Algeciras our diplomacy seems to have lost completely even the bluff qualities which marked her last success."
The Kaiser now begins to be discussed, and I heard more than once this definition of His Imperial Majesty: "A man good enough in peace-time, but hardly capable of bearing the responsibilities or of carrying out alone and successfully the task he has lately undertaken."

The English cartoonists show us every German soldier weighed down by a large iron cross hanging from his neck; in real life the thing is just as bad as in caricature. One often sees groups of fifteen or twenty men every one of whom shows the large square piece of blackened tin hanging from the third button-hole of his grey-green uniform. It is as though the iron cross, instead of being a decoration, was an indispensable accessory of the uniform.

I have seen two battalions of the new recruits coming back from drill to their barracks on the Spree; some of the soldiers did not look more than sixteen, they were headed by a very old captain of the Landsturm and accompanied by a few officers—all old men
(I have seen a lieutenant who was probably sixty-five).

Those who were not aged were suffering from recent wounds. A lieutenant who had evidently been struck by a bullet in the knee, limped painfully at their side, leaning on a stick, his right sleeve hanging empty from his shoulder. He was the only one in the column who smiled cheerfully, and the crowd in the streets looked at him with admiration, while some old men raised their hats.

A curious crowd indeed, this of Berlin. Women and children composed a very large part of it, and the number of people in mourning was really astonishing, far more than I saw in Paris or Vienna. Some people were wearing a white and red armlet or a band crosswise with the number of the regiment to which the man who died used to belong. An old lady was wearing the band with the number of a regiment repeated three times on it. She had lost three sons who were all in the same regiment.
The proprietress of the hotel at which I was staying had lost a son in France and another was lying wounded in a hospital in Belgium.

"The one who died," she said, "had been in England for over four years, and was here taking a holiday when the war broke out. He always used to say that he liked England better than his own country, and yet he had to go. He was killed by an English bullet."

Her story was interrupted by an unrestrained sob, and she went on: "The one in Belgium is very, very bad, and they say that (even should he live) he will be blind for life. I have got two more sons fighting down there. God knows if they will ever come back," concluded the poor woman, crying hopelessly.

The mothers, whether they be English or German, whether they sit in a factory or work in a mill, are always the first to bear the privations of war. Yet in Germany they are bearing these privations nobly indeed. The
courage of their women is an example to the world.

* * *

The few police agents still to be seen in the streets of Berlin are standing outside military and public buildings. They are old men already out of service, called back as substitutes for the policemen, who were all converted into soldiers and sent to the front. Naturally the police service, which was one of the best in the world, has lost most of its efficiency—luckily for me perhaps!

In the Tiergarten large posters hang on the trees, saying that owing to the mobilisation of the police force for active service, the lovers of romantic walks at night (one of Berlin’s favourite pastimes) will have to look after themselves, and that the corporation has not enough men to carry on a service of police after midnight.

The first effect of this is the enormous number of beggars in Berlin streets—women and children, and old and crippled men—standing at the street corners, or sitting in
long rows on the outer steps of churches, and
telling long tales of husbands, fathers, sons
at the war, of miseries of every kind. Even
about this, the Berlin Corporation, always
fond of giving tips to the public, has issued
another proclamation, which reads:—

Don't give anything to people in the
streets asking for help. Nobody starves in
Berlin. There are free distributions of
bread, soup, and potatoes in all quarters
of the town. The money you can spare for
charity should be sent to the Relief Com-
mittee; this will ensure that such institu-
tions are kept going. The beggars are only
trying to make money out of your sym-
pathy, and their tales of misfortune, in
most cases, are absolutely false.

Unemployment seems to have increased
enormously, especially for women, owing to
the fact that most manufacturers have closed
down their works, either for lack of raw
material or for lack of demand. In some
other industries where women cannot take the
place of men workers are badly needed. I
have been told that unemployment is even greater in the northern towns. The toy-making and fancy goods industries are almost entirely stopped, as the stores are full of goods prepared for the usual exportation, which is, this year, entirely paralysed.

Paper, wool, metal, and wooden industries no longer receive their usual supplies of raw material; and though articles manufactured of these are badly needed, the works have had to close.

Metals have increased enormously in price, and all the reserves of so-called noble metals, and also of nickel, etc., were requisitioned by the military authorities. Such metals are indispensable in the making of new guns, and also for repairing the old ones put out of action by long usage. Lead is also very much dearer than usual, and everybody is instructed to take down old gas and water pipes and to bring them to special depôts, at which the metal is bought by weight at standard prices, to be forwarded to military works, where it is converted into bullets.
As for copper, a few old mines which had been given up forty years since because they did not pay when the metal could be imported freely, have been reopened with success and give employment to some of the out-of-work folk.

Bread, except in the Zucker-Baeckereien, which are not forced to sell at standard prices, is getting very scarce, and all bakers study every possible way to make it as heavy and as economic as possible.

Wheat and other cereals, all equally scarce, have been seized by the Government, which lets the different bakers have so much a week and gives instructions about bread substitutes and the methods of making them as healthful and nourishing as possible. The Government also recommends the baker to make his wares as little appetising as possible so that people should not eat too much out of Feinsmecherei—gluttony.

The last quality, if not the other two, is certainly prominent in the German bread I have seen.
Though bread is not the most important part of the daily food of the German population, and though in many provinces potatoes have almost completely taken its place, yet the problem is very serious, and Germany tries to face it in all possible ways. Large quantities of wheat have been imported from Roumania, and potatoes, dried peas, etc., from Switzerland.

Through Holland, Germany still gets a certain amount of fruit, beef, and cheese. Special stores have been arranged for the preservation in good condition of perishable goods for a fairly long time.

Good Munich beer is now a luxury obtainable only in a few high-class establishments. The materials, which usually come from Russia, are naturally all stopped; moreover, the strong young fellows who generally work in the large breweries are now at the front. It would not be surprising in a few months to see Germany reduced to drinking aerated waters.

Upon reflection I think I must be wrong,
however, for there is now in Germany plenty of champagne—champagne of German make, which is sold at very low prices, and excellent French champagne of the best brand, sold a lot cheaper than it was ever possible to buy it, even in France.

A large shop in Unter den Linden displayed a window full of "Mumm," "Clicquot," "Pommery," and practically all other first-class champagnes at five marks (five shillings) a bottle. In the middle of the window was a large poster saying that here was a unique opportunity, and that every Berliner must have on his Christmas dinner table a bottle of good French champagne to drink the health of the Kaiser. This is probably the first effect of the wholesale sack of Rheims. To obtain such a noble result even the shelling of the cathedral was not too much.

I was struck by the enormous number of children in the street. The first time I observed this I thought that I was near a school and that the children were just coming
out; later on I saw that it was the same everywhere. I very often saw a lady with ten or twelve children, as though she were taking a whole school for a walk.

The explanation is that children from the towns and villages near the Russian frontier have been sent to Berlin; a great number have arrived also from Galicia. The schools are all closed, and the children thus left free all day long.

* * *

I have said that the Berliners have been taken by a sort of mania which makes them detest everybody on earth who has not the great fortune to be born a German subject. I was not quite right.

If, besides the enemy she is fighting, Germany loathes Italy for having deserted her and also for having taken Valona (the Albanian port which Germany meant to offer Italy as a bribe for neutrality), America for supporting Belgium and sending ammunition to the Entente, Austria for not doing well enough, etc., she has still a place in her well-
protected heart for one tender love. The lucky country which occupies this position is Turkey. Everyone in Berlin talks of the Turks as the best soldiers in the world (always excepting the Germans, of course). Enver Pasha is considered one of the best servants of the Kaiser.

Turkey has taken the place of Italy in the defunct Triple Alliance. In the streets of Berlin I saw quite a number of fez, only a few of them worn by Turks. The others were worn by children or by the plump beauties of the German capital, amongst whom the fez is perhaps even more popular than is the "Tipperary" cap over here.

Everybody seems to have great hopes in Turkish co-operation. There is a little disappointment over Egypt, Algeria, and Tunis, because they have not awakened yet; but it is hoped that they will do so in a few weeks. I don't believe that military circles are as optimistic as are the general public about Turkish help.

An officer told me that the action of the
fleets in the Black Sea had to be postponed owing to damage to two of the units of the Turco-German Fleet. The transport of Turkish troops from Asia Minor to Egypt had been promised in an endeavour to make a Pan-Islamic war, but it would be very difficult to carry out such a scheme. He said it was not unlikely that a certain contingent of Turkish troops, especially cavalry, would be brought to Germany next spring.

Curiously enough, this love for Turkey is not extended to Austria, which country, after all, has already made the biggest sacrifices in this war.

I saw many wounded Austrian officers in Berlin. Apparently more Austrian troops will arrive shortly in Germany. It seems that more cavalry is urgently needed for the operations in the East.

One evening I was sitting in my stall at the Lessing Theater, where a boring “1870” drama had been revived; in front of me were two Austrian officers, while at my side some German people were discussing the war.
They were speaking loudly about the battle in Galicia, and passed many untactful remarks, evidently meant to be heard by the Austrians. They carried this to such a length that the two officers left their seats and walked out.

Listening to other people's conversations is certainly the best way of getting unsophisticated impressions of what they think, as when they know they are talking to a foreigner their Chauvinism makes them speak in a more optimistic way.

"We cannot keep on for ever racing our troops from west to east; if we do not obtain a success now in Flanders, I don't know what will happen afterwards when England sends her new troops," said one of the theatre-goers.

"Don't be frightened," said another, "she will want to keep too many soldiers at home to defend her own coasts. I think the danger is now on the eastern side, and that we had better go ahead there as far as possible; who knows if we leave the Russians alone, how many men they will concentrate there?"
"Well, I only hope it will soon be over, otherwise we shall all be ruined," said an old man, evidently belonging to the shopkeeper class.

"It will all be over in a year."

"In six months."

"You are wrong, it will be over in four months. The war cannot last more than that; the Tribunal of Brunswick having to call a witness in a case, and the witness being at the front, decided that the witness being detained by an engagement of uncertain duration, the cause should be called again in four months. Evidently the war cannot last longer than that."

Everybody laughed at this typically German joke, but I am afraid the Brunswick magistrate will have to adjourn the case for many a four months, even if the Court has not to renounce the witness completely.

The night life of Berlin, which had struck me so much ten weeks ago, may be considered now as dead. The cabarets are closed, not by the police, but from the lack
of male customers. Of the theatres only the Lessing, the Schiller, and the Neues Schauspielhaus are still open; the music-halls have reduced their prices and are arranging special patriotic shows to attract the public, but their efforts do not seem to have succeeded, and almost every week some of them close to re-open no more.

The great amusement of Berlin is the cinema, where really wonderful pictures are shown. Most of the pictures are faked; but they are so cleverly done that the public does not doubt for a second that it is seeing real battles, and tries to pick out relatives amongst the soldiers in the pictures represented as fighting at the front.

There are wonderful dramas full of English and French spies, traitors, and rascals, and of German heroes—all very much appreciated.

The show is generally closed by slides showing, under the title "What We Have Achieved," photos of Brussels occupied by the Germans, of the ruins of French and
Belgian towns, of destroyed bridges and shelled cathedrals. The audience cheer loudly at each picture.

* * *

"Ist Gott neutral?" I read this astonishing question printed in red letters half a foot high on numerous posters stuck on the walls all over Berlin just as if it was the most ordinary question, such as "Is Holland neutral?"

At first I took it for one of those complicated swear-words one so often hears in Southern Italy. I looked naturally for the answer.

The answer was given by P. Samuel at the Circus, the very theatre at which Max Reinhardt produced his cumbersome "Miracle."

P. Samuel was a name perfectly unknown to me, but I learned that its owner is a preacher of large fame in Berlin. I decided to go to his lecture.

The enormous hall was filled by over 5,000 people. Evidently, thought I, P. Samuel is
a celebrity. In a powerful, low-pitched voice he started to speak amidst perfect silence. I listened.

God is not neutral! He is with the Germans. That is why He has placed them in the middle of Europe. After this war they will be for ever the first nation of the earth. But they must go back to Christ; the bankruptcy of materialism is complete. How could a materialist explain a phenomenon like the present war? The name of Idealist which has covered the whole nation from the beginning of this war has been superb; but an Idealism without religion must lead to final disaster.

The victory of our arms is certain. Since Frederick the Great Germany has attributed to God the habit of being on the strongest side; now we can say that He is behind our guns. But even if they are not the strongest, God is with us all the same. He gave us our genius, our culture, our art, our music; He gave us the mission to make us teach it to the whole world.
The victory is certain, but we must afterwards be worthy of it.

At this moment it was that I really saw a new Berlin, a Berlin unsuspected, a Berlin I did not know, a Berlin which is really a creation of the war.

Five thousand people had come to this theatre to hear that God is not neutral. After the preacher had finished the people sang:—

A safe stronghold our God is still,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He’ll help us clear from all the ill
That hath us now o’ertaken.
The ancient prince of Hell
Hath risen with purpose fell;
Strong mail of craft and power
He weareth in this hour;
On earth is not his fellow.

After that a sudden extraordinary and fascinating thing happened. The preacher, with his strong, calm voice invited the audience to pray with him; Pater noster. . . . The men stood, the women knelt down with the children, struck by a sort of mystic terror.
"Vater unser der du bist im Himmel...."

Five thousand people of all classes, of all social conditions, everyone with a father or a brother or a husband to pray for, recited the Paternoster in the theatre.

They recited it in a low voice, like the murmur of a quiet river.

Then there was a short silence followed by the benediction, recited by the black-bearded monk, and the crowd walked out quietly.

I walked out with the others, and I found myself a little distance from one of the smartest concert-halls in Berlin, in which a certain Professor Blüthner was to deliver a lecture, the title of which had attracted my attention when I had seen it announced in the morning newspapers; it was, "Us, Italy, and England."

As I was just in time I stepped in.

The audience was very select, the five marks admission being devoted to the fund for soldiers fighting at the front. Most of what is left of Berlin society was there.
With polished words the lecturer served out to his hearers the most astonishing theory: England took part in the struggle, not in defence of Belgian neutrality, but in fear of Italy becoming a great Mediterranean Power.

How? The explanation, according to the lecturer, was simple.

The Anglo-French Naval Convention imposed on France the necessity of keeping her fleet in the Mediterranean. If England had kept neutral she would have allowed France to bring her fleet out to protect her defenceless coast; but in that case Italy would have been master of the situation in the Mediterranean.

That is why England preferred to declare war. Clever and simple, this explanation, is it not? What will Italy do?

Mr. Blüthner knows quite well.

Italy, he is quite certain, will decide to join Germany before long. Is she not the motherland of Machiavelli, and Machiavelli, we all know, was decidedly against any form of neutrality. Neutrals, said the lecturer, will
be hated by the beaten nations at the end of the war and despised by the victors.

Therefore Italy will join the German side, and the old ideal of the German Empire (as wrote Bernhardi) will again come to life in a federation of Germany, Austria, and Italy.

I wonder if, in a few months' time, this delightful Mr. Blüthner will be of the same opinion?
CHAPTER VI

VIENNA

During my first visit to Berlin travel by railway was almost impossible, so slow, crowded, and irregular was the service at that time. Now it has been completely restored, and, if anything, probably better than it ever was, thanks to the small number of passengers. Even dining and sleeping cars are obtainable on the principal lines.

