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TRAIL OF ATROCITY ON EUROPEAN BATTLEFIELDS DIFFICULT TO TRACE

War Correspondent Hears Plenty of Cruel Stories, but Gets Little Proof—Mistake Made of Blaming a Country for Acts of a Possibly Criminal Individual—Each Nation Makes Accusations Against Enemy.

By RAYMOND E. SWING. (Correspondence of The Chicago Daily News.)

Berlin, Germany.—The task of gathering material about atrocities is perhaps the simplest of the activities of those reporting this war, but the task of confirming these stories is one to drive a trained jurymen mad. After spending several days among soldiers at the front I have come to the conclusion that one of the horrors of war is the wildly exaggerated stories about atrocities, and that these stories are nearly as harmful as the verified atrocities themselves. They will make any sane and progressive peace movement extremely difficult, which must find its support from a people believing with bitterest hate every exaggerated statement about an enemy and refusing to believe the crimes of its own army.

There are plenty of atrocities with incontrovertible evidence. Such cases are not difficult to find, particularly in East Prussia. Henry C. A. Mead, who went to East Prussia for The Chicago Daily News, brought back a report of which I quote the following:

"In the hospital of Soldau there lies a woman who can speak with terrible conviction about the bestiality of Cossacks. When the Russians came through Soldau she was working as nurse in the little Soldau hospital. With three aged men she hid in a shed behind the hospital. A shell burst near the shed and drove them from their hiding place. They ran to the street as the Cossacks were riding past. The three men were immediately killed and she was attacked by five Cossacks and then shot. The bullet struck her shoulder and she survived to tell her story. I had it from her own lips as she lay in the hospital."

Swears to Mutilations. Mr. Mead continues to quote from an affidavit of August Kurz of the Fifth company, Landwehr:

"We were marching from Lautenburg to Hohenstein when attacked. Our company entered the woods, and in the woods I was separated from my comrades. In the woods I came on the bodies of 11 women, all of them mutilated."

This affidavit is supported by another member of the same detachment of troops who saw the same gruesome sight. In East Prussia there are many stories where conclusive proof of this sort is lacking, but which apparently bear the earmarks of truth, and which will make it difficult for the East Prussians to believe that the Cossack is better than his reputation. The cruelties inflicted on women, the murder of old men and the horrible abuse of children are told in many quarters. There are several instances where Russian officers themselves warned the population to flee, as they declined to be responsible for the actions of the Cossacks.

Saw Evidence of Plundering.

Mr. Mead himself saw many evidences of plundering. Tapiau, Wehlau, Soldau and Allenburg were ruthlessly robbed by the Russians. Shops and homes were in the greatest disorder when he was there ten days after Russian evacuation. Allenstein, Insterburg and Tilsit, however, were not plundered; though in Tilsit were found papers indicating that the city was to have been plundered in two days. General Hindenburg's victory of Tanneburg intervened. In these three latter cities the Russians have had well paid for everything they bought in the shops and gave "bonds" for commandeered supplies.

Mr. Mead heard conflicting stories about a general massacre in Abschwangen. All versions agreed that the Russians had killed nearly all the population, and the likeliest reason he could find was that the invaders, believing that the landwehr troops there were civilians, had revenge what they thought to be franc-tireurs. The number of dead is variously estimated from 150 to 300. The evidence about Abschwangen is confusing and the truth is hard to determine.

Seeking to Poison Water.

Another story, for which there was good authority, though no direct evidence was found by Mr. Mead, was that a man had been captured in Koelnsberg with several tubes of typhoid bacilli, with which he was trying to poison the water supply of the city.

With the western armies stories about atrocities and plundering are as plentiful as in East Prussia. The world is fairly familiar with accounts of alleged German and Belgian atrocities in Belgium. There are many variations of these stories; they seem to include all the most horrible crimes which the human mind can conceive. I shall add only one to this list. A German flyer in Belgium, a man whose reputation is exemplary and who bears a name known to the world, was forced to descend with his machine when his observer was wounded. He left his observer with the aeroplane while he went back to seek help. When he came back he found his observer—who was his most intimate friend—with eyes gouged

out and tongue torn out by the roots. "Can you hear me?" he said to the observer. "I am going to shoot you!" The mutilated man barely nodded, and the other held his revolver to his friend's head and put him out of his misery.

"I staggered away," he said, in telling of this experience, "and if I had found any civilian crossing my path I should have been content to kill. I should have tortured him to death."

Charges Against the English.

There are comparatively few stories of atrocities told against the French. There have been isolated cases of franc-tireurism and cases of the French firing on the Red Cross and destroying food, even cases of the French plundering their own villages. But these stories, were they all true, would not make in bulk anything like the stories told against the English. Everywhere in the German army there is a deep respect for the French and their gallant and civilized fight. Such a feeling, however, is not felt for the English.

