

A GERMAN DESERTER'S WAR EXPERIENCE.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The following narrative first appeared in German in the columns of the New Yorker Volkszeitung, the principal organ of the German speaking Socialist in the United States. Its author, who escaped from Germany and military service after 14 months of fighting in France, is an intelligent young miner. He does not wish to have his name made public, fearing that those who will be offended by his frankness might stir their wrath on his relatives. Since his arrival in this country his friends and acquaintances have come to know him as an upright and truthful man, whose word can be relied upon.

The vivid description of the life of a common German soldier in the present war aroused great interest among those present. In these pages to the English speaking reader was published in serial form. For here was an historical of the war who had been through the horrors of the carnage of the front, the horrors of the "Boches"; a soldier who had not abdicated his reason; a warrior against his will, who nevertheless had to conform to the etiquette of war; a hater of millions of his fellow men, whose manhood was in vain, but only butchery and brutality, crime and vermin, inhuman toil and degradation. Moreover, he was found to be no mere observer of men and things. His keen mind was a school of mining enabled him to obtain a much clearer understanding of the war of position than the average soldier possesses.

Let soldiers who have been in the war and have written down their experiences have done so in the customary way, never questioning for a moment the moral justification of war. Not so our author, who could not but question the moral justification of war. He was determined to make a distinction between private and public morality, and the angle from which he views the events he describes is therefore entirely different from that of the school of observers of and participants in war. His story also contains the first German description of the retreat of the Teutonic armies after the battle of the Marne. His account of this soldier's narrative lies, however, in his destructive, annihilating criticism of the romance and fabled virtues of war. If some of the incidents related in this book appear to be treated too curtly it is solely due to this author's limited literary powers. For, for instance, he does not dwell upon his inner experiences during his terrible voyage to America by ship, but only on the fact that it is because he is not a literary artist, but a simple workman.

The translator hopes that he has succeeded in reproducing faithfully the substance and spirit of the story, and that this little book will contribute in combating one of the forces that make for war—popular ignorance of war's realities. Let each individual fully grasp and understand the misery, degradation and destruction that await him in war, and the barbarous order by carnage will quickly become the most unpopular institution on earth.

J. Kottgen.

MARCHING INTO BELGIUM.

At the end of July our garrison at Koblenz was feverishly agitated. Part of our men were seized by an indescribable enthusiasm, others became subject to a feeling of great depression. The declaration of war was in the air. I belonged to those who were de-

pressed. For I was doing my second year of military service in the barracks in Koblenz, and was to leave the barracks in six weeks' time. Instead of the long wished-for return home war was facing me.

After turning my military service I had remained the anti-militarist I had been before. I could not imagine what interest I could have in the marching and I also pointed out to my comrades that under all circumstances war was the greatest misfortune that could happen to humanity.

Our supper battalion, No. 30, had been in feverish activity five days before the mobilization; work was being hurriedly completed and night so that we were fully prepared for war already on the 23rd of July, and on the 30th of July there was no person in our barracks who doubted that war was near. However, there was the suspicious amiability of the officers and sergeants, which excluded any doubt that any one might still have had. Officers who had never before replied to the salute of a private soldier now did so with the utmost attention. Cigars and beer were distributed in those days by the officers with great, unbecoming liberality, so that it was not surprising that many soldiers were already at the point of desertion. There were soldiers who clung to the officers of good humor and the grinning comradeship of officer and soldier could not forget that in military service they had often been degraded to the level of brutes, and who now thought that they were being offered an opportunity might perhaps be offered in order to settle accounts.

The order of mobilization had been given the last of August, and the following day was decided upon as the real day of mobilization. But without awaiting the arrival of the reserves we left ourarrison town on August 1st. Who was to march? We did not know. Russia was for the present the only country against which war had been declared.

We marched through the streets of the station between crowds of people numbering many thousands. Flares were thrown at us from every window; everybody wanted to shake hands with the departing soldiers. All the people, even soldiers, were weeping. Many marched arm in arm with their wife or sweetheart. The music played songs of leave-taking. People cried and sang at the moment they were leaving. Men and women, embraced and kissed each other; men embraced men and kissed each other. It was a real witches' sabbath of emotion; like a wild torrent, the whole carried away the whole assembly of humanity. Nobody, not even the strongest and most determined, could resist that ebullition of feeling.