In the train which took me from Berlin to Vienna the civilian passengers were no more than half a dozen; all the other passengers were officers and soldiers, mostly wounded Austrians returning to their motherland. Some were very seriously injured and groaned continuously; others had horrible wounds.
badly bandaged; some were disfigured; some had had limbs amputated.

They begged from the other passengers a few coppers to buy fruits or cigars, but hardly anybody took any notice of them. They were nearly all cavalrymen, and, as is usual in Austrian regiments, were of different nationalities. This explains the lack of fellowship among them—the lack of a sentiment which generally so much sustains soldiers of other nations.

At a frontier station we were able to buy some Austrian papers. They gave us a sort of foretaste of life in Vienna. There was very little news, but talk about wonderful victories in Galicia and Serbia (official), followed by a long white space where a comment had been cut out by the Censor.

Two hours before publication a complete proof of every Austrian paper must be presented to the Censor. Anything not considered fit for publication is cut away; consequently the paper is often much ornamented with blank spaces.
The big station at Vienna presents a really astonishing sight. Wounded soldiers and refugees are everywhere. Outside the station it is the same—and it is the same in the large central streets, in the parks, in the churches. Vienna is the first great town completely transformed by the war that I have seen.

On the broad footways at the sides of the streets there are two unending processions of tired, famished-looking refugees. Most of them are from Galicia, but there are thousands also from other provinces of the Empire.

The authorities do not know where to place them; they do not know what to do. They make the refugees walk with all that they still possess on their shoulders. Often a sack and an old chair or some other piece of furniture will be carried about for days and days.

These people have the eyes of those who have seen the horrors of war without knowing what it is all about, without asking or being
able to understand why their fields should be destroyed, their houses burned, and their pacific existences overturned by the calamity. Vienna does not know what to do with them.

The subscription list started for the refugees has not been successful, and Vienna is invaded by an enormous number of women, children, and old men, penniless, without clothes, and with no means of subsistence. It is very difficult to suggest a solution to such a condition of things. The Government has sent 60,000 to 70,000 of the fugitives to towns in the west; but there the same phenomenon repeats itself on a smaller scale.

The first effect of such a condition of things is the enormous increase in the prices of food-stuffs. Milk, potatoes, meat, sugar, etc., are double the usual price; eggs have become a food for the rich, and bread, even of very bad quality, is expensive and scarce.

Special decrees have been issued with the purpose of restricting the use of flour to no more than 50 per cent. in bread and 60 per
cent. in cakes, which are not allowed to be made, even in private houses, more often than twice a week.

In the restaurants almost every dish has become more expensive, and there are no more dinners at fixed prices.

Coal is a luxury, it being an absolute impossibility to get any from the Westphalian mines. Gas has nearly doubled in price, and poor people who could not pay their bills had it cut off immediately.

Most of the hotels are full of families of the Galician aristocracy. These families seem to be living a very gay, frivolous, and expensive life. Smart carriages and motor cars run about the streets that are full of starving people; while ladies, in £1,000 furs, and gentlemen, smoking half-sovereign cigars, lounge about the hotels. I have never in my life seen a more insolent and less appropriate display of wealth. The rich Galicians show no inclination to help the poorer refugees. "We are refugees, too," they say.

Outside the stations I saw a crowd of
people waiting for soldiers to arrive. Having lost faith in what the newspapers say, and aching for news, the population is trying to get it directly from those coming from the front. Nearly all the decently dressed Viennese people wear mourning and nearly all have the armlet of the Red Cross.

The number of wounded in Vienna is astonishing. All the schools, public buildings, assembly rooms, most of the theatres and halls, and even some of the pavilions which generally shelter picture shows and other attractions, including the famous Circus, have been converted into hospitals. All the Viennese are trying to nurse soldiers to the best of their ability; but everything is scarce, from bandages to medicines, from cotton wool to beds and litters.

A new calamity seems to be approaching now. Smallpox is breaking out in the poorer quarters and is claiming many victims, especially amongst the refugees. Another epidemic that is visiting Vienna is cholera.
The fact is being kept very dark by the authorities to avoid panic; but it seems that during one week more than 500 lives were lost through the terrible disease.

While taking my after-lunch coffee I was astonished to hear at my back a conversation taking place in the Venetian dialect; two soldiers were talking about the war, and their accents did not leave me in any doubt as to their nationality. I went to them and, after a few minutes, won their confidence and got them to talk.

They had been wounded in Serbia and had been sent back to Vienna to be cured. Now they were well and were going back to the front again next day. I shall never forget the two poor young fellows; one of them was just twenty, the other about twenty-five; and both were natives of Trieste.

They confirmed all that has been said about the system of the Austrian officers, and added things which I should not have believed had I not heard them from the victims of the atrocities themselves.
They told me that in the Austrian Army the word of reproach has been substituted by a spit in the face or a stroke with a switch; the whip and the revolver in the hands of officers at the back of their men serves to send them forward. The hesitation of a second is punished by a shot. The soldiers obey; but during the struggle there is always a bullet for the brutal officer which does not come from the enemy's lines, and which avenges the murdered private.

All sorts of tortures and insults are inflicted on the soldiers.

I could not find a word of consolation for the poor chaps who were going back to such an infernal life. I shook hands with them and walked away.

All the other soldiers—German or French, Russian or Serbian—are, after all, fighting somebody they detest for the victory of their Motherland; but these poor chaps, forced to give their lives for a nation they detest, to fight men against whom they have no hate and who could perhaps help them to get back
their independence, are the most pathetic figures of the whole war.

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The Austrian war loan seems to have been an absolute failure. Nobody wants to buy shares, and the few millions subscribed were taken by Government employees, who were forced to do so. The high financial world and the aristocracy have been very stingy; so now the Government is trying to get at the small purses.

On the café table, at the post offices, and in the hotels numerous pamphlets are to be found saying that everybody ought to subscribe at least twenty-five crowns, not only as a contribution to the nation's need, but also as an excellent investment. Nobody seems to be anxious to make the excellent investment.

It is the middle class which is said to be suffering most under these conditions, for they have no money in the bank, they hardly manage to make any money at all at the present moment, and, at the same time, they
don't want to admit that they are in need of anything.

Vienna has, at the present moment, scores of families—well-dressed and well-connected—who are starving at home, families which, before the war, used to live up to their full income and generally above it, and which, now the father is unemployed or at the front, are absolutely penniless and too proud to accept anything from public charity.

But the Viennese is certainly one of the most light-hearted persons on earth—the war is going badly, the town is full of starving people, the empire is engaged in a dangerous adventure, the end of which he does not take the trouble to prognosticate; but what does it matter? He talks about the war to crack a joke on the subject; he sees and laughs at the faults of his allies; he manages to have a good time as far as possible. The few theatres left open are crowded, as well as the cafés, the cabarets, and all other places of amusement.

About politics, or the conduct of the war,
he does not care to talk. The argument is sad and it is not even very safe to say exactly what one thinks on the subject.

If anybody is heard talking pessimistically about the war he is denounced to the authorities. A case is made against him, and the imprudent chatterer is almost certain to be condemned. I know of a man who got two months' imprisonment for having said that he did not believe the newspapers.

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Besides the hospitals fixed up in numerous picture-galleries, theatres, university buildings and private houses, the Prater's constructions given up to depôts, magazines, and aeroplane sheds, and the complicated system arranged for the collection of money and comforts for the troops, all of which have altered considerably the general appearance of the city, the thing which astonished me most was the activity of a society which bears the harmonious name of "K. u. K. Oesterreich - Ungarischer - National - Sprachen - Gebrauchs-Verein," the nearest translation
of which I can think of is "Society for the exclusive use of the national language in the Austro-Hungarian Empire."

Vienna is certainly one of the towns outside France which shows a strong French character, and the language, as well as the life of the whole city, bears evident marks of it. Well, this society wants to rid the Viennese slang of French words, as well as of all words not in the German dictionary. The first effects of this movement have been to make numerous hotels, cafés, and cabarets change names, and the publication of pamphlets, distributed freely all over the town, in which are full lists of the taboo words, as well as of the numerous French and English Christian names which are quite usual in Vienna, and which, it is requested, should now be given up.

However, the great majority of Viennese people laugh at this mania; the Chauvinistic spirit is not very much developed in Vienna, and the hatred of England, which is Berlin's strongest feeling, is hardly noticeable here.

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CHAPTER VII

SWITZERLAND

We have become so used to regarding Switzerland as an all-the-year-round playground, and the Swiss as a race of hotel-keepers, waiters, and guides, that many people were quite surprised to learn, when Switzerland mobilised, that she could put an army of 250,000 in the field.

Switzerland, which has been for centuries the battlefield of European nations, has understood that even her perpetual neutrality, guaranteed by the Powers, could not save her from the danger of an invasion if she did not boast a fairly strong army, and in 1874 she organised a proper military service.
A regular army as known in other countries Switzerland does not possess, but she has an admirably organised militia, an army of citizen soldiers. The German Emperor, during his last visit to Switzerland, in September, 1912 (during the first one, nineteen years before, he had a much more enthusiastic reception), assisted at the manoeuvres of the Swiss army, and his dream of a German Switzerland as a "Germanic Dependence" must have had a very severe shock.

His reception was nothing more than polite, and all the shouting and flag-waving part had to be done by a large portion of the 300,000 German subjects living in Switzerland, who took the trouble to go to Berne specially to see their Kaiser in his carefully chosen uniform. William II., being now aware that the Swiss nation does not mean to preserve her neutrality by sending troops only to the Franco-Italian frontier, will realise that the fact that the Swiss President carefully avoided showing him, or any of his officers, the fortifications
of the German frontier was not a mere coincidence.

It was just a few days after this famous visit that a Franco-Swiss newspaper printed this wonderful little paragraph about the German Emperor:—"People have so often talked about the cult of peace without believing in it that one may finally be permitted to believe in it without talking about it."

In any case, the Kaiser, as soon as he was back in Berlin, sent to the Swiss Government 2,000 yards of grey-blue cloth to dress a group of the Swiss infantry troops, which at that time were still wearing very dark uniforms. The Kaiser observed that those uniforms would be very conspicuous in wartime, and his present of cloth was most appreciated, and lately, with a slight modification in the shade, adopted.

Troops dressed in this way are now watching the German frontier.

Though the Swiss recruit has a very short training, he is quite effective as a soldier.
As a schoolboy he has a proper physical training, and when he leaves school he generally joins a rifle club. At twenty he is liable to military service, which for every Swiss lasts a period of twenty-five years. During the first year he is called out for recruits' service, which in the infantry lasts forty-five days, in the cavalry eighty days, and in the field artillery fifty-five days. On completing his first year he joins the Élite, or active army, and remains in it for twelve years. On leaving the Élite men pass to the Landwehr, in which they remain until their twenty-fifth year of service.

A third line of troops for home defence is furnished by the Landsturm, which is composed of all able-bodied citizens between the ages of seventeen and fifty who are not embodied in the Élite or Landwehr.

The Federal Army thus constructed may be said in round numbers to consist of:—Élite, 135,000; Landwehr, 82,000; and Landsturm, 63,000; total, 280,000—an astonishing figure if one considers the total
population of Switzerland and how cheaply this army is obtained.

* * *

Before the beginning of this war one must admit there was a sort of ill-feeling in the Swiss Confederation against France. To protect her national industries the Republic used to be very strict on the subject of imports from Switzerland, and the custom tariffs for exportation of goods to France used to be much higher than those upon exports into Germany or Italy. Since the war broke out everything has changed; the example of Belgium and of what happened to that unfortunate nation, for the sole reason that she was "in the way of the Germans," has made Switzerland think how analogous is her own situation with the situation of Belgium.

The so-called "verbal treaty" existing with Germany stood little chance of being respected after the way in which the regular treaty with Belgium had been violated.

At the very beginning of the campaign
there was great fear of France trying to pass through Switzerland, fear increased artificially by the Swiss Press, which has always been frankly in favour of Germany. But now the Swiss population begins to realise how things are really going, and their attitude is really and strictly neutral.

It appears that the respect and ingratiating attitude towards Germany shown by Switzerland at the beginning of the war was the usual behaviour of the small weak boy towards the school bully. Moreover, there was some excuse for this. It is very difficult to obtain any papers other than German in Switzerland, and all the calumnies printed in them were taken by the Swiss population for gospel truth.

Now some of the Berne papers begin to show a little more independence, and print side by side the different official communiqués of the various nations.

The Government has begun to think seriously about the food supply question. Supposing Italy should go to war—which, it
is realised, may quite well happen any day—what would happen to Switzerland, surrounded by Germany, Austria, France, and Italy? Where could she get the foodstuffs she is bound to import?

Large depôts and stores of all kinds have been arranged, and severe measures have been taken against contraband runners, who up to October last were carrying on extensive operations. The Government has monopolised the mills and the whole of the wheat reserves, as well as all imports, which are taken up by the Government and sold at standard prices and in no larger quantities than is absolutely indispensable.

All the Swiss people I came across seemed to be occupied more by their commercial interests, badly hit as they are by the war, than by anything else. They only wish for the war to cease, the sooner the better.

There are hardly any foreigners in Switzerland, though some Swiss hotelkeepers have been advertising both in England and Germany: in England that
the German managers and waiters had been removed; in Germany that no English guests would be received in their hotels.

However, business was very slack, and everybody seemed very pessimistic about the coming summer season.

Though the sentence, "Politically we have nothing to get and nothing to lose," is often repeated, I met somebody who showed me that the great crisis has awakened hopes of national development even in this quiet, business-like little country.

At the Bubenberg, a large Berne café of world-wide fame, I met a Swiss ex-officer whose white hair saved him from the danger of the Landsturm service. In front of him, on the marble table, a large map of East Switzerland was wide open, and he was tracing a few mysterious lines on it with a blue pencil. When I asked him about it, he told me that the north frontier of Switzerland could never be safe unless it was a "natural" one.

"Our canton of Shaffausen," said he, "is
completely isolated among German land. We want this little piece of territory between Ludnigshafen, on the Boden-see, and Bargen. We want also the Wutach frontier, from the spot where this river marks our frontier with Germany down to the Rhine.”

“And what about your neutrality?” I asked him.

“Oh, the neutrality, mon ami, could not mean much in a general modification of the European map; and beside that, vous savez l’apetit vient en mangeant; and if everybody has a piece of Germany, why should we keep out of the feast?”

It will be just a hundred years next September since the Prussian Principality of Neuchatel became a Swiss canton. Well, after all, the old Swiss captain’s idea would be a rather smart way of celebrating a centenary.
CHAPTER VIII

ITALY

"What will Italy do?" The question is often repeated in the newspapers of the capitals of Europe. The interest in the attitude of Italy, the only Great European Power which has not, to the time of writing, taken a part in the war, seems to increase every day.

For one who is here, in Rome, the answer can hardly be doubtful. Italy looks very much like a country getting ready for war; like a country that understands to the utmost that this is an occasion on which to fulfil her national ambition—an occasion that will never return.