The story I heard most often repeated about the English was that they had given the sign of surrender, and then, when the Germans advanced, had fired upon them. I have heard several versions of this story, generally from intelligent, cool-minded officers who seemed to know what they were talking about. The last time I heard the story was in Frankfurt-on-the-Main from a personal friend who had just come from general headquarters to which he is assigned. The English, he said, had given the sign of surrender, their officers standing at the edge of the trenches, hands raised. The Germans advanced, and when they came quite close up they were met by a deadly fire from English troops firing from between the officers' legs.

"So now there is no more quarter being given English soldiers," he ended.

Some English Ingenuity.

Another story about the English which has the authority of a German army officer who witnessed it is the following:

In a small engagement in France the Germans were facing the English and were suffering from artillery fire of a rather uncanny nature. In the first place, the location of the enemy's artillery was a mystery, and no reason could be found for its deadly accuracy. Before long the artillery was disclosed. It was in a large building flying the Red Cross flag and was firing from the windows of this "hospital." Later it was found that an English officer was in the town where the Germans had their headquarters, and had walled himself in the cellar. Here he communicated with the outer world through an air shaft, where the village priest gave him observations about the accuracy of the English artillery, which he then telephoned to the "hospital."

With the army corps where I had the privilege of mingling freely with soldiers behind the lines I heard innumerable stories about the English firing on the Red Cross. It was so terrific, this inhuman battle, that during the early days of the trench fighting, I was told, Germans were forced to lie in their trenches for 48 hours with the dead and their dying comrades about them. No Red Cross assistance could be brought because the enemy ruthlessly shot down anyone coming with relief.

"No More English Prisoners."

These stories were always concluded by the statement, always significantly added, that "now no more English are being taken prisoners." I tried to find out just what truth there was in this of repeated statement, and, while I found it believed everywhere, I could never run across an officer in whose particular corps or regiment this order had been given. It was always in the "next corps" or the "next regiment." Finally an offi-

cer that he believed that such an order had been given in only one corps of soldiers facing the English. Certainly it was not with his corps, as I myself talked to two English wounded prisoners in one of the little field hospitals a few miles behind the trenches.

"Why did you fire on the Red Cross?" I asked them. "The Germans are doing it, too," they said.

The handsome old chateau, where I was a guest of the commanding general for two days, had been previously occupied by the English, and the general himself took me about the place and showed me where the English had smashed open the magnificent pieces of antique furniture in their search for loot. They had broken the glass case containing a rare old coin collection, and had left a few pieces of a jewel collection.

German Looter Punished.

Later I learned that the only German caught at "souvenir hunting" in the castle had been given a sentence of six months at hard labor.

The quiet and picturesque old village which this castle watched over had been plundered by the English, as villagers themselves told me, adding that many of their girls had been cruelly treated by the allied soldiers. They said they were glad to have the Germans there, for the Germans paid for everything, and German army doctors even took care of their sick in the village. I could not, however, get any accurate information as to the extent of English offenses.

I have by no means retold all the stories I heard about the English, confining myself to those which have the best authority.

I heard several stories from Germans about their own misdeeds. When one is with privates he soon finds that war is a great instigator of latent talents of story telling, and I was so ready a listener that something extraordinary had to be prepared for me. Most of these stories had as hero the story teller himself, and while occasionally one dealt with more serious crime, the majority were rather fascinating accounts of the stealing of chickens, eggs, occasional several times, so that there may be some foundation for it. But when comparing the two most extreme versions one has a clear glimpse of the unreliability of many of the stories told about the war.

"Slaughter" of English Prisoners.

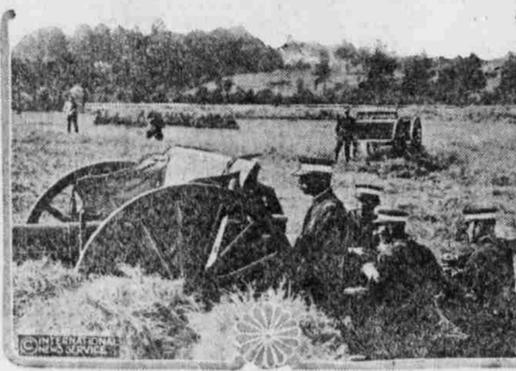
The worst version of the story is that 70 English prisoners were being conducted by some Bavarians to Liege on their way to Germany. When the car arrived only six Englishmen were left. The Bavarians were questioned as to the whereabouts of the 64.

