THREE TIMES AND OUT

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Author: McClung, Nellie Letitia

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THREE TIMES AND OUT

TOLD BY

PRIVATE SIMMONS

WRITTEN BY

NELLIE L. MCCLUNG

Author of SOWING SEEDS IN DANNY, IN TIMES LIKE THESE, and THE NEXT OF KIN

With Illustrations

TORONTO

THOMAS ALLEN

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

1918

To the companion who failed
through no fault of his and
no lack of courage
TOM BROMLEY
loyal friend and best of com-
rades, this book is dedicated.

Frontispiece: Private Simmons

PREFACE

When a young man whom I had not seen until that day came to see me in Edmonton, and told me he had a story which he thought was worth writing, and which he wanted me to write for him, I told him I could not undertake to do it for I was writing a story of my own, but that I could no doubt find some one who would do it for him.

Then he mentioned that he was a returned soldier, and had been for sixteen months a prisoner in Germany, and had made his escape—

That changed everything!

I asked him to come right in and tell me all about it—for like every one else I have friends in the prison-camps of Germany, boys whom I remember as little chaps in knickers playing with my children, boys I taught in country schools in Manitoba, boys whose parents are my friends. There are many of these whom we know to be prisoners, and there are some who have been listed as "missing," who we are still hoping against long odds may be prisoners!

I asked him many questions. How were they treated? Did they get enough to eat? Did they get their parcels? Were they very lonely? Did he by any chance know a boy from Vancouver called Wallen Gordon, who had been "Missing" since the 2d of June, 1916? Or Reg Black from Manitou? or Garnet Stewart from Winnipeg?

Unfortunately, he did not.

Then he began his story. Before he had gone far, I had determined to do all I could to get his story into print, for it seemed to me to be a story that should be written. It gives at least a partial answer to the anxious questionings that are in so many hearts. It tells us something of the fate of the brave fellows who have, temporarily, lost their freedom—to make our freedom secure!

Private Simmons is a close and accurate observer who sees clearly and talks well. He tells a straightforward, unadorned tale, every sentence of

which is true, and convincing. I venture to hope that the reader may have as much pleasure in the reading of it as I had in the writing.

NELLIE L. McCLUNG

Edmonton, October 24, 1918

Contents

List of Illustrations

Friedrichsfeld Prison-camp in Summer

A Prison Post-card from Friedrichsfeld Bei Wesel / The Group Includes Soldiers from Canada, Newfoundland, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Serbia, and Roumania.

Post-card Sent by Private Bromley from the Prison-camp Of Soltau, Germany, in July, 1918 / the Crosses Mark The Graves Of Prisoners Who Have Died at This Camp

THREE TIMES AND OUT

CHAPTER I

HOW IT STARTED

"England has declared war on Germany!"

We were working on a pumphouse, on the Columbia River, at Trail, British Columbia, when these words were shouted at us from the door by the boss carpenter, who had come down from the smelter to tell us that the news had just come over the wire.

Every one stopped work, and for a full minute not a word was spoken. Then Hill, a British reservist who was my work-mate, laid down his hammer and put on his coat. There was neither haste nor excitement in his movements, but a settled conviction that gave me a queer feeling. I began to argue just where we had left off, for the prospect of war had been threshed out for the last two days with great thoroughness. "It will be settled," I said. "Nations cannot go to war now. It would be suicide, with all the modern methods of destruction. It will be settled by a war council—and all forgotten in a month."

Hill, who had argued so well a few minutes ago and told us all the reasons he had for expecting war with Germany, would not waste a word on me now. England was at war—and he was part of England's war machine.

"I am quitting, George," he said to the boss carpenter, as he pulled his cap down on his head and started up the bank.

That night he began to drill us in the skating-rink.

I worked on for about a week, but from the first I determined to go if any one went from Canada. I don't suppose it was all patriotism. Part of it was the love of adventure, and a desire to see the world; for though I was a steady-going carpenter chap, I had many dreams as I worked with hammer and saw, and one of them was that I would travel far and see how people lived in other countries. The thought of war had always been repellent to me, and many an argument I had had with the German

baker in whose house I roomed, on the subject of compulsory military training for boys. He often pointed out a stoop-shouldered, hollow-chested boy who lived on the same street, and told me that if this boy had lived in Germany he would have walked straighter and developed a chest, instead of slouching through life the way he was doing. He and his wife and the grown-up daughter were devoted to their country, and often told us of how well the working-people were housed in Germany and the affairs of the country conducted.