When the war broke out, Italy found her-
self in a peculiar position. Bound by the decrepit Triple Alliance to Austria and Germany, but with her interests, feeling, and sympathies on the side of the Entente, Italy did not, unfortunately, feel strong enough to take a decision straight away. Her army, especially the artillery, was in need of much material; the Tripoli war, the plan and conduct of which was marred by the very same mistakes England committed in the South African War, had swallowed up more money and men than had been expected. Her diplomats, though warned of the approaching storm, did not believe that it would break so soon, and under such a condition of things, neutrality seemed for the moment the only possible attitude.

Italy fully realised that if she wanted to take her part in this war, or at least if she wanted to safeguard her own interests, she had to get ready first. The large quantity of guns, which had been ordered at Krupp’s, was not supplied, and Italy had to make good the deficiencies with her national industrial
resources. Nearly all the large metal-works in Italy started making guns under the supervision of artillery officers; new uniforms, new boots, ammunition, sanitary necessities, etc., have been prepared in very large quantities. The fortresses on the Alps and the eastern frontiers have been reinforced, and a number of regiments generally quartered in South and Central Italy have been moved steadily to the northern towns.

This as far as the Government goes. As for the spirit of the army, it could not be keener. In the barracks the old songs of the "Risorgimento" have been resurrected and have taken the place of the Neapolitan melodies.

Many officers told me that their men kept asking, "When are we going to fight?" just as if Italy was already at war. The aspiration to the possession of Trento and Trieste, which, during the last twenty years seemed to have weakened considerably, has now reawakened as strong as ever, and the many inhabitants of Dalmatia and Istria, who have
left their homes for Italy during the last months, to escape persecutions and vexations of all kinds, are carrying on an active propaganda.

Almost every day there are demonstrations in favour of going to war. The university towns of Italy are like powder-magazines ready to explode at the first spark of war, and the professors have to use all their authority to keep their students quiet and to prevent them running away to enlist in France or Montenegro. Before the war the most educated Italian classes gave to Germany a place of honour amongst the cultivated nations of the world. Now this feeling has completely disappeared and its place has been taken by disgust and hate for the country which has disguised her incurable barbarism under a mask of more or less real culture. German people in Italy have never got on very well with the majority of the population, but now they are having a very hard time. Everybody tries to avoid them, in the way of business and relations of all
other kinds, and most of those who did not go back to fight for their country have left for America, or have become naturalised Italian citizens.

Public opinion in Italy varies from province to province. While all the south is frankly eager for war as soon as possible, in the northern provinces, the richest and most industrial of Italy, the population is just now recovering from the financial losses inflicted by the last war, and would prefer Italy to keep neutral as far as possible.

This does not mean that the war would be unpopular there. Rich provinces are a little like wealthy people; they would rather keep quiet and continue in their profitable business, but when the danger is near and fighting is unavoidable they give up without regret their everyday habits and bravely do their duty.

The different tendencies of the north and south meet in Rome. Though there are no more convinced adherents of the Triple Alliance left in Italy, and though you cannot
find a single Italian who will say that his country ought to have fought side by side with Austria and Germany, the neutralist party is still very strong, and the idea of making *cause commune* with France still keeps some of the intransigent Catholics from joining the War Party. The Socialists have assumed a sort of wait-and-see attitude which will easily be changed at the right moment to frank support of the war; and the new Nationalist Party, though only a few years old, is making gigantic progress.

The most important part of the Italian Press has never ceased, since the beginning of the war, to try and make the nation feel the disadvantages of an uncertain position. Without England or France having supported them, or even treated particularly well their correspondents (many Italian journalists, Barzini included, were arrested and sent back to Paris when found too near the front), the Italian Press, with few and not important exceptions, has opposed the idea of neutral policy. One of the most important
of Italian journals printed as a sub-title to its heading in big type the sentence of Machiavelli: "Neutrality is never suitable to a nation, for a State who keeps neutral loses her friends, does not gain advantages and, when the war is over, ingenerates such diffidence about her future conduct that no other nation cares to conclude an alliance with her."

Germany and Austria, recognising the trend of public opinion in Italy, did not economise money or trouble in an endeavour to change its course if possible. Two or three newspapers were bought by a sort of secret trust which depends upon "Palazzo Venezia," the Austrian Embassy in Rome; some others were largely subventioned; news made in Germany was sent out, not only to all newspapers, but to private houses. A friend of mine kept a full collection of such pamphlets right from the beginning of the war. The circulars are issued every two or three weeks, and generally begin with a formal denial of everything that has been
stated by the French, English, and Russian official bulletins. Accusations of pillage, robbery, murder, and cruelties of every possible kind are made against the Allies, and are proved by bogus letters from German officers and soldiers. This system, though it certainly does not succeed amongst the more educated classes, scores a little more amongst the lower-class folk, who are highly flattered to see amongst their weekly correspondence a large letter bearing for crest the Austrian or German eagle.

Another system largely employed by Germany in their attempted work of modifying Italy’s public opinion is the free supply of photographs and sketches to illustrated newspapers. Above all, however, they have concentrated their endeavours upon the kinema.

The picture-house has ceased to be the means of spending an hour far from business and worry, in a restfully darkened room, watching a moderately amusing and, possibly, highly moral film, which does not suffer if one misses part of it. Now it has
become an instrument used by Governments for educating the people.

Germany produces a large number of war films, both for home display and for abroad. There are descriptive, allegoric, sentimental, even comic films inspired by the war: the soldiers of the Kaiser do the most wonderful things. They are strong, generous, good-humoured. Most of these scenes are arranged, and only slices of real life in the case of military revues and parades are introduced.

The German authorities seem to be specially anxious to prove one thing: that the German soldiers are behaving like gentlemen, and that the stories about their deeds in Belgium and France are calumnies.

Perhaps this very earnestness in trying to alter a prevalent belief proves that Germany has not quite a clear conscience on the subject.

So, at least, seem to think the Italian public; and when some such pictures were shown lately in Rome and Milan, nobody
took them seriously, and they were considered as childish fakes.

Such films are offered to picture-house managers on extremely tempting terms by special agents, who tour all over Italy. Nearly all the atrocities which were proved to have been committed by the Germans themselves are attributed in these films to the Belgians. In one of them a Belgian woman sets fire to the bed on which three wounded German soldiers are dying, and runs away after taking their watches and pocket-books. In another picture the old tale of the *treachery* of the Louvain inhabitants is staged in a very fierce manner; I have also seen a picture of a cavalry charge given as having been actually taken during the war in Flanders, but which was really part of a two years' old manoeuvre film, easily recognisable because the uniforms have changed since then.

As no English or French war pictures reach Italy, the local firms have to make their own war-films to suit the taste of their public. In the country round about Milan, Turin,
and Rome, the principal centres of the Italian film industry, cardboard Belgian villages and churches, trenches, and terrible-looking fortresses have been constructed, and one can often see hundreds of "Tommies" in khaki, French "pioupious" and helmeted Germans fighting miniature battles.

Another of Germany's devices to capture Italian public opinion was the famous tour of Italian journalists, organised by a well-known German emissary, who, by the way, has been arrested lately as a spy in Naples.

None of Italy's best-known journalists, nor any correspondents of predominant papers, accepted the invitation, and only about twelve young men, belonging to second-rate journals, went, chaperoned by the vigilant Herr Sweinhart.

But they were only allowed to see parades and specially prepared trenches, or batteries which had never been exposed to the fire. They were shown a concentration camp, but were not allowed to speak to the prisoners.
They were taken to Liège to see the forts, but not to the destroyed towns in Belgium. Then they had to go back to Berlin and were kept there in one of the principal hotels, waiting for the moment when everything should have been arranged for them on some quiet spot of the Russian frontier. The tour came to a sudden and rather unfortunate end, as the journalists, having realised that they were allowed to see nothing of interest, but only what pleased Herr Sweinhart, decided to return to Italy at their own expense, and did not write a line about their experiences so as not to excite the hearty laughter of their wiser colleagues.

The cleverest move of the Austro-Germans in the direction of keeping Italy quiet as long as possible was certainly the sending of von Buelow to Rome as German Ambassador.

The personal charm of this clever diplomat probably accounts for Italy's attitude during the last months. He acted, and is still acting, like a rubber cushion between the
Teutonic ruggedness and the Italian susceptibility.

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In the little "Trattoria" near Piazza Colonna, in which most parliamentary men meet in preference to the big, gilded, French-style restaurants, where the food is excellent, the wine taken with a gay murmur from large barrels showing at the back, and where hardly any "outsider" or any foreigners dare enter, so modest is the appearance of the establishment, half-a-dozen world-known writers, politicians, and journalists were enjoying a "fritto di pesce," abundantly accompanied by the light wine, "delli Castelli." The subject of the conversation was, of course, the war. All the sympathies were on the side of the Entente. A copy of The Times was passed from one to another, and the most important news was translated for the benefit of the few of the company who were not familiar with English. A well-known writer of military criticism in one of the principal Italian papers, a former Major
in the army, produced a letter from one of his sons, now fighting with the French army in Alsace. The letter was very enthusiastic about everything and everybody at the front; the young man was one of the very last to manage to join the voluntary corps, Italy having, since December last, stopped completely the granting of passports to young men liable for military service.

The wonderful work of the "Dante Alighieri," the society which has been struggling hard during the last years to keep the Italian language alive in the provinces under foreign domination, the last poem of D'Annunzio on the war, the concentration of troops near Verona, were, in turn, subjects of conversation. I got the impression that for them the question was not, "Are we going to war?" but, "When are we going to war?"

* * *

Italy has suffered very much already for this war. All her commerce with the Continent has been stopped, as well as her ship-
ping lines trading with Constantinople and the Black Sea. The shortage of petroleum, coal and wood has hit many of her industries, and some foodstuffs have increased considerably in prices.

Moreover, the annual tide of foreigners which is the principal resource of many Italian towns has not come this year, and Italy begins to realise that if she is not going to war now, she has made enormous financial sacrifices to equip her army. She will have shared all the disadvantages of the fighting countries without being able to get any of the recompense.

It is now for Italy to make a great decision. If she believes in her destiny, if she feels that there are in her energies, intelligence, and possibilities of taking her real place amongst the great Powers of Europe, she has to fight.

If she feels she is not equal to such a task, then she had better become at once the first of the defensive countries and renounce all her dreams of empire; she had better sell
her fleet, economise on armaments, and invest the money saved in first-class hotels, casinos, and spas. She has certainly beauty and natural advantages enough to out-rival Switzerland, Spain, or Norway.

But the modern Italian is rather tired of being the citizen of a country admired only for her blue skies, her Roman monuments, and her rich museums. He is more proud of her industrial enterprise, of the wide expansion, of the wonderful progress of his country in the last fifty years, than of the fair pages of her history. He will not hear about renouncing what he calls the third renaissance of Italy.

That is why I believe Italy is going to fight.
CHAPTER IX

FRANCE

Notes taken while Motoring on the Riviera.

MENTONE.

In the southern sunshine it is a strain to realise that France is at war, that, in the north, the biggest war the world has ever seen is being fought out desperately day after day. The only unusual sight is the groups of Senegalais, the French Colonial soldiers, and the blackest niggers I have ever seen, walking at leisure on the parade with a curious movement of the arms and of the whole body, which reminds one, at the same time, of a bear in his cage and the balancing efforts of a dancer on the tight-rope. They
are waiting expectantly to be sent to the battlefield, and in the meantime enjoying themselves, walking about holding each other's hands, and laughing at everything with a wide, good-natured laugh. Everybody likes them and spoils them. To see the Senegalais walking amongst the palm trees under the tropical sky of Mentone, clad in dark blue with the wide scarlet belt round their waists, is really a pleasure to the eyes.

They look and feel at home. When I see a coloured man or a Chinaman in the Strand I generally feel sorry for the poor beggar; he would be all right in Pernambuco or in Canton, but in London he looks like a violation of the natural order of things. That's why I was pleasantly surprised when I saw the Senegalais of Mentone. Most of them are very fine fellows, well over six feet, and quite a number show wound scars and medals, which prove that they will not be new to fire when they take the field.

In addition to the coloured troops, not
many soldiers are seen now in Mentone, as the wounded sent down here are still in the hospitals, and only very few risk the air. But a few may be seen in the sunshine, surrounded by a small crowd of admiring children and of sympathetic grown-ups of both sexes. The temporary hospitals have been arranged in a number of the larger hotels which were formerly owned by Germans, and prove now most useful and comfortable for the French wounded.

Mentone had during the last few years acquired the fame of being one of the most Germanised towns of France. This sort of pacific invasion was encouraged by the German Government in the hope that Italy would stick to Germany in the long-expected struggle, and she could then have a sort of _avant-garde_ of friends in French territory at the beginning of hostilities. Instead, when the war broke out, after a week's hesitation France withdrew practically the whole of her frontier troops and guns, while Italy was doing the same at the other side.
When the Germans were forced to leave, one of the expelled hotel-keepers, after passing the Italian frontier, which is at a few yards' distance from the last houses of Mentone, showing his fist to the crowd still on French territory, shouted: "Au revoir! In two weeks in Paris!" His hotel has been the only German house in Mentone wrecked by the population.

* * *

**Monte Carlo.**

In every small town along the Riviera I came across I never failed to ask: "Are there any British wounded here?"

The answer was always the same "No, not yet, but we are expecting some, sir"; or, "Mrs. or Miss So-and-So has offered her villa, with doctors and nurses and everything, so they are bound to come soon."

And this is perfectly true. Everywhere, even in small villages like La Turbie, English ladies have offered to equip their villas as hospitals for British wounded. But
no one has been sent yet, and the beautiful houses in that wondrous climate, which would certainly mean a delightful and quick convalescence, still remain empty.

If no use is made of such generous offers the fault will more easily be found in England than in France.

During a long motor trip all along the Upper Corniche Road I saw hundreds of French wounded who have become quite well and will go back to the front in a few days’ time.

I spoke to some of them, and all admitted that there is nothing like staying, even for a very short time, on the Riviera to pick one up after the life of the trenches.

Not only wealthy people in their villas, but many among the middle classes and even poor folk find room for convalescent wounded in their homes; a doctor goes round every morning, but all the nursing is done by the families who take charge of the sick men.

Motoring on the Riviera is now a fairly
complicated business, in spite of the passports and other documents which everyone now carries. At every control—and there is a control at every village—there are difficulties.

This severity rather surprised me, considering how easily one can get into France from England, Switzerland, or Italy.

The explanation was given me by a lieutenant, who said that, during the last few months, German spies had been pouring into France continuously, either by means of the passports of neutral nations, or by landing in the seaside towns near the frontier from a small boat. This accounts also for the fact that sailing or boating has been forbidden, except in special cases, and for fishing purposes.

The war has affected the Riviera in one curious way. Certain articles have become quite cheap, others more expensive than usual, owing to the fact that the goods service with Paris is infrequent and too slow for perishable stuff, and that Italy,
since the war broke out, has stopped any exportation of foodstuffs.

Eggs, cheese, and butter are getting dearer, while flowers, oranges, &c., which generally are exported to Austria, Russia, and England, are now obtainable at extremely low prices.