But all this was surpassed by the taking leave at the station, which we reached after a short march. Here final adieus had to be said, here the separation had to take place. I shall never forget that if they were leaving the old I may grow to be. Desperately many women slung to their men; some had to be removed by force. Just as if they had a vision of the fate of their beloved ones, as if they were beholding the old graves in foreign lands in which those poor nameless ones were to be buried, they sought to cling fast to their possession, to retain what already no longer belonged to them.

Finally, that too, was over. We had entered a train that had been

kept ready, and had made ourselves comfortable in our cattle-trucks. Darkness had come, and we had no light in our comfortable sixth-class carriages.

The train moved slowly down the Rhine, and we went along with any great shaking, and some of us were seized by a worn-out feeling after those days of great excitement. Most of the soldiers lay with their heads on their benches and slept. Others again attempted to pierce the darkness as it still looked into the future; still others drew stealthily a photo out of their breast-pocket, and only a very small number of us spent the time by debating our point of destination. Where are we going to Well, where? Nobody knew it. At last, after long, infinitely long hours, the train came to a halt. After a night of quiet, slow riding we were at Aix-la-Chapelle! At Aix-la-Chapelle! What we were doing at Aix-la-Chapelle! We did not know. We were only shrugging their shoulders when we asked them.

After a short interval the journey proceeded, and on the evening of the 2nd of August we reached a farm in the neighborhood of the German and Belgian frontier, near Herzelsheim. Here our company was quartered in 3 barns. Nobody knew what our business was at the Belgian frontier. In the afternoon of the 2nd of August reservists arrived, and our company was brought to its war strength. We had still no idea concerning the purpose of our marching to the Belgian frontier. That and everything else lay on our bed of straw with a forced tranquillity of mind. Something was sure to happen soon, to deliver us from that oppressive uncertainty. That and everything else lay on our bed of straw with a forced tranquillity of mind. Something was sure to happen soon, to deliver us from that oppressive uncertainty.

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A sudden signal of alarm fetched us out of our "beds" at about 10 o'clock in the morning. The company assembled, and the captain explained to us the war situation. He informed us that we had to keep ready to march, that he himself was not yet informed of the purpose of our marching. He said that we were to march at half an hour later, fifty large traction motors arrived and stopped in the road before our quarters. But the drivers of these engines, too, knew no particulars and were waiting for orders. The debate about our nearest goal was resumed. The orderlies, who had snatched up many remarks of the officers, ventured the opinion that we would march into Belgium the very same day. But we contradicted them. None of us could know anything certain. But the order to march did not arrive and in the evening of all that we were again on our guard. But it was not until the morning of the 10th in the morning an alarm sounded again, and the captain ordered us with an address. He told us we were at war with Belgium. We were to march into Belgium as brave soldiers, and we were to do, and honor to our German name. Then he continued some words as follows: "We are making war only against the armed forces of Belgium, and not against the lives and property of the Belgian people. We are under the protection of international treaties, international law, but you soldiers must not forget that it is your duty to defend the protection of your Fatherland, and to sell them as dearly as possible. We want to prevent useless shedding of blood as far as the civilians are concerned; but I want to remind you that a too great cowardice in the face of the enemy is punished very severely."

After that "humane" speech by our captain we were "told" that we were to march into Belgium. The Belgian frontier on the morning of August 16. In order to meet you at Liebhof any time after the first of May to purchase that tract of land that I have been telling you about.

It will take \$18,000 to handle the proposition. Let all that can meet me there about the 1st of May write me. If there is not enough that wants to go into this fall to start a co-operative colony we can cut it up and sell it out at a profit. I want to put \$2000 into it now, perhaps more later. The quicker we get the better, as prices are continually going up.

READY FOR BUSINESS.

Some have written me telling me that they saw in The Rebel where I was selling out a block of land near Liebhof, and will say to all that have thus written me that if you don't know any more about co-operation than that you had better stay out of co-operation.

I thought I had made the matter clear, that the land and all productive property were to be held by the company and used jointly. This is exactly what the early church did. No one said aught of the things he possessed was his own but they had all things common and no one lacked anything. See Acts 4, 32.

If you are a Christian then whether you are a Socialist or not you believe in co-operation. In fact, the Testament covers all the ground. A Christian, which means a follower of Christ, believes in all things that will bless the human race and should work to that end that when he leaves this world he can say that the world has been made better by him having lived in it.

Yours for business.

G. A. Lambeth.

TAX THE DOLLARS.