But I think the war was as great a surprise to them as to us, and although the two women told us we were foolish to go to fight—it was no business of ours if England wanted to get into a row—it made no difference in our friendly relations, and the day we left Clara came to the station with a box of candy. I suppose if we had known as much then as we do now about German diplomacy, we shouldn't have eaten it, but we only knew then that Clara's candy was the best going, and so we ate it, and often wished for more.

I have since heard, however, of other Germans in Canada who knew more of their country's plans, and openly spoke of them. One of these, employed by the Government, told the people in the office where he worked that when Germany got hold of Canada, she would straighten out the crooked streets in our towns and not allow shacks to be built on the good streets, and would see to it that houses were not crowded together; and the strangest part of it is that the people to whom he spoke attached no importance whatever to his words until the war came and the German mysteriously disappeared.

I never really enlisted, for we had no recruiting meetings in Trail before I left. We went to the skating-rink the first night, about fifteen of us, and began to drill. Mr. Schofield, Member of the Provincial Parliament, and Hill were in charge, and tested our marksmanship as well. They graded us according to physical tests, marksmanship, and ability to pick up the drill, and I was quite pleased to find I was Number "One" on the list.

There was a young Italian boy named Adolph Milachi, whom we called "Joe," who came to drill the first night, and although he could not speak much English, he was determined to be a soldier. I do not know what grudge little Joe had against the Germans, whether it was just the love of adventure which urged him on, but he overruled all objections to his going and left with the others of us, on the last day of August.

I remember that trip through the mountains in that soft, hazy, beautiful August weather; the mountain-tops, white with snow, were wrapped about with purple mist which twisted and shifted as if never satisfied with their draping. The sheer rocks in the mountain-sides, washed by a recent rain, were streaked with dull reds and blues and yellows, like the old-fashioned rag carpet. The rivers whose banks we followed ran blue and green, and icy cold, darting sometimes so sharply under the track that it jerked one's neck to follow them; and then the stately evergreens marched always with us, like endless companies of soldiers or pilgrims wending their way to a favorite shrine.

When we awakened the second morning, and found ourselves on the wide prairie of Alberta, with its many harvest scenes and herds of cattle, and the gardens all in bloom, one of the boys said, waving his hand at a particularly handsome house set in a field of ripe wheat, "No wonder the Germans want it!"

My story really begins April 24, 1915. Up to that time it had been the usual one—the training in England, with all the excitement of week-end leave; the great kindness of English families whose friends in Canada had written to them about us, and who had forthwith sent us their invitations to visit them, which we did with the greatest pleasure, enjoying every minute spent in their beautiful houses; and then the greatest thrill of all—when we were ordered to France.

The 24th of April was a beautiful spring day of quivering sunshine, which made the soggy ground in the part of Belgium where I was fairly steam. The grass was green as plush, and along the front of the trenches,

where it had not been trodden down, there were yellow buttercups and other little spring flowers whose names I did not know.

We had dug the trenches the day before, and the ground was so marshy and wet that water began to ooze in before we had dug more than three feet. Then we had gone on the other side and thrown up more dirt, to make a better parapet, and had carried sand-bags from an old artillery dug-out. Four strands of barbed wire were also put up in front of our trenches, as a sort of suggestion of barbed-wire entanglements, but we knew we had very little protection.

Early in the morning of the 24th, a German aeroplane flew low over our trench, so low that I could see the man quite plainly, and could easily have shot him, but we had orders not to fire—the object of these orders being that we must not give away our position.

The airman saw us, of course, for he looked right down at us, and dropped down white pencils of smoke to show the gunners where we were. That big gray beetle sailing serenely over us, boring us with his sharp eyes, and spying out our pitiful attempts at protection, is one of the most unpleasant feelings I have ever had. It gives me the shivers yet! And to think we had orders not to fire!

Being a sniper, I had a rifle fixed up with a telescopic sight, which gave me a fine view of what was going on, and in order not to lose the benefit of it, I cleaned out a place in a hedge, which was just in front of the part of the trench I was in, and in this way I could see what was happening, at least in my immediate vicinity.

We knew that the Algerians who were holding a trench to our left had given way and stampeded, as a result of a German gas attack on the night of April 22d. Not only had the front line broken, but, the panic spreading, all of them ran, in many cases leaving their rifles behind them. Three companies of our battalion had been hastily sent in to the gap caused by the flight of the Algerians. Afterwards I heard that our artillery had been hurriedly withdrawn so that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy; but we did not know that at the time, though we wondered, as the day went on, why we got no artillery support.