This last Christmastide the Riviera suffered a famine of Christmas-trees. The young pines used for this purpose generally arrive in large quantities during the week preceding Christmas and come from Col di Tenda, on the other side of the frontier.

But wood is amongst the things the exportation of which from Italy has been stopped, and as it was too late to get pines from somewhere else, the children, for the most part, had to be content with curious substitutes; while the Senegalais in Mentone had their first, and let us hope last, Christmas-tree made with a huge laurel.

Life is altogether considerably cheaper than usual in Monte Carlo, at least for the
winter visitors. Most of the hotels have reduced their tariffs, and I could name more than one very first-class house which, probably for the first time in their existence, have quoted *en pension* terms.

Summer is naturally the quiet season on the Riviera, and it is then that Monte Carlo proceeds with her yearly toilet, undergoes transformations and improvements. Quite a number of embellishments had just been started when the war broke out, and at the moment these constructions remain unfinished, waiting for quieter times.

For instance, the familiar square in front of the Casino, and the Hotel de Paris, with its lawns and flower-beds, has become an enormous hole, an excavation which looks like a quarry. In a day still distant it will become an underground garage in which the cars of the visitors of the Casino can wait instead of crowding all along the Avenue des Palmiers.

The work, which was begun last summer
and should have been finished by December, was interrupted by the war. The Casino is open, with Louis Ganne, of "Marche Lorraine" fame, Caruso, and all the other great artists. None of the usual Russian and American customers are seen in the salles-de-jeu.

When I entered the roulette room the gambling was very slack. There were only eight or nine people round the green table. Three old ladies of the special kind one sees only in the Casinos of the Riviera—blonde wig, wrinkles patiently filled up with pink paint, and a small, sickly dog emerging from a fur-lined bag—were playing very methodically with very small stakes; two Americans were staking high and losing a fair amount; an elderly Englishman of the retired major type was going en plein every now and again after consulting each time a small red-bound book, in which all the en pleins of perhaps twenty years were marked, while a party of Spaniards, evidently new to the green table, were playing irregularly
in a foolish way and losing nearly every time.

A young French artillery officer, still limping, and with his right arm suspended by a black silk bandage, entered the room, came straight to the table and put two louis on the 14 a second or so before the *rien ne va plus* was pronounced.

The little ball stopped on the 15.

A lady who was with the officer excitedly pinched his undamaged arm.

"You never listened to me, Jean," she called out. "You forgot the little mark on your left shoulder."

Everyone within earshot, the imperturbable croupier included, smiled. The officer himself joined in, and could not help giving some explanation.

"My wife," he said, "insisted on putting my money on the number corresponding to the number of my wounds. I have fourteen to speak of, but I did not count a tiny scratch which a bullet made on my left shoulder."

Then, addressing his wife: "The next
time I come back we will count everything. We'll get an en plein then!"

* * *

NICE.

Though the affluence of foreign people at Nice is, this year, greatly reduced, the population of the town is perhaps higher than when the season is in full swing.

Nice has, this year, an unusual class of guests, people who, up to a few months ago, used to think of Nice as a sort of earthly paradise reserved to the plutocracy of the new and old world, and who would never have seen the Côte d'Azur if the war had not chased them from their homes in the east of France and in Belgium.

Nice has, at the present moment, five or six thousand refugees, and more are expected. I saw groups of them walking along the long dusty road that runs at the side of the Paillon, the little torrent which, in winter, looks quite a respectable river.

Here is nothing of the Nice that English
people know; no hotels, no palm trees, no flower-beds, no smart shops.

The town in its eastern part has preserved its look of sixty years ago, the only new constructions being two huge hive-like barracks. It is probably uglier and dirtier than the commercial quarter of Marseilles itself.

The refugees have chosen as their favourite promenade this dingy quarter. Here they meet the soldiers who are coming back or are going to their country, here the Corporation of Nice distributes twice a day free soup to the poor.

The refugees are not often seen in the smart part of the town. The Promenade des Anglais, the Jetée, and the Place Massena are a background too much in contrast with their ragged clothes. They don’t care to walk near the well-dressed people lounging in basket-chairs along the promenade.

Most of the refugees have taken with them all they could manage to carry, and it is touching to see how, amongst all their
troubles, seldom have they forgotten the little mongrel dog, faithful companion in the happy days before the war.

I was contemplating the refugees, and walking down the irregular pavement of a Genoese-looking street, when a strange sight met my eyes.

Behind a brick wall an extraordinary structure of long wooden bars, osiers, canes, wire-work, and such-like material, emerged and reached a height of perhaps twenty feet.

After a minute's uncertitude, I remembered that I was in Nice, the motherland of the famous Carnival. This complicated construction could only be the skeleton of His Majesty King Carnival himself, the jolly deity who presides at the Riviera winter festivities.

"I thought you always burnt your King Carnival at the end of the season," I said to a native. "How is it that you preserved last year's dummy?"

"This, sir," he answered, "is not the last Roi Carnival, but the next Roi Carnival."
Nobody thought we were going to take him round the town this year, but we shall probably have him finished up with canvas and plaster all the same.

"Of course, it will not be one of our great Carnivals; we have no money to throw away this winter, but His Majesty will go round the streets with a German helmet on his head and two upstanding moustaches, and everybody will enjoy more than usual the moment, at the beginning of Lent, when the figure will be set on fire."

Really, Nice does not look like a town which will, this year, have festivities of any kind. There are too many wounded and too many hospitals; the restrictions imposed by the Government are too strict, and the people do not seem to want any such amusement. Most of the luxury shops remain closed, and there is no chance of having an opera season or the famous Veglione at the Opera.

When walking about in Nice one gets the impression that France’s military resources
are almost unlimited. I don’t know how many soldiers are in the town at the present moment, but certainly more than half the men one meets in the streets are in uniform. The long, straight Avenue de la Gare, the Oxford Street of Nice, is the favourite promenade of the military element.

Chasseurs des Alpes and Turcos, Colonial troops and helmeted cavalry, lend a gay look to the wide, handsome street, and the red and gold of their uniforms moving about in all directions reminds one of the bright setting of a patriotic ballet.

Here are the offices of the leading local newspaper. The latest war news is written in large characters on a huge board hanging from the second-floor windows. A permanent crowd waits there, commenting on the cables, with an astonishing abundance of gestures, in a curious mixed dialect of Italian, French, and Provençal.

Inside the offices is a sort of picture gallery. Photographs of all the officers and soldiers, natives of Nice who have fallen
during the war, with a record of their deeds, and newspaper cuttings about them, sometimes in English as well as in French, are hung round the room, to the respectful admiration of the people.

Pious hands daily place fresh flowers beneath these photographs. All the men inspect the collection with hats off. An old lady placed some superb white roses round the picture of a young lieutenant; a black-haired young girl of the working-class went round with a bunch of scarlet carnations, and decorated the photos of those soldiers who had no other fresh flowers.

* * *

PARIS, February.

"Paris is desperately dull," said a club acquaintance whose weakness it is to affect a blasé manner. He made the remark to me just before I left London, he being newly returned from a tour in France. "Nothing on; nothing left of what we call Paris! It is really the most boring place on earth."

So it would be for most people, I am
afraid—people who have always refused to see Paris as it is, but who pretend to see it as a town in which pleasure and habits, life and morals, are abnormal, different, and possibly opposite to those of all other places on earth.

Such people have never seen—or, at any rate, never understood Paris. They have only seen the gay if somewhat professional, amusing if somewhat vulgar, mask the capital of France shows to most foreigners who do not trouble or who do not wish to see her real face.

At the moment of the declaration of war this mask suddenly dropped, and Paris appeared to the few foreigners who were there at that time to be completely altered; anxiety instead of cynicism; patriotism instead of that curious pose of French people which makes them enjoy running down their rulers and reading about Government scandals.

All these sentiments, which were either asleep or kept concealed because they were
thought to be much too *vieux jeux*, came out again. The motto of Republican France, *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* (which appears so often on the buildings of Paris), ceased to sound ironic and anachronistic.

Maybe all this seems extremely boring to the more or less real *viveur*, who cannot conceive Paris without *cafés du nuit* and absinthe, shocking little theatres, and all the rest of Parisian pleasures which are by no means only Parisian nowadays, and which, in any case, are mostly organised for foreigners and by foreigners.

To my eyes, Paris has never been so wonderful a city as since the war broke out.

I saw it astonished and overrun by the mobilising troops at the beginning of the war; ready to fight the invaders and to again undergo the calamities of 1871, when the investment of the town appeared unavoidable; full of hope when the tide of the German advance was suddenly stopped, not a day too soon; decided to make all efforts and sacrifices to end the war as soon and as
gloriously as possible now that everybody in France is certain of final victory.

It is certainly impossible in hurried notes of this kind to try and analyse Paris in 1915. It is a subject fit for treatment only in a book, and a large book, too. The new wave of sincerity and self-sacrifice has swept away habits and men, affectation and vices; and one feels that in the future Paris will never again be quite the same as before the war.

Forty-five years ago the siege destroyed for ever the society Zola has snapshotted for us in the "Rougon-Macquard." Probably Paris will come out of the present crisis purified of the arrivistes, politicians, snobs, and pseudo-artists that we all know, thanks to French literature and the French theatre of to-day.

Then there will be room for a new society, possibly as bad as the former, and, for a few writers, not quite as entertaining to write about.
CHAPTER X

HOLLAND

During my war wanderings I crossed Holland several times, and each time I spent a few days there. I did this because of the difficulty of getting the signatures of the different foreign Consuls, because of the irregular service run by the Channel boats, and because I wanted to witness the change which, little by little, came over Dutch public opinion and altered the Germanophile tendencies of the early days of the war to the sympathy for the Entente of the last months.

This does not mean to say that Holland was wildly pro-German in August and is enthusiastically pro-British now.
Holland is essentially pro-Holland, for can we blame her for this attitude, which has been christened by an eminent writer of a neutral country "sacred egoism"?

We who belong to nations numbered, since a more or less long time, among the great Powers, love our country and our independence in a different way from that of the subject of a small nation. We love it, as a matter of fact, without thinking and without speaking very much about it; we know she is in a position to defend herself if attacked, and that she is able to make other nations respect her.

But a Dutchman, like a native of all little States, loves his country and cherishes her independence with the tender and anxious feeling we feel for a person we might easily lose. He knows how difficult is the position of his country, and the example of what happened to Belgium has made him even more thoughtful about it.

The bygone sympathy for Germany was not of a very demonstrative sort, and was
inspired in the Dutch population by the undeniable affinity of race, as well as by the never-completely-extinguished jealousy of Belgium and the ill-feeling against England due to the Transvaal War.

But a distinction has to be made; if the Dutch people were rather inclined towards Germany on account of her activity, her commercial prosperity, and her wonderful development (which, indirectly, has done a lot of good to Holland—intermediary and natural channel between Germany and the sea), they felt the opposite sentiments towards Prussia. "Prussia" means, in Holland, the military caste, the Hohenzollern system, the competition in armaments, the general predominance of the soldier over the civilian.

This Holland could never like. She belongs to the hen type, and not to the eagle type. She will fight if she is forced to do so, and fight well too, but she leads a useful existence, and does not understand nor appreciate the system of life of the other
bird and his mania for space, for dominion, for prey.

Then came the war, and Holland had to arm, and the refugees began to pour in from the Belgian frontier, and with them their tales of horror; then the action of England protecting the weak against the strong captured the sympathies of the Dutch public; the rudeness and clumsiness of the German Government, its system of war, its campaign of paid articles in the Dutch papers and spies all over the Dutch country, its unfortunate diplomatic conduct, did the rest.

Each time I visited Holland during this war I received the impression that England had acquired, and Germany lost, some more friends.

In the meantime, the Government proceeded to look after the defensive works, and the mobilisation, which was thought at the beginning of the war to be a temporary measure, became a permanent thing. In Holland, before the war, a soldier or an officer was a curiosity. I remember that
during my first visit, years ago, I wanted to see the different uniforms of the Dutch Army, but could never manage to do so, so scarce were the soldiers. Even at the Hague one used to see very few officers, and I remember asking a Dutch friend, "Where do you keep your army, please?" To which he answered, "I am not quite certain if we have one!"

Now soldiers are everywhere, and good, solid, sturdy soldiers they look too. I saw them drilling in the grounds near Haarlem, on the long straight avenue that leads to Scheveningen, in the narrow lanes which run by the side of the canals, and I received the most favourable impression.

But the element Man is necessarily of secondary importance in the defence of a country like Holland. The only effective system of protecting her well-developed frontiers is by fortifications, and to this Holland has turned her attention long since. During the last forty years the Dutch Government has carried out, at great ex-
pense, the construction of a line of forts, complete with channels, blockhouses, and redoubts, all along the German and Belgian frontiers.

Recently these forts were all armed with modern guns, and the capital, Amsterdam, was also fortified in a modern and efficient manner.

But this does not mean that the defence of the country would be carried out without much trouble; on the contrary, if Holland went to war, the forts would offer a temporary resistance against the gigantic modern artillery, and then the sluices would be opened and the whole of the country, with the exception of a few eastern provinces, would be covered by the water of the Zuyder Zee, the level of which, as everybody knows, is higher than the level of Holland. The towns and villages would be kept out of water by means of a system of strategic dykes, and the country would probably resist for a long period.

But what an enormous price Holland
would have to pay! The century-long work which has transformed a sea-bed into the productive, modern Holland would be completely wasted. For years and years to come the industrial life of Holland would be spoiled, and it is almost certain that the little kingdom, instead of being one of the richest, would become one of the poorest countries on earth.

This is certainly one of the many reasons why Holland does all she possibly can to remain neutral.

Up to the present she has succeeded in the difficult task, thanks not only to the action of her Government, but also to the behaviour of her subjects.

When you speak to a Dutchman who happens to have been near the frontier and to have spoken to Belgian refugees, he may let himself go and use a bitter phrase against Germany, but he will suddenly stop with the sentence: "Of course, I am a neutral, and this does not really concern me."

It is wonderful to see how the single
individual understands the fragility of his country, which reminds one of the earthenware pitcher travelling with the bronze vase. Even when he had to suffer personally from German manners (and many inhabitants of Holland trading with Belgium were treated in the most disgusting way), the Dutchman will generally add, as a sort of excuse, after relating his adventures: "But, of course, they are at war, and probably one cannot help doing such things even to neutrals when one's country is at war."

* * *

If Holland is "the most neutral of neutral States," it does not mean that the war is not felt financially in the country. In Amsterdam a member of the Chamber of Commerce told me that Holland's trade since the war began has been reduced gradually by more than 65 per cent., and that this figure is continually mounting higher.

Moreover, the refugees from Belgium who have found asylum in the western provinces cost the nation a fair amount of money, not
to consider the expense of the fully-mobilised army's upkeep and the high prices paid for the hurried fortification works carried out since the beginning of the war.

"Dutch people are said to have made a good deal of money out of Germany, up to December or even later, by selling her food-stuffs and other articles at very high prices," I remarked, remembering what I had heard both in England and Germany.