It is said that the Government is considering the advisability of placing a confiscatory war tax on those who have incomes over \$100,000 a year. The Rebel believes that the confiscatory tax should be on incomes over \$5,000 a year. The Government is fighting will be safe from the tax as their incomes are about \$500. However the plutons don't worry. We should believe that if all incomes over \$5,000 were confiscated it would be a very real reality than the European war because 10,000,000 people would drop dead from heart failure if the Donks should do any patriotic stunt for the masses.

"I don't swear so if you want to go to go to go."

gave special solemnity to that "historical" moment we had to give three cheers.

At no other moments the fruits of military service were presented themselves as clearly before my mind. The soldier is told: "The Belgian is your enemy," and he has to believe it. The soldier, the workman in uniform, had not known till then who was his enemy. If they had told him: "The Hollander is your enemy," we would have believed that, but we would have been compelled to believe it, and would have shot him by the neck. The "German citizens in uniform," must not have an opinion of our own, must have no thoughts of our own, for they give us our enemy and our friends according to requirements and according to the requirements of their own interests. The Frenchman, the Belgian, the Italian, is your enemy. Never mind shoot us we order, do not bother your head about it. You have duties to perform, perform them, and for the rest—cut it out!

(To be continued.)

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

The Fort Worth Star Telegram in a recent issue editorially commented on the recent Socialist party's National Convention as follows:

A Gasp From a Dying Doctrine.

In reaffirming its allegiance to the principles of internationalism and working class solidarity the world over, and proclaiming its "unalterable opposition" to the war just declared by the United States, the Socialist Party convention at St. Louis demonstrated how absolutely it is dominated by the German doctrinaire element which founded the party in this country. It is significant that John Spargo, who has labored for years to create an American socialism, free from the distinctly German doctrine, supported a resolution which declared in effect that every Socialist would support the United States in the present war.

The Communist Manifesto, which proclaimed the principle of internationalism, was written by the German Socialist party. When the war broke out the German party and the English Socialist party in the world had taken a stand at the beginning of the war similar to that which it is now taking. It was no premonition, a stand which it could have taken with better grace than this. The war might have been over by the time it did. Indeed, it was the support which the German party gave their government which broke down the "international" and made impossible any action on the part of the Socialists of Europe to intervene.

For the American party, or rather the English party, to proclaim internationalism in the face of the failure of the originators of the idea to uphold the principle, of course, but it serves to illustrate the purely selfish and doctrinaire character of the dominant leaders. It is significant that leaders like Charles Edward Russell, William Lloyd Garrison, P. Ghent, Spargo and others have announced the principle of upholding democratic government against the encroachment of absolute monarchies. This, we think, is a sadder kind of internationalism, the kind of internationalism which President Wilson proposes to incorporate in a league of nations to enforce peace.

The action of the St. Louis convention means that that faction of the party which sink into a state of insignificance.

The Rebel would suggest to the Telegram that they ought to get some facts on the subject of internationalism on such an important subject. In the first place when the Communist Manifesto was written there was no such thing as a German Socialist party. The Russian Democratic Socialism founded years later. The manifesto was written in London, England, by Karl Marx as the platform of the "Communist League," a workmen's association and under the political conditions then existing was a secret society. It was printed in London, England in 1848. Marx was at that time a refugee, having been driven out of Germany by France, from there he went to London, England and sought refuge in England in 1848.

So much for the historical accuracy of the Telegram.

It is true that the Socialist party was the strongest in the world when the war broke out. It is true the vast majority of the Socialist representatives in the Reichstag voted for war; but it is also true that even the German party candidates combined and also electing C. Johnson 9th ward; while W. E. Rodgers held over. Alderman Kennedy is known as the leading anti-militarist of Chicago and the people stayed with him. He and Rodgers won the street car strike for the men two years ago by introducing resolutions that kept them out of the city and by drafting an ordinance calling for partial ownership of the street railways.

The Rebel has been physically beaten up from head to foot by the Telegram in a double with its own.

"OF ALL SAYS DOORS."

By Boots Nearing. The American people were slow to enter the war. Indeed, it is doubtful whether a majority of them would have voted in favor of war at the time when war was declared.

The war will be expensive, expensive in life and joy, and expensive in wealth, yet the present position of this country is so deterrent. The national debt has spent to date, perhaps \$75 billions in the war—a sum large enough to buy New York City eight times over; a sum large enough to pay every man, woman and child in the world forty-five or fifty dollars; a sum large enough to build over a hundred Panama Canals; a sum large enough to provide \$200 for each of the 30 million people of the United States who are now living in poverty—And there's the rub.