"The poor fellows died on the way," the Bavarians replied. "And if Liege had only been a little farther away the other six would have died also." I was horrified by this story until I heard the milder version, which had all the same details with the some what important difference that six were killed and sixty-four remained. Later I heard a story that a Bavarian conducting English prisoners, had been insulted by a strapping six-foot English private and had broken his neck by one twist of his powerful hands. This may be the whole truth. It may be another incident or it may be that both stories are without foundation.

It is my deep conviction that one of the gravest and most terrible features of the war is the unjustified and seemingly unlimited publicity which has been and will be given to alleged atrocities committed in the war. I do not mean to show the slightest coldness to the horrors of the unquenchable large number of crimes which have been committed, but I am convinced that the publicity has been unmeasured, and given without much success in bringing cool judgment to bear on the accuracy and significance of the evidence published.

I am grateful that I can conclude this statement by telling a few instances of gallantry and decency. It is a pleasure to find such a story as Mr. Mead brought back from Wehlau, where a crude Russian soldier, entering a small cafe, struck the aged woman, who was waiting on him, and demanded "schnapps." An officer who witnessed the brutality waited until the soldier came out and remounted his horse. The officer dragged him from his horse and thrashed him with his riding whip in the presence of his comrades.

JAPANESE ARTILLERY IN ACTION



This is one of the Japanese guns on the plains of Shantung which hammered Tsing Tao until the Germans were forced to surrender.

SKUNKS LIKE TO BE PETTED

Forty Pretty Little Chicken Thieves Enjoy Human Companionship—Unique Industry.

Greenville, Cal.—Greenville has now established one of the most unique industries in the state, namely, a skunk ranch. Early in the spring Will Stevens, a butcher, formerly of Goldfield, rented the F. W. Peck ranch, and entered the business on a small scale.

Young skunks were captured in various parts of Indiana valley, and placed in pens. They grew and multiplied rapidly. The business proved so lucrative that larger pens of corrugated iron were made, and the number of skunks increased. The skins sell for \$3 to \$5 each. The oil is also valuable, and is sold to druggists. Stevens now has large skunks that will be ready for market in a couple of months. The skunks will eat all sorts of scraps and waste food, but are especially fond of milk and vegetables. They seem to like human companionship, and when called came to be petted. To see 40 chicken thieves, with their long, white-striped bodies and bushy tails feeding at a trough like so many pigs is an interesting sight.

Lived on Same Farm 77 Years. Battle Creek, Mich.—With a record of having lived 77 years on one farm, Mrs. Lucy E. Spaulding died at the home of her daughter in Battle Creek.

MUCH COMFORT IN A LITTLE SPACE

Small House May Be Classed as Triumph of Architectural Designing.

SHOWS MARCH OF PROGRESS

Builders of Today Have Learned How to Utilize Room to the Best Advantage—Modern Bathroom Is One of the Especial Features of the Plans.

By WILLIAM A. RADFORD. Mr. William A. Radford will answer questions and give advice FREE OF COST on all subjects pertaining to the subject of building, for the readers of this paper. On account of his wide experience as Editor, Author and Manufacturer, he is, without doubt, the highest authority on all these subjects. Address all inquiries to William A. Radford, No. 327 Prairie avenue, Chicago, Ill., and only enclose two-cent stamp for reply.

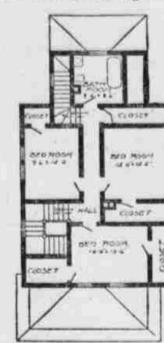
A thoroughly well-built "big little" house containing seven rooms and a bathroom, all included in a space 26 feet 6 inches by 41 feet, exclusive of porches, is shown in the accompanying illustrations.

Architects have learned how to make a roof to accommodate several bedrooms. Bedrooms finished off in the attic are not exactly a new idea; but a thoroughly well-arranged set of three or four bedrooms in a roof, practically all above the plates, with bathroom and plenty of convenient closets, is a production of modern architecture of a high order.

It is just as much of an innovation to lay out house space to the best advantage as it is to invent a machine to do a certain kind of work in a manufacturing plant. A few years ago a house this size and shape would have about three rooms downstairs and a cheap partition somewhere in the left to inclose a set of bedroom furniture. In the design here presented we see how the old-fashioned shell has been transformed into a house of beauty

all the way from the top of the heater to the highest hot-water tap, and the cool return pipe must incline toward the heater from the lowest part of the hot-water reservoir; otherwise steam will gather in the pipes and a disagreeable kicking will be kept up as long as the water tries to circulate.

The carrying of hot water in the pipes depends on what is called the principle of the circulation of hot water. Warm water is lighter than cold water, and it quickly finds its way to the top, so that in practice the water is continually circulating through the pipes. Where long hot-water pipes are used a return is necessary to prevent the water cooling too much in the pipes; but in a small house this is not necessary. The cooking range would be in the kitchen directly under the bathroom; and the pipe to the washstand and to the bath would be no more than six or eight feet long.