"Somebody certainly has," admitted the Dutchman. "Since August, 1914, our Government has stopped the exportation of wheat, etc., but some German private agents used to buy it and send it to private addresses in Germany; we really don't know what happened to that stuff, and as the prices offered by the Germans were very good, I know that a lot of merchants here were only too glad to make business with them. Now the new customs regulations have completely stopped this, and I can tell you that lately Germany has not managed to get anything through the frontiers. The German agents
are still here, as well as in Rotterdam and other towns, but they have realised that it is impossible to send to Germany the foodstuffs, etc., which they have already stored for the purpose, and now they have stopped buying."

*   *   *

During my last visit to Holland I was struck by a curious phenomenon. Dutch people are very fond of humming a tune. They hum it when they walk, when they read, when on business, while smoking huge cigars. True enough, it is very difficult to detect the tune, as they generally distort it in the most unexpected way, but as everybody seems to be fond of the very same tune at the very same time, after hearing three or four performances you usually get to know what they mean by the series of mewings and mutterings they send out, together with abundant puffs of white smoke. My different visits to Holland have been marked by different favourites in the way of tunes: "Merry Widow" three years ago, then
“Dollar Princess,” then “El Choclo,” then “Dixie,” and the last time “Tipperary.”

Men, women, and children have really gone Tipperary-mad; they make the most gallant efforts to master the tune, hum it all the time, ask for it in the café or theatre, and put the Tipperary record on the gramophone every night before going to bed.

When at the Hague I saw at a music-hall a revue in which the Tipperary tune returned over and over again like a nightmare, and a Dutchman at my side observed to his wife, who was marking time to the music by alternating movements of her head, causing her corkscrew earrings to rattle to and fro: “Isn’t it a charming melody?”

At any rate, the “charming melody” has been officially acknowledged in Holland, and I heard the military band at the Bosch playing it in front of the Royal villa.

“That’s a real breach of neutrality,” I remarked to a Dutch officer who was with me. “If you are not careful you will have serious trouble with Berlin!”
“Oh, no; we are very neutral. I, personally, am absolutely impartial, and don’t care a scrap, for instance, whether Berlin is blown up or burnt down,” he answered, repeating, for the hundredth time, a joke which has lately captured Dutch sympathies at least as much as “Tipperary.”

Walking through the wonderful wood which probably has no equal in Europe, calm and imposing as it is with its green ponds and its gigantic lime-trees, we came to the large avenue on which is the Palace of Peace, the greatest irony in brick and stone human mind has ever conceived.

“You should be ashamed to talk like that, you official guardian of the temple of European peace,” I said.

“We are jolly glad to have this big palace here,” he answered, smiling. “We are short of large barracks at the Hague!”

* * *

The names of Nispen, Rosendaal, Bergen-op-Zoom, and of many other little towns and
villages of North Brabant, will always in future call to my mind the most touching scenes I have ever witnessed. The multitude of refugees who have found asylum in the frontier towns of Holland called to my memory the crowds of starving folk in the best of Goya's sanguines, or the intricate groups of absent-minded humanity in some of Previati's wonderful drawings. Every face, every movement, not only of men and women who have seen and understood, but even of children, is full of pathos and tragedy.

Even now, months and months after their flight from that hell of sacked, burned, and destroyed towns which was Belgium before Antwerp's capitulation, they look frightened, worried, and restless as on the day of their arrival.

Dutch hospitality, which has been celebrated for centuries and centuries, has in this case surpassed itself. The crowd of starving, penniless, terrorised people found a kindly reception, and within a few days' time all churches, public buildings, theatres,
and chapels were transformed into lodgings for the new guests.

But soon this was not enough, and temporary constructions had to be erected at public expense, most of the able-bodied refugees helping in the task.

About 350,000 refugees are now in Holland, some in the frontier towns, some in the large towns of South and North Holland. Rotterdam and Amsterdam, the Hague, and Leiden and Haarlem received with outstretched arms, dressed, sheltered, and fed their share of Belgians without making any fuss about it, just as if it was the most natural thing to help this wave of humanity which had come into their country.

It may be said here that not a single charity show, fund, or special committee has been arranged. The different corporations give what they can or take as many refugees as they can afford to keep. The same with private families. I have seen a humble workman offer a corner of his bedroom and his dining-table to a Belgian boy who had
lost his parents, and consider him as one of the family.

At Ossendrecht, quite close to the barrier of wood, barbed wire, and stones thrown across the country road to mark the frontier of Holland and Belgium, of peace and war, there is a little café where most of the refugees from Antwerp made their first halt in Dutch territory, and which really would have done a roaring trade since the beginning of the war but for the fact that most of the customers were not even rich enough to pay for their bun or for their glass of beer, and but for the kind-hearted proprietress who could not refuse such comforts even if she had no hope of getting paid for it.

She was a tall, solid, and healthy-looking woman, who seemed to have stepped from a Rubens canvas, with a glory of fair, curly hair and a complexion to render jealous the brightest Haarlem tulip. When she asked me in her curious dialect—which, as a compliment to me, was mixed with a few English
words—if I wanted “Pilsener” or “Dunkel,” she was carrying two babies of apparently the same age in her arms, one each side. I was wondering how she would manage to bring me my drink, when she put one of the babies on the counter and kept the other in her arms. The baby on the counter fell asleep, but the other one started crying desperately.

She told me that only one of the babies, the one on the counter, was her own, and that he was born in August; then her husband was called away by the mobilisation order, and the refugees began to pour into Holland like flocks of sheep chased by wolves. One day a tired, ill-looking woman came with a baby in her arms. She crossed the frontier and was almost carried into the little café, as she was too faint to walk any further. She said her husband had been killed at Liège, and asked to remain just one night. Though there was not a single bedroom to let in the little café, the kind-hearted giantess agreed. The next morning the
Belgian woman was very ill, and in two days she was dead.

"The little girl was just about as old as my boy. I was strong enough to keep the two," she concluded, with a proud smile. "Why shouldn't I have kept the two?"

"And what about your husband?" I asked, admiring her great simplicity.

"I wrote him a postcard, telling everything; and he answered that for him it would just be as if we had got twins."

From Ossendrecht to Bergen-op-Zoom a curious steam tramcar, in the middle of which a group of natives and refugees dry their feet at a red-hot stove, affords me a curious place of observation. Old women, in the celebrated lace bonnets and gilded helmets of the Dutch peasants, seem great friends with Belgian girls, who try their best to convert their Flemish into a language as nearly as possible Dutch. I learn that a lot of refugees go on daily pilgrimages to the frontier, where in one way or another they manage to get some news, or at least a talk
with their country-people who continuously come out of Belgium.

The refugees' most difficult task is apparently to find each other. I know of sisters from Malines with their families who have been living for two months within a few hundred yards one of the other, and each believing the other killed or gone to England. One finds everywhere, carved into trees, scribbled on walls, or written on pieces of paper nailed here and there, addresses of refugees wishing and trying to meet old friends or relations.

Sometimes the address is a sensible one, but often one cannot help laughing on learning that the present address of a refugee's family, or part of it, is a church, or a theatre, or a motor garage, or even, as I have seen, a stable or cellar.

At Bergen-op-Zoom the refugees are certainly twice as numerous as the ordinary residents, and the little town, the present look of which belies its bellicose traditions, has been given up completely to them.
Here the refugees can get their meals for nothing, or, if they can afford to pay for them, for a few coppers, and the depôts of foodstuffs specially reserved for them are so gigantic that they seem sufficient to keep the whole country going for a long time.

I have assisted at a dinner of refugees in a large schoolroom close to the Hof van Holland Hotel; hot steaming soup, vegetables, roast meat, cheese, and ham were freely given away by young girls in the picturesque costume of the country.

The food seems excellent. The convivial scene reminded me more of the dinner of country people than of a charity meal. A faint smile comes back to most of the refugees' faces as they eat.

This war, the simple and noble manner in which the Dutch have given all they could to the refugee Belgians, will certainly kill for ever the century-long jealousies which were still alive a few months ago.
CHAPTER XI

ANTWERP—THE DEAD CITIES OF BRABANT

One must have known Belgium before the war, and have travelled through that rich and beautiful country in times of peace, to realise how great is the change. All that has been written up to now about what has happened there is in reality much less than the truth.

Every town, large and small, every country village, one might almost say every inch of Belgian soil, bears the heavy mark of the invaders. What nobody dared to touch they have destroyed; what was believed to be protected by religion and tradition they have profaned; what centuries had made sacred for any thinking being they have demolished.
We send to prison and often take the life of the man who kills another man. Here defenceless old folk, women, and children have been killed by thousands without a motive, even without a pretext. We rage impotently at the earthquake which destroys towns and takes the toll of life. Here human beings have surpassed the earthquake. We shiver at the idea that a fire could destroy the treasures of art which are often the only chain which links us to past generations. Here men who proclaimed themselves the greatest admirers of all the arts stood by and watched the treasures of the world burn by the flames they themselves had lighted.

I have been practically across the whole of Belgium, from east to west, from north to south. From Antwerp to Liége, from Namur to Tournai and to Ghent, by road and by rail, but mostly on foot, on horseback, or by prehistoric vehicles, as it is impossible to get a motor-car at any price. Always the same sight. A population that hardly dares to hope, aching for real news—
a population that is feeling a grief too deep for tears, and is plunged into a tragic, dumb sorrow. There it lives and works under the mocking eye of the Conqueror. Sometimes this Conqueror is frankly rude and violent, as he loves to feel and to look like the real descendants of that Attila he has glorified. Sometimes he takes on a mask of scoffing politeness which is still more unbearable. During the first month or so the Germans tried to make friends with the population; the men tried to mix with the people; the officers with the best families. Their advances always received an icy though more or less polite reception, so now the enemy has assumed an air of disdain for the weak little nation it is keeping under its heel.

The little steamboat which took me from Flushing to Antwerp all across the Escaut was laden with a pathetic crowd. There were mothers going back to see their sons, who, being of age liable to military service, had not been allowed to leave Belgium;
parents whose only desire was to discover the grave of their son; people who, having come to an end of their resources, were going back to their deserted ruined homes, to their little piece of land which is now covered by water two feet deep.

* * *

When we sight Antwerp it is already dusk, and round us is the large harbour, which has completely lost its wonderful multiform life. Carcases of old boats, breasts and keels of sunken ships, emerge from the lead-like water, suggesting the terrific curves of pre-historic monsters. Some of these boats were sunk by the British before they left. Others were sunk by the Germans, who madly shelled their own mercantile ships together with those of the Allies. On the top of a mast a French flag is still being washed continuously by the waves.

The complicated landing formalities distract my attention from the contemplation of this cemetery of ships. We are searched three times. Every scrap of paper in our
pockets, every single article in our luggage, is carefully examined. Then our passports. Very few of these seem complete enough to please the German authorities. A man who is travelling with somebody else's pass is discovered and taken away. Two ladies are not allowed to land, and they are taken back on board screaming and crying; in two days they will be sent back to Holland. Only German is spoken here, though nearly all the officials know French perfectly. If one does not understand German, one cannot possibly get on. After a couple of hours we are allowed to go into the town. No more taxis are running owing to the shortage of petrol, and also to the fact that all vehicles have been taken up by the German Government. The town is dark for fear of an aerial attack. Patrols of Landsturm men pass continuously across the principal street, and fill the town with the squeaky noise of their nailed boots. The password is loudly shouted when they meet another patrol.

At the hotel everybody is German, from
the manager to the liftman and to the chambermaids. As for the guests, they are all German officers. Every good hotel in Belgium is at the present moment inhabited almost exclusively by German officers, and outside the main doors a white, black, and red striped sentry-box has taken the place of the majestic doorkeeper.

Most of the officers are not alone; they have sent for their wives, and very often even their children, nursemaids, servants, and dogs.

I am told the German Government is encouraging this kind of thing, and offers special travel facilities for wives and families. Lately non-commissioned officers and men have been allowed to send for their families. I don’t know the real reason of all this, but it is certain that the Germans are trying hard to give the Belgians the impression that they have come to stay. In many places they have taken houses or flats for a year, and have paid for them in advance, and in some small towns in which it is not possible to get a
comfortable residence they have started the construction of new villas and cottages.

I walk down the Avenue de Keyzer and enter a very large restaurant, which seems also completely in German hands. Even the menu is printed in German, and hardly a single Belgian enters the huge establishment. I ask for some newspapers, and I am told they can only get German ones; at ten o'clock every light must be out. People walking in the street without special permits after half-past ten are likely to be arrested.

Antwerp is probably the most Germanised town in all Belgium, owing to the fact, I believe, that even before the war any amount of German people lived here, and nearly all the hotels were already in German hands. The town itself does not appear much damaged by the bombardment. Now and again a large hole or a burnt ruin shows the spot were a bomb has burst, but to see real destruction one must go to the southern suburbs, outside the Porte de Berckem.

Here are the old forts, some half destroyed
by shells, some still untouched, and most of the houses show wide open wounds, red with freshly smashed bricks. Most of the forts are now converted into barracks for the German troops, and near every one of them is a small cemetery, with many a glorious name written on the rough, white wooden crosses.

Though most of the actual fighting took place outside the old fortification near the new fortresses, at about three miles' distance from the town, some of the old seventeenth-century forts have received their share of shells, and do not seem to have done at all badly, considering the very modern artillery which has beaten them.

Antwerp has lost more than three-quarters of its usual population, a large part of which joined the army or escaped to Holland and England. That is why, perhaps, foodstuff is still comparatively cheap here, and everything except bread and vegetables seems fairly plentiful. Flour is very scarce, and all sort of ingredients are used in its place.

Curiously enough, while bread is scarce
and very bad even in the best restaurants, and while in most villages people are forbidden to buy more than a small ration per head, confectioners' shops are full of cakes and sweets of all descriptions. I could not help thinking of the words attributed to a fine lady of France: "Il n'y a plus de pain? Pourquoi ne mangent-ils pas de la brioche?"

As for vegetables, the Belgian gardens have been completely swamped by the inundations, and the produce imported from Germany does not seem to go very far.

There has been apparently a quiet exodus of works of art from Antwerp's famous museums to Germany, though apparently most of the Rubens, Rembrandts, Van Dycks, and Teniers, which were the gems of the Antwerp collections, were taken away before the arrival of the Huns, and are said to be now in a very safe place. Some of the remainder have now found their way to Germany. By the way, some of the rarest specimens of the Zoo animals have shared the fate
of the old masters, and now languish behind alien bars.

The town is infested with spies, who are relentlessly hunting down Frenchmen and Englishmen. As a matter of fact, everyone who comes into Belgium is provided straight away with a sort of guardian angel, who very often does not leave him for many days, and possibly not before he has given him some trouble with the German Kommandantur.

This has happened to me, as I will relate later on, and also to most American and Dutch subjects who get into Belgium at the present moment.

Some of them, for the simple fact that they are journalists, are taken to Germany and interned there, and when the Embassies of the different countries protest and claim their subjects, the Government of Berlin answers that the captured journalists are not considered as prisoners, but are only detained for a certain time—that is to say, for as long as the news they have gathered remains important if made public.
Another variety of the so-called German Secret Service is the agent-provocateur, who generally speaks perfect French and Flemish, and gets a fixed sum for every arrest effected by the police on his initiative.