When the government of the United States assumed the task of waging a million little wars, many there were five or six million families in the United States who, according to the figures published by the Federal Health Bureau, are living in poverty.

More than a million little Americans were at work for wages; three-fourths of the ten millions of women who work in the United States were receiving a weekly wage of less than eight dollars. Half of the adult men engaged in American industries were earning less than \$500 a year.

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The government is going to spend seven billions during the next few months. If only that money could have been employed on an intelligent, far-reaching campaign against undernourishment and unemployment! Suppose that the newspapers could have filled their columns; the radio could have delivered their sermons, and the teachers utilized their position of unparalleled advantage and power. Suppose the movies, the chateaus, and all of the other agencies for the dissemination of ideas had devoted as much attention to the perils of these internal problems as they devoted to the perils of militarism in Germany. If only they could have done that, how different would be the situation in the subsequent history of the United States might have been.

"Of all says doors of tongue or pen, the saddest are these—It might have been."

SOCIALIST VICTORY.

The Socialists in the Chicago common council increased their representation by re-electing J. C. Kennedy, who received over 10,000 votes, and thus all the other party candidates combined and also electing C. Johnson 9th ward; while W. E. Rodgers held over. Alderman Kennedy is known as the leading anti-militarist of Chicago and the people stayed with him. He and Rodgers won the street car strike for the men two years ago by introducing resolutions that kept them out of the city and by drafting an ordinance calling for partial ownership of the street railways.

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That last October just three weeks before election, I was standing in the lobby of the Oriental Hotel in New York City, waiting for a dining car to take me to my apartment. Senator Johnson of Hall county, Senator and owner of the Hall County Democrat, and the Honorable John P. Morgan, who was against Governor Ferguson in the last legislature, came up to me and said: "Mr. Hickley, you have been in my county three times before. I have never seen you before. I have been keeping track of you all over the state. I understand that you are hoarding in many places, writing from ten to twelve times a week to your paper, and delivering eight or ten speeches a week on the side, that you live on rail road trains and your friends tell me you have not had a day's sleep since election time." I knew you were a stocky built Irishman with iron powers of endurance but an great power you could not keep up your pace. If you do not keep up your pace, you will fall. I told them before the ballots are counted, because when a man like you breaks he goes all at once." Patrick Smith was standing by and listening intently. He said: "You are right, Mr. Hickley, alone, he will pull through in fine shape." I said "Much obliged for your kindly advice Senator, but I am going to sleep tonight." He said: "I am going to pull the sheet about my tired form and sleep for a week." I said: "I am going to sleep tonight, and immediately after the election." I made tracks for my downy couch for the long sleep. But, alas, morpheus the goddess of slumber deigned my silent prayer. I awoke with my eyes and soft caressing fingers on my forehead. Mother Nature was now at a dinner and decided on a bitter beverage. In a spirit of rebellion she poured down on the noblest cause man ever fought for—Social Democracy and Peace. I had flouted the old lady; laughed in her face and bid her to go. She said: "You are a scoundrel. Wakenings might cure her smiles and conserve their energies, but not me. I was the Vetsche woman who reeled not of bed but of wine. I was the Vetsche woman who pushed forward against the Dem and Reps, who are deadly enemies of the Nation's flag." And so for the first time in my life I suffered from insomnia. I lay awake for three days. I lay I lay peacefully while five thousand of pro-beheadened public yelled in strident tones their infamous lie as results has since been proved. "He kept us out of war." In seven days I did not sleep to exceed seven hours. Later I got some sleep and the old time flush of spirit came back. I was a member of the two Prohibitionists' and sold 5000 extra copies. I then had a relapse and thought of a change of scene would do me good. I went to Austin to cover the trial of the two Prohibitionists. I took a look at that can of fish worms made up of bankers, lawyers and landlords would arouse every drop of my Celtic blood. In this I was right. I saw the old man, as strong as Sandow to watch that labor-bating crowd of reactionists. I was seized with a gripe and my head was as empty as a tin. Then I went to the farm and far from the maddening crowd I have made peace with old mother nature. She is as kind now as ever. I am now in the city. In her own home, the quietude of the city, she has been waiting. She hurls to me a soft lullaby by the spring breezes from the Brazos that blow gently over the hills and valleys. She has been waiting like a tired clown, who then

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