Before us, and about fifty yards away, were deserted farm buildings, through whose windows I had instructions to send shots at intervals, to discourage the enemy from putting in machine guns. To our right there were other farm buildings where the Colonel and Adjutant were stationed, and in the early morning I was sent there with a message from Captain Scudamore, to see why our ammunition had not come up.

I found there Colonel Hart McHarg, Major Odlum (now Brigadier-General Odlum), and the Adjutant in consultation, and thought they looked worried and anxious. However, they gave me a cheerful message for Captain Scudamore. It was very soon after that that Colonel Hart McHarg was killed.

The bombardment began at about nine o'clock in the morning, almost immediately after the airman's visit, and I could see the heavy shells bursting in the village at the cross-roads behind us. They were throwing the big shells there to prevent reinforcements from coming up. They evidently did not know, any more than we did, that there were none to come, the artillery having been withdrawn the night before.

Some of the big shells threw the dirt as high as the highest trees. When the shells began to fall in our part of the trench, I crouched as low as I could in the soggy earth, to escape the shrapnel bullets. Soon I got to know the sound of the battery that was dropping the shells on us, and so knew when to take cover. One of our boys to my left was hit by a pebble on the cheek, and, thinking he was wounded, he fell on the ground and called for a stretcher-bearer. When the stretcher-bearer came, he could find nothing but a scratch on his cheek, and all of us who were not too scared had a laugh, including the boy himself.

I think it was about one o'clock in the afternoon that the Germans broke through the trench on our right, where Major Bing-Hall was in command; and some of the survivors from that trench came over to ours. One of them ran right to where I was, and pushed through the hole I had made in the hedge, to get a shot at the enemy. I called to him to be careful, but some sniper evidently saw him, for in less than half a minute he was shot dead, and fell at my side.

An order to "retreat if necessary" had been received before this, but for some reason, which I have never been able to understand, was not put into effect until quite a while after being received. When the order came, we began to move down the trench as fast as we could, but as the trench was narrow and there were wounded and dead men in it, our progress was slow.

Soon I saw Robinson, Smith, and Ward climbing out of the trench and cutting across the field. This was, of course, dangerous, for we were in full view of the enemy, but it was becoming more and more evident that we were in a tight corner. So I climbed out, too, and ran across the open as fast as I could go with my equipment. I got just past the hedge when I was hit through the pocket of my coat. I thought I was wounded, for the blow was severe, but found out afterwards the bullet had just passed through my coat pocket.

I kept on going, but in a few seconds I got a bullet right through my shoulder. It entered below my arm at the back, and came out just below the shoulder-bone, making a clean hole right through.

I fell into a shallow shell-hole, which was just the size to take me in, and as I lay there, the possibility of capture first came to me. Up to that time I had never thought of it as a possible contingency; but now, as I lay wounded, the grave likelihood came home to me.

I scrambled to my feet, resolved to take any chances rather than be captured. I have an indistinct recollection of what happened for the next few minutes. I know I ran from shell-hole to shell-hole, obsessed with the one great fear—of being captured—and at last reached the reserve trench, in front. I fell over the parapet, among and indeed right on top of the men who were there, for the trench was packed full of soldiers, and then quickly gathered myself together and climbed out of the trench and crawled along on my stomach to the left, following the trench to avoid the bullets, which I knew were flying over me.

Soon I saw, looking down into the trench, some of the boys I knew, and I dropped in beside them. Then everything went from me. A great darkness arose up from somewhere and swallowed me! Then I had a delightful sensation of peace and warmth and general comfort.

Darkness, the blackest, inkiest darkness, rolled over me in waves and hid me so well no Jack Johnson or Big Bertha could ever find me. I hadn't a care or a thought in the world. I was light as a feather, and these great strong waves of darkness carried me farther and farther away.

But they didn't carry me quite far enough, for a cry shot through me like a knife, and I was wide awake, looking up from the bottom of a muddy trench. And the cry that wakened me was sounding up and down the trench, "The Germans are coming!"

Sergeant Reid, who did not seem to realize how desperate the situation was, was asking Major Bing-Hall what he was going to do. But before any more could be said, the Germans were swarming over the trench. The officer in charge of them gave us a chance to surrender, which we did, and then it seemed like a hundred voices—harsh, horrible voices—called to us to come out of the trench. "Raus" is the word they use, pronounced "rouse."

This was the first German word I had heard, and I hated it. It is the word they use to a dog when they want him to go out, or to cattle they are chasing out of a field. It is used to mean either "Come out!"—or "Get out!" I hated it that day, and I hated it still more afterward.

There were about twenty of us altogether, and we climbed out of the trench without speaking. There was nothing to be said. It was all up with us.