In Antwerp I saw one of these spies approach an old gentleman who had a Belgian rosette in his buttonhole. He was on a tramcar platform, and the spy said to him, "Very bitter weather for our poor little soldiers at the front, isn't it, sir?" The old gentleman evidently knew the identity of his companion, for he simply stared at the rascal and turned his face the other way.

The favourite ground of action of this army of spies is the railway carriage. There acquaintances are easily and quickly made. I very often saw people taken away at the station by two soldiers, while the hero of this beautiful deed was following at a short distance with his face wreathed in the happiest of smiles.

To travel in Belgium now is a complicated task; railways are completely taken
over by the German War Office, and only Germans are employed. Not even the old porters are allowed in the stations. No tickets are given without a special pass from the Kommandantur of the town, saying where the applicant wishes to go, for how long, and for what reason. Then you pay for your ticket, provided you make yourself understood by the German employees, and you have the exact amount in marks and not in Belgian money. There are only third-class carriages at first-class fares—fur Zivilpersonen—all the other first and second class carriages are marked Nur fur Heeres angehörige—those who don't pay evidently.

Before arriving on the platform you are searched by very rude soldiers wearing a large crescent-shaped brass plate with the word "polizei" suspended to their necks by a chain, like a metal label on a brandy bottle.

After this you carry your own luggage to the train, which is thoughtfully kept waiting a quarter of a mile outside the station, in rain or snow, and sit down in a freezing carriage
without any light or heating, but possibly with one or more windows smashed. Half an hour or so after the fixed time the train begins to move; a little notice, in German naturally, tells you not to put your head outside the window while crossing a bridge because sentries will shoot at you, and another notice says that, owing to the crisis, you may be asked to step out of the carriage at any moment and without any right to protest, even if you happen to have the pluck to do so.

And ultimately, after hours waiting in intermediate railway stations, after changing trains two or three times on a ten miles’ fare, you sometimes arrive; you and your luggage are searched once again, and then you are let out.

I feel sure most of those gentlemen got their iron crosses for much less than this Odyssey.

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It was five o’clock in the afternoon when I walked out of Louvain station on to a
muddy piece of uneven ground surrounded by ruins which were once the station square. It was a grey day, and a few stray flakes of snow were blown by the icy whirlwind in all directions. The weather was perfectly consonant with the general aspect of the town.

Right and left I could discover nothing but ruins; it was hard to tell which was the road and which the site of former buildings. Enormous masses of calcinated bricks and stones are all that remain of the houses which have collapsed; as for the others which are still standing, their appearance is still more tragic. All the inside part, the ceilings, the staircases, the roofs, have been burned away, and the outer wall, all out of perpendicular, still shows the pots of flowers, the iron bars, and the metallic parts of the shutters which were burned away.

Entire rows of houses protrude on the street as if they are going to collapse at any minute; others lean backwards just as if they were frightened; others are all leaning on the right or the left side as if a terrible
wind had forced them into that unnatural position.

Here at another spot the walls of two houses touch each other at the top, forming a sort of pointed arch. The steeple of a little church leans far more than the famous Pisa Tower.

From every window there hangs a curious sort of transparent stalactite, which at first sight looks like an icicle, and is formed by the window glass melted in the dreadful heat. A three-floor house has collapsed completely except for the wall facing the street, and at one of the second-floor windows a bird-cage, suspended by a chain, is still hanging, and the blizzard rattles it continuously to and fro. For the fire has got a sort of sinister humour of its own. Here it has destroyed completely the powerful masonry of a fifteenth-century house whose walls were four feet thick, and next door it has blackened without burning a fragile-looking cottage, and even left a white and red check curtain hanging from the window.
Further down, a butcher's shop has completely disappeared, but a large metallic sign with an enormous bull painted on it is still at its place, sustained, a miracle of balance, by the frame of the burned awning.

I walk down the Rue de la Station to the Grand' Place. Here was the fine theatre in Italian renaissance; now only the four pillars of the front mark the place where it was standing. Farther down, near the gigantic ruins of the University and the Library, is the once-famous Cathedral of St. Peter.

Up to a few months ago this building was one of the most beautiful examples of the Flemish florid-Gothic. All lovers of old things remember its windows, made more elegant than those of any other Gothic cathedral by a sort of carved balcony, its steep roof, its solid-looking, severe front without the traditional portals. Now all this has disappeared. The roof has collapsed. The wonderfully painted stained
windows are no more. The carvings have been reduced to shapeless calcinated stones, and the bricks underneath, re-baked by the flames, show themselves as red as a fresh wound. A notice stuck on what was a beautifully carved oak door tells me that the entrance to the cathedral is strictly "verboten." But a couple of marks make the soldier on guard close both eyes, and he lets me in after having warned me not to say a word or make any noise, as pieces of burned wood and of cornice are dropping down at the slightest movement.

Inside one walks on a bed of rubbish four to seven feet deep. The huge pillars stand without supporting any vault, like useless date trees. The famous tabernacle of Mathieu de Layens has been cracked by the heat, and tattered blackened pieces of canvas hang from the walls once covered with paint. As for the twenty-four little statues which used to decorate the choir, they have disappeared. I don't know if they were taken away by the priests before the destruction.
of the cathedral or stolen by the Germans after it.

Outside, the streets are nearly deserted. A few soldiers, a few ragged people begging for a copper or a piece of bread, these I see; a few of the old inhabitants searching the remains of their homes and contemplating, with the look of somebody who sees an old friend, every bit of metal, every fragment of pottery they happen to find. They have constructed temporary shelters and collected therein what the flames have spared. Some are looking under their house ruins for a member of the family who has disappeared. Every day a new corpse is found. In every square are fresh graves, and the very day of my visit five more victims of German violence had been buried right in the middle of the station square, all round the statue of Van der Weyer, which has been respected probably as an homage to its ugliness. The Kommandant of Louvain insisted that the victims should be buried there, and not in the cemetery, "to set a good example!"
In this phrase is the reason of the destruction of the harmless little town—a reason which has puzzled the whole world.

For the most dreadful part of the destruction of Louvain is that there has been no fighting, no shelling, nothing of what we generally understand by the word war. The town had been quietly occupied by the Germans, and they forced the population to leave their houses without carrying anything with them. People who tried to save anything were robbed of what they had taken with them, the earrings were pulled out of the women’s ears (I have seen a body with both the ear-lobes torn in two), the pockets searched, and in more than one case anybody who was found to be carrying something was immediately shot.

Petrol and some other new liquid combustible quite recently discovered in a Berlin laboratory, and which the Louvain people have christened “Colofogne du Diable,” were poured abundantly on the whole town, except, perhaps, on twenty houses inhabited
by Germans. I saw, in one of the station rooms, the fire engines which have been used for this purpose, fire engines which bear the arms of the City of Louvain, and which, with cruel irony, were used to set fire to the town they had been created to save. Specially made bombs were thrown into every house, and the Germans retired outside the town on the great boulevard to enjoy a spectacle really worthy of Nero.

But at Louvain the Germans have surpassed Nero. While the town was still burning all the population, regardless of age or sex, was arranged in a single line near Mont César. And then the most dreadful thing happened.

The Romans, to subdue soldiers' rebellions, invented a punishment which always seemed to the world the limit of cruelty—decimation.

The Germans at Louvain did the same thing, but they beat the Romans. Every third man was the victim. I met a gentleman who had been twice through this ordeal.
He was still young, but his hair was grey, and his eyes had in them a far-off expression of terror. Near the cathedral somebody pointed out to me a young woman gone mad through having lost her husband and brother in this way.

* * *

From Louvain to Malines the country shows all the signs of dreadful desolation. Flooded land covered with ice, under which the dead lie by hundreds, pieces of wood crowned by Belgian képis or Prussian helmets marking the grave of officers—this is the sight. Flooded trenches and rusty wirework, burned or cut trees, telegraphic poles smashed by shells, and again burned houses and windmills, some of the large wings of which have been amputated, and little ruined châteaux on the top of which waves a German flag.

The train passes the Dyle on a temporary bridge constructed at the side of the old one destroyed by the retreating Belgians. Here were many large greenhouses in which the
cultivation of the orchid had reached its highest degree of perfection. Now they look like enormous cages, every one of their windows having been smashed.

Malines station gives you an idea of what the whole town looks like. A large placard tells you that the town is now called Mecheln, and underneath it is a large picture of the general who ordered the shelling of the town, but met his death the same day. German soldiers keep the frame constantly decorated with laurel branches. The glass roof is torn by an enormous hole, through which the snow enters freely. The waiting-room has also an extra aperture, and a bomb has taken away every bit of the stucco work and left the walls completely bare. Malines was not set on fire; all the ruin brought on it was due to the blind violence of the high explosives. Evidently they are not as destructive as the people who have invented them, and the town does not look half as bad as Louvain.

Though very few of the houses are un-
touched, the general aspect of the quiet town has not changed much. Only one or two of the large domes and steeples which used to emerge from the roofs of the small houses have disappeared, and the unfinished tower of St. Rombaut has altered its massive silhouette a little.

Now and again I see deep holes, caused by shells, and houses which have lost a corner, and allow a glance of their domestic life through a large crevice. Here a quiet "béguaing" has received a projectile in full, and from the street I can see a whitewashed room with a decapitated painted crucifix, and hanging to a nail a black bonnet of the old Brabant country woman.

I think of the tragedy of the poor old lady who received that unexpected visit in the very room in which she had chosen to end her life. The "béguaings" of Malines are said to be the most strict of the whole of Belgium, and in some of them the old women live for years without seeing an outsider. Where are now the poor old things
who thought every day's life full enough of private worries, and have now been reached in their seclusion by this dreadful catastrophe?

Curiously enough, Malines, which can be considered as the religious metropolis of Belgium, establishes a real record in the way of sieges, pillages, and plunders. French, English, Dutch have often taken and half destroyed the town, and ultimately Napoleon dismantled it in 1804. Some old twelfth and thirteenth century houses which have resisted all previous trials have been fatally hit now. The Grand' Place, which used to delight the lovers of old Flemish constructions, has greatly suffered, and the shells with subtle perversity have spared some ugly modern buildings and raged on what centuries had respected.

Alas! these descriptions of destroyed towns, of murder and pillage; the stories of unbelievable atrocities, even only those which I know are true, the pictures of misery and famine which nobody would
have believed possible in our times, could be continued page after page.

But what happened in the towns is nothing compared with what happened in the country. There, far from the control of high officers, the blonde beast has given way to all the brutal follies of which the Hun is now known to be capable.

I have seen and heard things that disgust keeps me from writing; things compared with which the excesses of the French Revolution, the bloodthirsty pleasures of some barbarian kings, the exploits of some notorious brigands, are but the A B C of an art in which the German army has certainly reached the highest possible standard of perfection.
CHAPTER XII

BRUSSELS, TOURNAI, AND THE GERMAN FRONT

To penetrate into Belgium with a passport which proves, alas! too clearly that the bearer of it has been twice to Berlin, once to Constantinople, and often to Paris since the war broke out, and that he has had his passport *visé* at the various Consulates in London, is, as a Belgian friend told me, asking for trouble.

My troubles really began before leaving Holland. The German Consul in Flushing makes all foreigners who want to go to Belgium (though there are few enough who attempt the adventure) sign a special declaration saying that they take the full responsibility of their own act; no passports are
given to leave Belgium, and people going in are likely to be kept there up to the end of the war.

The night before, at the Albion, an inn which arrogates to itself the pompous name of Grand Hotel, I met two Belgian refugees who had succeeded in escaping from Belgium two days before, crossing the marshes and wireworks near Maesevck; and though I did not fancy this way was a very comfortable one, I couldn’t see why I should not use it myself in case of necessity.

At any rate, I bravely signed the paper, with the idea that something or somebody would get me out of trouble, and, as a matter of fact, I did not have trouble during the first part of my journey.

I began to think that all that had been said about the cleverness of the German police was a little exaggerated. But at the end of my first day in Brussels, having retired to my room in the hotel, I was just going to bed, when I received a visit from two gentlemen who, I learned, were
members of the German police. They were accompanied by four helmeted and fully-armed soldiers, two of whom remained in the corridor outside the door, while the other two stood like mummies, one at each side of the bed. First one of the two civilians, who seemed the higher-placed, informed me in excellent English that I was a very suspicious person, that the police were perfectly aware of what I was doing in Belgium, and that the Imperial Government would take against me any steps it thought suitable.

I answered in French that I did not understand him, and that I had my passport in perfect order. "It is easy to have a passport, but the Imperial Government is not the dupe of such childish tricks." He then ordered his companions to search the room. As for myself, the search was made extremely easy by the simplified costume I happened to be wearing.

I have had lately a few experiences of this sort, but the one in Brussels easily beat all
IN BRUSSELS

the former ones. The police inspector in Berlin and the Turkish Custom House officers are as blind as bats and as superficial as amateurs compared with this man, who I honestly thought was Argus himself. He examined my luggage, my linen, my clothes, assured himself that nothing was concealed underneath the linings, looked for a double bottom in my bag, for receptacles in my watch-case, and produced from his roomy pockets a miniature hammer with which he made sure that the rather high heels of my boots were not hollow.

I suppose I could not help smiling while he was taking all this useless trouble, and the other man remarked that I need not make my position still worse by behaving insultingly to the representative of the Imperial police.

When he had finished searching my things, the polizei talked to his chief, and said in German, which language they did not know I understood, that I had evidently concealed the documents somewhere in the
room. Lying on the floor or climbing on the chairs, helping himself with an electric torch and with a sort of paper-knife which belonged to the arsenal of his professional belongings, he searched the carpet, the furniture, the bed, the shade of the electric light, the pipes of the bath—in a word, everything.

The man seemed so keen on his job that I really felt sorry I had not anything with me which would give him the pleasure of a sensational discovery. He reminded me of a ratter in which the gift of search is sure and instinctive.

When he thought he had found something behind the drawer of the dressing-table his eyes shone with delight, and his voice had suddenly an intonation of supreme joy. But he could only produce the catalogue of a furrier, evidently left by one of the former occupants of the room. Finally he had to give up searching, and the whole company departed, taking my passport and all my papers with them, promising another visit on the following morning, and
informing me not to try and leave the hotel, or even my room, because such an attempt would be useless.

The next morning, at seven o'clock, only the two civilians came back, and told me to dress as quickly as possible, and follow them to the Kommandantur. I said I was quite ready to please them, but, to teach them a little patience, had a comfortable bath, polished my nails to the highest possible brightness, spent as long as possible in shaving, dressing, and having my petit déjeuner, while the chambermaid was packing my luggage.

When I followed the two polizeiern I said to her, "I hope you don't believe I have taken anybody's pocket-book?" "Certainly not, sir," she answered quite seriously. "All well-to-do people in Brussels have been taken to the Kommandantur this year; l'arrestation est très portée à présent."

Reassured by the assertion of the witty maid, which I acknowledged with an extra tip, I went with my two companions to a
smart motor-car waiting for us outside. I feel indebted to the Germans for the only motor ride I managed to have in Brussels, no public or private car being allowed on the road, unless for military or police service.