Second Floor Plan.

would not hold more than possibly a quart of cold water.

It is not necessary to have a city water supply in order to have running water in the house. There must, of course, be a supply under pressure from some source; but this may be had from a tank which is filled by a pump either from a cistern or a well. Of course the supply must be sufficient for the needs of the family, and it should be so thoroughly well arranged and connected, and so well adapted to the purpose, that there will be no shortage, with no tinkering necessary. Water is cheap, whether hot or cold.



512 X

outside, and a model of comfort and convenience within.

Objection is sometimes made to bedrooms in the roof on account of the heat in summer; but when you consider that north of parallel 42 there is no more than two weeks of uncomfortably hot weather in a whole year this objection is not very serious. By having the house shaded with large trees during the afternoon the objection disappears entirely, because a low house shaded is cooler than a high house exposed to the sun.

The bathroom in this little house is exceptionally large, being 8 1/2 feet square, with a good window that is free of access. Bathrooms have never received the attention they deserve. Nothing adds more to the comfort of a family than a good bathroom that is warm and comfortable. Bathing is

if the arrangements for supplying it are adequate and satisfactory. Persons living in villages or in the country today may have modern improvements in a better and more satisfactory way than residents of cities had a few years ago.

Modern catch basins, cesspools, septic tanks, etc., have worked great changes. If families do not avail themselves of these modern improvements and conveniences to make life pleasant they are not living up to their opportunities. Because our fathers or grandfathers did without such things is no reason why we should. Life in the country is more satisfactory than living under artificial conditions in town, if we have the things necessary to make home pleasant.

Urges Use of Mushrooms.

In the Berliner Tageblatt, Dr. Fritz Showronnek urges strongly, in the present scarcity of foodstuffs, the more general use of mushrooms, which cost very little to raise, and are very nourishing. Other countries, he says, have long availed themselves of this edible, which in Germany is strangely neglected. In Russia, Bohemia and all other Slavic countries, the forests are constantly being scoured for mushrooms. He suggests that a knowledge of mushrooms be imparted in the public schools. Last year, he says, he selected the school children of a large village for a practical demonstration in mushroom lore. A dozen teachers and 60 children accompanied him, after a brief introductory lecture, to the woods, and within an hour the pupils were able to recognize 35 kinds of edible mushrooms.

Kissing on Street Proper.

It is not disorderly conduct for two men to frequently kiss a girl when they are bidding her good night at a street corner. At least that is the decision handed down by Justice Dean of the northeastern police district.

Charles Lawson and his brother, Harry Lawson, had attended a party in northeast Baltimore with Miss Eva Bova. After the party adjourned they accompanied the girl to the street.

They were kissing and hugging each other when they were interrupted by Patrolmen Callahan and Murray and taken to the northeastern police station.

Justice Dean dismissed the case—Baltimore Dispatch to the New York Sun.

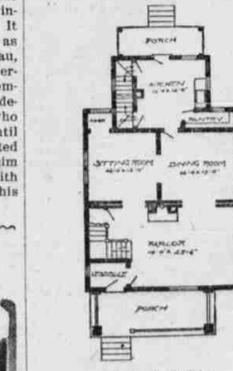
Arctic Placidity.

"Ah, me!" exclaimed the Eskimo; "This is indeed a happy life." "In what respect?" asked the explorer.

"We can go through the whole year without the slightest nervousness about when it is necessary to throw away our straw hats."

More Than the Cost.

Manner—In a way having a wife is much similar to owning an automobile. Dunner—How so? Manner—It isn't the first cost of either. It's the upkeep.



First Floor Plan.

necessary for good health in the winter time as well as in warm weather. No one can bathe properly without the necessary accommodations, which include a warm room and plenty of hot water.

In laying out a house it costs very little more to add a bathroom. The expense when building will never be noticed; but this feature will be appreciated as long as the house is occupied. The question, "Shall we have a bathroom?" should never come up. If there is any question about it at all, it should be: "Shall we have one or two bathrooms?"

Modern plumbing is so simple that almost any blacksmith can screw the pipes together and make the necessary connections in a satisfactory manner. Enameled bathtubs, wash basins and bowls may be had at reasonable prices from almost all large dealers; and they are not half as expensive as they were a few years ago. Where hard coal is used the most satisfactory water heater is a range water front. This device used to be called a "water back;" but when the heater is in front of the fire it is thought the oven works better. For this reason most stoves are built with a heater in front of the fire. There is just one precaution to remember in laying the pipes. They must incline