CHAPTER II

THROUGH BELGIUM

It is strange how people act in a crisis. I mean, it is strange how quiet they are, and composed. We stood there on the top of the trench, without speaking, although I knew what had happened to us was bitterer far than to be shot. But there was not a word spoken. I remember noticing Fred McKelvey, when the German who stood in front of him told him to take off his equipment. Fred's manner was halting, and reluctant, and he said, as he laid down his rifle and unbuckled his cartridge bag, "This is the thing my father told me never to let happen."

Just then the German who stood by me said something to me, and pointed to my equipment, but I couldn't unfasten a buckle with my useless arm, so I asked him if he couldn't see I was wounded. He seemed to understand what I meant, and unbuckled my straps and took everything off me, very gently, too, and whipped out my bandage and was putting it on my shoulder with considerable skill, I thought, and certainly with a gentle hand—when the order came from their officer to move us on, for the shells were falling all around us.

Unfortunately for me, my guard did not come with us, nor did I ever see him again. One of the others reached over and took my knife, cutting the string as unconcernedly as if I wanted him to have it, and I remember that this one had a saw-bayonet on his gun, as murderous and cruel-looking a weapon as any one could imagine, and he had a face to match it, too. So in the first five minutes I saw the two kinds of Germans.

When we were out of the worst of the shell-fire, we stopped to rest, and, a great dizziness coming over me, I sat down with my head against a tree, and looked up at the trailing rags of clouds that drifted across the sky. It was then about four o'clock of as pleasant an afternoon as I can ever remember. But the calmness of the sky, with its deep blue distance, seemed to shrivel me up into nothing. The world was so bright, and blue, and—uncaring!

I may have fallen asleep for a few minutes, for I thought I heard McKelvey saying, "Dad always told me not to let this happen." Over and over again, I could hear this, but I don't know whether McKelvey had repeated it. My brain was like a phonograph that sticks at one word and says it over and over again until some one stops it.

I think it was Mudge, of Grand Forks, who came over to see how I was. His voice sounded thin and far away, and I didn't answer him. Then I felt him taking off my overcoat and finishing the bandaging that the German boy had begun.

Little Joe, the Italian boy, often told me afterwards how I looked at that time. "All same dead chicken not killed right and kep' long time."

Here those who were not so badly wounded were marched on, but there were ten of us so badly hit we had to go very slowly. Percy Weller, one of the boys from Trail who enlisted when I did, was with us, and when we began the march I was behind him and noticed three holes in the back of his coat; the middle one was a horrible one made by shrapnel. He staggered painfully, poor chap, and his left eye was gone!

We passed a dead Canadian Highlander, whose kilt had pitched forward when he fell, and seemed to be covering his face.

In the first village we came to, they halted us, and we saw it was a dressing-station. The village was in ruins—even the town pump had had its head blown off!—and broken glass, pieces of brick, and plaster littered the one narrow street. The dressing was done in a two-room building which may have been a store. The walls were discolored and cracked, and the windows broken.

On a stretcher in the corner there lay a Canadian Highlander, from whose wounds the blood dripped horribly and gathered in a red pool on the dusty floor. His eyes were glazed and his face was drawn with pain. He talked unceasingly, but without meaning. The only thing I remember hearing him say was, "It's no use, mother—it's no use!"

Weller was attended to before I was, and marched on. While I sat there on an old tin pail which I had turned up for this purpose, two German officers came in, whistling. They looked for a minute at the dying

Highlander in the corner, and one of them went over to him. He saw at once that his case was hopeless, and gave a short whistle as you do when blowing away a thistledown, indicating that he would soon be gone. I remember thinking that this was the German estimate of human life.

He came to me and said, "Well, what have you got?"

I thought he referred to my wound, and said, "A shoulder wound." At which he laughed pleasantly and said, "I am not interested in your wound; that's the doctor's business." Then I saw what he meant; it was souvenirs he was after. So I gave him my collar badge, and in return he gave me a German coin, and went over to the doctor and said something about me, for he flipped his finger toward me.

My turn came at last. The doctor examined my pay-book as well as my wound. I had forty-five francs in it, and when he took it out, I thought it was gone for sure. However, he carefully counted it before me, drawing my attention to the amount, and then returned it to me.