At the police station a new and long interrogatory, followed by the seizure of all the money I had on me. Then I was confronted with a spy who had followed me about in my pilgrimage all over Belgium for five days. Not a single one of my moves had been missed from the moment I landed in Antwerp. A sort of long affidavit was drawn up containing all the accusations against me (I do not know exactly even now what they were), as well as my declaration and a complete list of the papers, books, and money I had with me. I asked permission to communicate with one of the neutral Consuls who are still in Brussels, but this was denied me, so I had to wait four or five hours, after which, having had a filthy German meal, always accompanied by my two polizeiern, in the canteen of an infantry
regiment, I was taken to the Kommandantur.

The canteen was prepared for the celebration of the Kaiser's birthday; flags and pictures of the War Lord were all over the walls, and in a passage were piles of little boxes, sent by the Berlin population to the troops as a homage to the Kaiser, and containing sweets, tobacco, chocolates, and dreadful-looking handkerchiefs with the whole royal family printed on them.

The Kommandantur was in possession of the Palais de la Nation, and here I was kept waiting two hours. Then, I suppose, not to rid me of a good habit, I was searched once again, then asked to repeat exactly all that was in my passport. As I could not say the exact date of one or another visé at the different Consulates, I was told that I had stolen the passport and a lot of other nonsense of the kind:

I required all my large stock of patience and good humour to stand this trying time. It was getting dark, and I began to think

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that I should have to pass the night at the Kommandantur, when my adventure suddenly came to an utterly unromantic end by the intervention of a friend of mine who happens to be very influential in Brussels at the present moment. I feel rather ashamed about it. A stout colonel with the unavoidable iron cross, and the baldest head I have even seen in my life, was interrogating me for the hundredth time, when he was suddenly put into the nicest of dispositions towards me by a letter sealed with a coat-of-arms I know quite well. It was brought to him on a silver tray by a Landsturm man.

The colonel began to apologise, saying that he felt certain I should understand things, and that really nothing would have happened "if you had not looked so extremely English."

I answered that I could not and did not wish to help my looks, and that I had thoroughly enjoyed the experience. "We happen to stay at the same hotel, I believe," he continued; "won't you dine with us to-night?"
I thought it was my turn to have a little of my own back, and, looking straight at him, I answered in my very best argot, “Ah ça non par example!” and I stepped out, enjoying thoroughly the servile bows of the two men who had searched me in the morning.

They gave me back my luggage, papers, and money, but in German notes instead of gold; and though I protested, as gold fetches in Belgium about twenty-seven francs per pound, they simply answered that no gold was allowed in Belgium, and I had to give in on this point. But I got any amount of pleasure, quite worth the money they made me lose, by telling them a few simple truths, which generally one cannot afford to tell to a German unless one happens to meet him somewhere out of reach of the police.

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After my visit to the ruined towns of East Belgium I naturally expected to see in Brussels the depressed appearance and the lifeless look of the other parts of the country.
I was therefore extremely surprised to find the town with all its shops and its theatres open, and with its everyday life in full swing.

The German authorities try to keep things as lively as possible in Brussels, and, up to a certain point, they succeed in doing so. Officers and men have received very special orders; they can do anything they like in the small provincial towns, but they must be fairly polite to the population in Brussels. As long as the capital has not been pillaged, burned, or shelled, the German Government thinks to have in its hands proof that no useless damage was done, and that the tragic happenings in the other towns were indirectly the fault of the "treacherous Belgians."

Another reason for this special treatment of Brussels is that though the Ambassadors of foreign States have left for Le Havre, a few members of the legations of neutral countries still remain in the town who would be compromising and official witnesses of any useless acts of cruelty. And this is why
Brussels is the only Belgian town with a garrison of crack troops and well-to-do officers, the only town in which theatres are open (by special command of the Government of Brussels), and the only town in which restaurants and cafés keep open till eleven o'clock—some even till midnight, German time.

The question of time is really very curious. One of the first acts of the invaders was to impose, or rather try to do so, the Berlin hour on Belgium. Everybody stuck to the old Belgian time, which is an hour earlier than the German.

Then the Germans forced the sacristans of the different churches to put the steeple clocks back an hour, but, as by a miracle, the old clocks, many of which had been going for centuries, developed trouble of some kind or another, and suddenly stopped. Now it is only the Royal Palace and station clocks that mark German time; all the others have stopped or are undergoing endless repairs.

The time at which his watch is set is now
a sign by which you can detect the sympathies of a person. When you sit in a tramcar or in a café, and somebody wishes to ask you a question, he glances first at your wrist, and, from the time of your watch, knows whether you are a friend or a foe.

The great majority of the Belgian population—I mean, of the Belgians who stuck to their homes, as should have been done by everybody—behave in a very dignified manner, and ignore the Germans almost completely. Nearly everybody, rich and poor, wears a Belgian rosette or King Albert's portrait in the buttonhole, and by so doing defy the Germans, who regularly rage at the sight.

A little story on this subject is often repeated in Brussels. A German officer asked a lady to take off the rosette she was wearing, but she refused.

"Very well, then," he said, "I will do it myself," and catching hold of the rosette he threw it on the floor and stamped his foot upon it. The lady stared at him con-
temptuously, and said, "After all, a rosette is much easier to take than Paris." She then walked away.

German soldiers have lately received the order not to bother about such trifles in Brussels, and everybody who wishes to do so can wear the colours of his country without serious consequences. I was really astonished at the appearance of some of the Brussels shops. Belgian flags and large pictures of the King and the Royal family, flanked by engravings of the Sovereigns of England and Russia, were shown in the windows, together with some clever caricatures and artistic etchings of "Bruxelles pendant l'occupation," a legend which means that it is hoped the occupation will cease as soon as possible.

To say at this moment that Belgium has been stricken by famine would be an exaggeration. Food is certainly scarcer than before the war, but the population is less, and consequently the prices have not risen extraordinarily.
At the restaurants the only dishes that are dearer are those that contain eggs; for the others, the higher cost to the caterers is made up for by smaller portions.

Bread is really the only thing that is dear. The quality, of course, varies, but the white, pure, wholesome bread formerly to be found everywhere as part of the excellent Belgium cooking, is no more.

From the Antwerp bread, which has now a funny taste as of dust, and the soft part of which is browny, full of dark spots, wet and granulous, to the brown soldier-like pain d’ammunition one gets in Tournai, from the maize and millet bread of Malines, to the still white but damp and curiously tasteless bread of Brussels—all the bread which was served to me during my Belgian trip showed clearly all the tricks used to provide the country with its indispensable daily bread. What in ordinary times would have been judged only fit for animals is now sold at very high prices and makes the base of the flour employed.
In places like Brussels, where a certain quantity of good flour is still obtainable at very high prices, the bread is made with a mixture of wheat, potato, and maize flour, but in most towns the wheat has been used up, and the bread has to be made without it.

In all the western parts of Belgium, all that remains of the old supply of corn is used for the wounded and the sick.

Pellagia, an old and almost forgotten ailment, caused by bad bread and rotten food, has reappeared in most of the country places where the food is worst. Some cases are really pathetic.

A doctor who is managing a hospital near Courtrai told me that it is impossible to get the good, healthy food indispensable in illness. Some cases of lemons and oranges for the Belgian hospitals which were specially allowed through the Italian frontier, in spite of the exportation bills, have been seized by the Germans.

Generally, German people and German hospitals in Belgium manage to get the very
best food; the native inhabitants have to be content with what remains.

To eat, I will not say good, but passable bread, for instance, one must go to one of the establishments regarded as "safe" by the Germans, one of the establishments where the Germans feed, where they can do what they like and drink Munich beer. Such places are allowed to keep open an hour longer than the others.

German people have monopolised the fashionable restaurants, teashops, and best hotels in the town. The Belgian population has completely given up going into such establishments, and patronise only certain others which manage, more or less, to keep the Germans away.

The famous Café des Augustins, on the Boulevard Anspach, the manager of which has been plucky and clever enough to do so without giving the Government a pretext for shutting up the place, has crossed from his lists all German wines, liqueurs, and mineral waters. As the
German Government has stopped the production of Belgian beer, in order to be able to send the stored oats and hops to Munich and to Pilsen, and to favour the sale of German beer in Belgium at fairly high prices, no more beer is sold in the establishment.

In the other restaurants, the Germanised ones, the new masters drink beer and champagne, sing, shout, and discuss the war.

All the smart tea-places of the capital like Matisse, the Palace, etc., have been monopolised by the German officers, and a lady will not visit them for anything on earth. "Ah non pas là; il y a trop de Boches!" declares a Bruxelloise invited to visit such a place.

It is really a trying time for a lady in Brussels, as well as all over Belgium. The German officers do not think it too base a thing to look up in the Kommandantur books the names of the young women whose husbands are either at the front or in a concentration camp in Germany; and then a
real hunting campaign begins, generally ended by the lady leaving her own house and going to stay with relatives or friends. The German officer's way of paying attentions to a lady varies from following her about in the most persistent manner to sending her bouquets of flowers, and even to operating day and night perquisition of her house under some easily-found excuse, or without pretext at all.

I know some instances of such cases which are very common in Brussels. The father of one lady, who received such a visit from an officer accompanied by two soldiers at three o'clock in the morning, is a very highly placed Belgian official. He protested at the Kommandantur, but the answer he had was that the officer was perfectly right in so doing.

All German attempts to make friends with the population have failed.

I know of officers, once personal friends of Belgian families, who have tried in vain to revive the old acquaintance.
Of course, there are a few families who have received the German officers, and these are consequently in favour. In a family of parvenus which hopes to take a better place in Brussels society if the German occupation continues, the Kaiser's birthday was celebrated with a dinner for officers, followed by a dance, permission being gladly granted by the Kommandantur.

But Brussels society, needless to say, has completely ostracised these people. Even the Germans at heart despise them.

"We go to the house," said the officer who told me of the Kaiser's birthday-party, "because we have nowhere else to go, but we know perfectly well they only do it because they think it will improve their social position. They are not exactly the kind of people I shall like to shake hands with when the war is over."

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There is one part of Brussels which has never been properly occupied—the part which lies on the other side of the port and
of the Bassin Vergote, the so-called Marolle, the East End of the Belgian capital. During the first month of the occupation the Kommandantur tried to establish a proper military police service there, as in the other quarters of the town; but each night several of the men in the patrol disappeared, and often a full patrol would meet a similar end.

The Brussels apaches have always been armed with long thin knives, and they took no notice of the order to give up all arms to the police. As the high powers of Berlin did not want a wholesale imprisonment or the destruction of the entire quarter, which would have been the only remedy, the Kommandantur has compromised. The Marolle is occupied during the day, and free during the night. Patrols go through it in daylight, but when evening comes they cross the water and retire into the old "Luna Park," now converted into a large prison and barracks.

The high and smartest part of the town is completely given up to the Germans. The Palais de la Nation, and the Palais du Roe,
the beautiful Palais des Beaux Arts, and the colossal Palais de Justice, are the headquarters of the German Government of Belgium. New German inscriptions tell the new uses of the palaces, and, what is rather important, no reference is made to a temporary government of Belgium; the inscriptions simply say, "German Empire—Government of the Belgian Provinces."

Near the Palais de Justice, which occupies a dominating position on a hill almost in the centre of the town, twenty large siege guns have been placed, and near them artillery officers and men connected with the Kommandantur by a camp telephone are ready to pour on the quiet town death and destruction should the necessity of subduing riots arise.

The most important monuments, art galleries, and churches are said to be mined, and the German authorities do not deny the rumour.

On the boulevards and down the beauti-
ful Avenue Louise, at the Cinquantenaire, and at the Bois de la Cambre, generally full of smart people, of horse-riders, and of carriages and motor-cars, there are now only old Landsturm soldiers drilling and very young officers riding, often accompanied by ladies, who, even in this the smartest of sports, cannot get rid of a certain Teutonic awkwardness.

The German nation has always been celebrated for her immoderate liking for issuing long and complicated notices, warnings which are possible only in Germany because in no other country would people take the trouble to read them.

In Belgium this mania has reached its highest possible point. On the ruins of the dead cities and on the trees in the open country, on the gates of the gardens, and on the milestones of the country roads, everywhere where there is space enough, the German Government has posted notices, printed in three languages—German, Flemish, and French—headed with the
German eagle and signed by the Governor-General.

Brussels is covered with a sort of incrustation of old and new official notices; notices about closing time for shops and cafés, about grouping in the streets, about meetings in clubs, about drinking spirits, about singing forbidden songs, about buying or selling forbidden stuff, about keeping arms, photographic cameras, or maps, about detaining gold instead of giving it up to the banks, about giving hospitality to refugees or foreigners, about everything on earth.

The list of things "verboten" would probably take more than a full page, but what is most insisted upon and is the subject of five or six different notices is the introduction of foreign papers into Belgium and the sale, or possession, of newspapers of any kind besides the ones sold openly in Belgium, a full list of which is given.

These are: a few Belgian papers, naturally issued under the vigilant eye of the most particular of censors; some German papers,
not all of them, as many are considered much too advanced to be allowed into the hands of Belgian people; and a Rotterdam sheet, which has the privilege of being the only foreign journal allowed into Belgium, a privilege more apparent than real, as the paper is notoriously in German hands.

It will easily be understood how the Belgian population feels more than anything else this complete lack of real news, and how eager they are for the information which is brought in by the few refugees who succeed in going back or by the few foreign papers they manage to smuggle in at great risk and great expense.

The other papers, the ones which are allowed, print the most fantastic news. I was in Brussels the day of the Zeppelin raid on the British coast; the aircraft, according to the news for Belgian consumption, reached London and dropped bombs all over the metropolis. Every day or two a great victory is claimed on either front, and the official
reports of foreign countries published in the papers are only mutilated and distorted reductions of the real ones.

To be found in possession of forbidden papers is extremely dangerous.

A gentleman belonging to one of the best Brussels families was given two months' concentration camp for translating articles from The Times, and one of his office clerks, who got hold of the translations and typed them and sold them, had to serve a six months' sentence. In spite of all this, I managed to get a copy of The Times nearly every day, paying for it two francs fifty, which is certainly a fair price, but not too high considering the difficulty of introducing it into Belgium, and that it was generally only two days old.

Up to about two months ago people would gladly pay twenty-five francs for a copy of the paper; refugees and Dutch people used to take it in at great risk, but now with an admirable sense of adaptability, the German soldiers, Custom House officers, and railway
employees have organised this delicate service.

They get *The Times* or the *Figaro* for two-pence at the Dutch frontier and sell it again to some agent in Brussels or straight to the public at a nice profit. One must, of course, be extremely careful in buying papers offered on sale by such people, as this is one of the favourite victim-hunting systems of the numberless spies of the Kommandantur.

In a difficult moment like the present one the Belgian Press, or the part of it which stuck to its place and kept independent from German influence, has assumed a very dignified attitude. *La Belgique, Le Bruxellois, La Patrie*, etc., publish the different *communiqués*, French, German, English, and Russian, but never forget to put, as an undertitle, "As transmitted to us by the Censor." Very often the papers come out with large blank spaces, the whole or part of an article having been censored.
At a famous restaurant near the "Halles," which is the meeting-place of journalistic and literary folk in Brussels, I met an old friend, now editor of a large Brussels paper.

He thought it was his duty not to leave the town and to try to give the Belgian public as truthful news as possible about the war, but he admitted the task he had assumed was almost impossible.

All communications with foreign countries have been interrupted, and the papers must depend completely on the censor for news. The few items of correspondence which he could manage to get through from England and France were not allowed to be printed, and quotations from foreign papers are strictly forbidden.

The German Government tried often with his paper, and with all the others of a certain importance, to convert them into Germanophile papers, offering large sums of money and great advantages of every kind. Such offers were naturally refused, and now the Germans have founded a new paper, the title
of which sounds very Belgian, while the editor and staff have been carefully selected amongst people who are, at least as far as their name goes, thoroughly Belgian.

This is now the leading organ of the Germanophil movement.

"Many Belgians in London?" asked my friend, after a pause.

"Too many," I could not help answering.

"Oh, we know, we know. Twenty per cent. are perhaps real refugees, and the others are slackers, or people who fancy that, after all, a season in London is the best way of dealing with the crisis.

"I wonder if the young men who left Belgium on the pretext of enlisting, and who are now 'acting the referee' in London, know that we consider them a disgrace to our country?

"If a man cannot fight with our King on the last bit of Belgian soil, his duty is to stick to his town, to his village, or to his country house. Especially if he is a man of wealth, and most Belgians now in London
are fairly well off, there is plenty for him to do here."

The very same thing was repeated to me by hundreds of people while I was in Belgium.

A lady who ten or twelve years since has spent every winter in her beautiful villa in Bordighera, and who, for the first time, did not this year leave Brussels, where she is managing an emergency hospital for children, said to me: "When you go back to England, please tell the English that we Belgians do not want to be judged by those of us who are now in London enjoying themselves in theatres and night clubs. What they spend in an evening would be sufficient to keep one of our starving families for a week. We know, from some refugees who have come back, how even a number of young men are enjoying in England an idle life and a free and large hospitality. Such people should not be surprised if, when the war is over and they are back in Belgium, they are considered as outcasts. We shall
not have any room for them in our society. They have deserted Belgium when she was most in need of them; they have made us look like cowards in the eyes of the country which has been helping us most gallantly, and they will not be surprised, I think, to be ostracised by the rest of their country-folk.

"This war," continued the lady, who bears one of the oldest and best names of Belgium, "this war has produced in our country a new form of socialism—a socialism which has nothing in common with the theories of Bebel or Marx, but which seems to derive its origin from the Commandments of the Bible.

"I know of ladies who would not, before the war, have thought it in themselves to do any such useful work as looking after entire families of refugees; others have been converted by the circumstances of war into efficient sick nurses, relief organisers, and even into cooks for our kitchens for the poor. I know of families who would have shivered
at the idea of having a stranger in their home, especially if that stranger happened to be of low class, who are now giving hospitality to whole families; I know of middle-aged gentlemen who almost every week risk their lives to go into Holland to get letters from soldiers fighting at the front and to bring back hope to hundreds of families. These and our soldiers are the true Belgians."

Poor people often told me the same thing. "Do you think we are of the kind to allow the Germans to turn us out of our own houses?" a little Belgian woman asked me. She was living with her five children in a little ruined cottage near Liége, while her husband was fighting at the front. A piece of shell remained jutting from a wall of the little house, which had newspapers at the windows instead of glass.

"I did not bother to have new glass put in just yet," said the little woman, smiling; "first of all because we have no money to spare, and also because we expect to see more fighting soon; at least, we hope
so. We know it will be hell when the Germans are pushed back, but we are waiting anxiously for that moment. Ah! sir, this is not life; this is worse than all being dead,” she ended, kissing the fair head of her last-born—born since the Germans came.

In many, many towns did I hear this very same hope expressed by all kinds and conditions of people and in the same manner: “When are we going to get rid of them?”

“Get rid of them” does not mean only that the Belgians desire to reassume the dignity of a free nation, have their own rulers, nor see any more pointed helmets, but also that they want to be able to start business again, to live, to eat, to be free in every sense of the word.

The subject of a country which has not suffered invasion for centuries and centuries can hardly realise what all this means.

* * *

Perhaps the most intolerable portion of the occupants are the civilians, who have
come down in big numbers, following in a week or two the German Army. They have joined the other Germans, those who have been preparing for years the ground for the future invasion. Some are occupied at the Kommandantur, some are organising the railway service, but most belong to the secret service and to the police offices.

The German waiters of the Palace, the Metropole, the Cecil, and all other big hotels in Brussels appear to have been working their very best for the Fatherland before the war began. Now they have left their humble jobs, thrown away their mask, and found new employment with the central police. In Brussels there are any number of such people, who now carry themselves proudly with a white, black, and red armlet and a pistol-case bulging beneath their coats on the left hip.

Very few motor-cars are seen in the streets, and during my stay of more than a week I did not see a single car driven by a civilian.
The petrol question seems to have become extremely serious. All the motor garages are closed, and it is impossible to obtain the spirit at any price, not only in large quantities, but even in small bottles from a chemist's shop.

This accounts for the boom in acetylene lamps and carbide. New large shops selling these goods have opened all over the country. In most villages gas and electric light have been cut off, and this is the only means of obtaining any light.

Here, again, Brussels has very special treatment. The town at night is as full of light as usual—probably because the Germans know perfectly well that if the Allies should attempt an air attack they would almost certainly damage the civilian population more than the occupiers. Very often, in the daytime, a Zeppelin will appear over the town; people are so used to the sight that they take little or no notice.

To sum up: the Brussels population has become accustomed very quickly to the new
situation. Nobody seems to mind the incessant rumble of the guns in the distance, nor the food scarcity and high prices, nor the abnormal life of the town. Nor the lack of amusements.

I have said some theatres are open; they are, but only for the Germans. The Belgian people refuse to go to them for two good reasons. They do not want to mix with the Germans, and they do not think it right to enjoy themselves when their country is reduced to such pitiful conditions and their King and the remnants of his army are fighting on the last bit of Belgian soil.

For the Germans there are even music-hall shows and dances, and, with that beautiful sense of tradition which, according to Nietzsche, is one of the secrets of German clumsiness, even the decrepit institution of Tango Teas is still kept alive. And there the Hun stuffs himself with more champagne and costly food.

At ten miles' distance from Brussels the
inhabitants of Forest have been rationed at half a pound of brown bread per head.

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It is very difficult to obtain from the German Kommandantur in Belgium permission to travel anywhere past the line of Ghent, Brussels, and Charleroi. The permits are not readily granted even to Germans and Belgians, and a foreigner, whatever his nationality, finds it almost impossible to secure one. The parties of American, Italian, and German journalists taken to visit the trenches and the supposed firing line were really shown only a few places previously arranged. In no case were they allowed to see the things they really wanted to see, nor were they permitted to talk to the population or to the soldiers.

If I wished to get near the front I realised that I must find a very convincing pretext. I happened to have some friends, proprietors of large motor works in Tournai, so I managed to obtain a pass for this town, alleging some business transactions as my excuse.
From Brussels the train only took me as far as Enghien, from which little town I had to proceed by road in an impossible vehicle pulled by an old horse, so old and worn out that it had escaped German requisition. It must have been a very old horse to escape that.

Curiously enough, the part of Belgium I crossed while approaching the German front seemed to have suffered very little. No ruins and no burned houses. Indeed, but for the sentries posted on the road every quarter of a mile, one could have thought the country was at peace.

But a few miles before Tournai was reached the country began to assume a war-like appearance.

Numerous trenches, which evidently had never been used, and which were filled with ice-covered water, lay ready for an eventual retreat. From this point up to the front there were long lines of trenches at frequent intervals. Before reaching Tournai I passed a military aerodrome, which had been ar-
ranged in a large treeless piece of ground near Basècles. Two large Zeppelin shelters and some temporary hangars, capable of holding about ten aeroplanes, had been erected.

One of the Zeppelins was just coming back from the direction of Brussels when we passed; two aeroplanes had been taken out in the open air, and a number of soldiers were busy round them.

Though Tournai is not very near the front the town is completely occupied by German troops, and is treated as a town in the battle zone. This is because the town occupies a very important position on the River Schelde and because Lille, about twenty kilometres westward is too close to the firing line to permit of its being used as a base.

All the bridges on the river are mined, most of the houses have been converted into temporary hospitals for slightly wounded soldiers, and the town is filled with officers and men just back from the trenches.

Never before had I seen German soldiers
newly returned from the field of battle. Nothing remained of the well-dressed, well-fed, and stiff troops generally seen in Germany. Their uniforms were torn and dirty; their faces unshaven, thin, and often unhealthy. They did not sing, they were not noisy. I saw them in cafés and restaurants writing long letters home, with a large glass of beer in front of them.

Often in the same establishment were groups of bright young soldiers in comparatively fresh uniforms, soldiers who were cheering and singing because next day they were going to the front. They were men of the '95 and '96 classes who had just come from Germany. The veterans were looking at them, and I heard one say to another, "They will cool down soon; they don't know yet what the trenches are like."

Tournai has seen going through its streets most of the German wounded on their way back to the Fatherland and most of the prisoners travelling to the concentration camps in Germany. Nobody could tell me,
even approximately, the number of wounded that had gone through the town, but everybody agreed the number was very large, though the number of sick is still larger. Typhoid fever claims a large number of victims, both amongst the troops and the civilian population.

Special notices warning everyone to drink no water unless it had been boiled were to be seen everywhere. Lately numerous cases of lockjaw (tetanus) have also made their appearance. It is said that soldiers get the dreadful illness while working with barbed wire.

The station of Tournai, as well as two large hotels near it, have been converted into dépôts for the wounded who are to be sent to Germany. Apparently the German Government does not like wounded or sick soldiers to come into touch with civilians or with soldiers going to the front. It is to avoid such contact that they are concentrated in Tournai, and from there sent via Mons, Liége, Aix-la-Chapelle, straight to Ger-
many. No civilians are allowed into the station at Tournai, and the wounded always travel by special train.

For the prisoners it is different. They are marched through the town, preceded and followed by German troops. The population offers them cigars, sweets, and tobacco, to the great rage of the German soldiers, who can never manage to make any friends. Very often the same group of soldiers is made to march through the town many times to impress the population with the large number of prisoners.

A lady who has been in Tournai since the beginning of the war told me that she once noticed amongst a group of British soldiers a very tall, thin, and red-haired Highlander, and she remarked to a lady friend with her, "Isn't that man the living caricature of the Englishman as we always see him on the stage?"

But two or three days later she saw a fellow exactly like the first amongst another group of prisoners; she came to the con-
clusion that the giraffe-like figures and ginger hair were rather common in the British Army.

The next day brought another group of British prisoners and another apparition of a very tall, red-haired "Tommy." She looked at him interrogatively, at which he bowed and shouted out in a jolly voice: "Here I am again, madam." The lady bid him good-bye, but the Tommy laughed, and answered, "No, au revoir. I shall call again soon, I am sure."

I wanted to get as near the firing line as possible, and I asked permission to go to Lille. This was denied me, and as, considering the enormous number of sentries on the roads, it would have been foolish to try and go there without it, I decided to go instead to Courtrai, a little town north of Tournai, which is only about twelve kilometres (about eight miles) from the firing line.

Tournai, which is not at all damaged in the centre of the town, has a number of
houses destroyed in its northern part. The wonderful cathedral, a mixture of twenty different styles, but, in spite of this, quite harmonious and beautiful, has received a shell which luckily has not done much damage.

Four large motor-vans passed in front of me on the road to Courtrai, and my horse, which in former years had probably been a good charger, reared and neighed loudly. They were Red Cross vans loaded with wounded. Four or five times a day they go to Tournai carrying wounded, and come back carrying sanitary material to the northern section of the German front.

I crossed the Schelde by a temporary bridge made with curious concrete flat boats. The bridge was guarded by numerous soldiers, and with them was an Austrian officer, the only one I saw during the whole of my journey in Belgium.

I had to get off the saddle and show my papers. While waiting for the officer to look at them, my attention was attracted to an
extraordinary-looking boat drawn up near the river side. The boat was just like one of the ordinary flat, large river boats which in Belgium carry stones and coal on canals and rivers, but for an exceptionally clean, smart appearance lent to it by a verandah covered with glass, under which were numerous palm trees. The whole boat was painted white, and on the top of it waved the Red Cross flag. On deck were two white-clad nurses, and one or two wounded with bandaged heads sat smoking and reading in basket-chairs on the verandah.

I was told that the boat is one of the Berlin Red Cross League floating hospitals, and that the nurses are all ladies in society. These hospital boats are specially intended for wounded or sick officers who are likely to recover soon if properly treated.

* * *

Are there any inhabitants left in Courtrai? I did not see any during my visit there. The hotels and the public buildings were taken
up by Germans; numerous platforms for guns were being constructed in the western part of the town. A number of temporary fortification works had already been prepared here. The line of the Lys seems to have been carefully fortified down to Courtrai, and one almost gets the impression that the Germans are seriously thinking of the possibility of a retreat on this river, while a second and still better fortified line has been prepared twenty kilometres (about thirteen miles) behind on the Schelde.

At the base of the old fortifications of the town, where the famous Bataille des Eperons d'Or was fought, the invaders have arranged a sort of artillery dépôt. The special carriages carry the fire-pieces from Essen to this spot, where they are put together, and then sent to their destination.

There are the enormous siege guns, as massive as elephants, and as complicated as a cathedral organ; the quick-firing guns, light and agile; the short and squat mortars; and on one side a sort of cemetery of old
artillery pieces; guns without carriages, smashed wheels, distorted and broken remains of old arms blackened and made unrecognisable by the explosions of hostile projectiles.

The number of soldiers here seemed enormous. Day after day trains loaded with new troops kept coming. These men are only in part sent to the front, the other part leaving for an unknown destination. I had the impression that something was being prepared, probably a desperate attack on the north-west in the direction of Ypres and Dixmude.

Courtrai is quite close to the trenches; often regiments which have been for a week or ten days in the firing line come back, and are replaced by fresh troops.

Every now and again a shell bursts in the town and causes some damage. It is almost impossible to get anything to eat anywhere, and the population is strictly rationed. To make sure that no light will give away the position of the town at night, gas and
electric light have been cut off. At nine o'clock everybody must be indoors.

I don't know if civilians have all left the town by order of the Governor, but it is certain that it seems to be only inhabited by soldiers. Some houses with doors wide open are completely abandoned, whilst others, the best ones, are inhabited by officers. A number have been burned.

In no hotels was there a room to be had, and I spent the night on a billiard-table covered with a mattress. Every now and again the guns awakened me with their thunder-like rumble, which at night sounded nearer and stranger. I could see the clouds in the distance reddened by the flames of the explosions.

In the morning I went down to the cemetery of the town, which, being at the extreme west, gave me opportunity to glance towards the forbidden ground, the real firing line. In the distance, with the help of a good pair of field-glasses, lent me by an officer, I could see something moving slowly with smoke
above it. Behind the leafless trees of the road more smoke announced the German artillery position.

I told what I had seen to an officer, who happened to be a very nice fellow, and I asked him: "Is a modern battlefield always so slow?"

"Yes, almost always."

"And this goes on for weeks?" I said.

"For months, sir!"

"And don't you think it likely that you or the others will try a decided move one of these days?"

"We hope so," answered the officer; "we have not begun to fight yet."