After my wound had been examined and a tag put on me stating what sort of treatment I was to have, I was taken away with half a dozen others and led down a narrow stone stair to a basement. Here on the cement floor were piles of straw, and the place was heated. The walls were dirty and discolored. One of the few pleasant recollections of my life in Germany has been the feeling of drowsy content that wrapped me about when I lay down on a pile of straw in that dirty, rat-infested basement. I forgot that I was a prisoner, that I was badly winged, that I was hungry, thirsty, dirty, and tired. I forgot all about my wounded companions and the Canadian Highlander, and all the suffering of the world, and drifted sweetly out into the wide ocean of sleep.

Some time during the night—for it was still dark—I felt some one kicking my feet and calling me to get up, and all my trouble and misery came back with a rush. My shoulder began to ache just where it left off, but I was so hungry that the thought of getting something to eat sustained me. Surely, I thought, they are going to feed us!

We were herded along the narrow street, out into a wide road, where we found an open car which ran on light rails in the centre of the road. It

was like the picnic trolley cars which run in our cities in the warm weather. There were wounded German soldiers huddled together, and we sat down among them, wherever we could find the room, but not a word was spoken. I don't know whether they noticed who we were or not—they had enough to think about, not to be concerned with us, for most of them were terribly wounded. The one I sat beside leaned his head against my good shoulder and sobbed as he breathed. I could not help but think of the irony of war that had brought us together. For all I knew, he may have been the machine gunner who had been the means of ripping my shoulder to pieces—and it may have been a bullet from my rifle which had torn its way along his leg which now hung useless. Even so, there was no hard feeling between us, and he was welcome to the support of my good shoulder!

Some time through the night—my watch was broken and I couldn't tell the time exactly—we came to another village and got off the car. A guard came and carried off my companion, but as I could walk, I was left to unload myself. The step was high, and as my shoulder was very stiff and sore, I hesitated about jumping down. A big German soldier saw me, understood what was wrong, and lifted me gently down.

It was then nearly morning, for the dawn was beginning to show in the sky, and we were taken to an old church, where we were told to lie down and go to sleep. It was miserably cold in the church, and my shoulder ached fearfully. I tried hard to sleep, but couldn't manage it, and walked up and down to keep warm. I couldn't help but think of the strange use the church—which had been the scene of so many pleasant gatherings—was being put to, and as I leaned against the wall and looked out of the window, I seemed to see the gay and light-hearted Belgian people who so recently had gathered there. Right here, I thought, the bashful boys had stood, waiting to walk home with the girls... just the way we did in British Columbia, where one church I know well stands almost covered with the fragrant pines...

I fell into a pleasant reverie then of sunny afternoons and dewy moonlit nights, when the sun had gone over the mountains, and the stars came out in hundreds. My dream then began to have in it the brightest-eyed girl in the world, who gave me such a smile one Sunday when she came out of church... that I just naturally found myself walking beside her....

She had on a pink suit and white shoes, and wore a long string of black beads...

Then somebody spoke to me, and a sudden chill seized me and sent me into a spasm of coughing, and the pain of my shoulder shot up into my head like a knife... and I was back—all right—to the ruined church in Belgium, a prisoner of war in the hands of the Germans!

The person who spoke to me was a German cavalry officer, who quite politely bade me good-morning and asked me how I felt. I told him I felt rotten. I was both hungry and thirsty—and dirty and homesick. He laughed at that, as if it were funny, and asked me where I came from. When I told him, he said, "You Canadians are terrible fools to fight with us when you don't have to. You'll be sick of it before you are through. Canada is a nice country, though," he went on; "I've been in British Columbia, too, in the Government employ there—they treated me fine —and my brother is there now, engineer in the Dunsmuir Collieries at Ladysmith. Great people—the Canadians!"

And he laughed again and said something in German to the officer who was with him.

When the sun came up and poured into the church, warming up its cold dreariness, I lay down and slept, for I had not nearly finished the sleep so comfortably begun in the basement the night before.

But in what seemed like three minutes, some one kicked my feet and called to me to get up. I got to my feet, still spurred by the hope of getting something to eat. Outside, all those who could walk were falling in, and I hastened to do the same. Our guards were mounted this time, and I noticed that their horses were small and in poor condition. We were soon out of the village and marching along a splendid road.

The day was bright and sunny, but a searching wind blew straight in our faces and made travelling difficult. It seemed to beat unmercifully on my sore shoulder, and I held my right wrist with my left hand, to keep the weight off my shoulder all I could.

I had not gone far when I began to grow weak and dizzy. The thirst was the worst; my tongue was dry and swollen, and it felt like a cocoa

doormat. I could see rings of light wherever I looked, and the ground seemed to come up in waves. A guard who rode near me had a water-bottle beside him which dripped water. The cork was not in tight as it should have been, and the sight of these drops of water seemed to madden me. I begged him for a drink, and pointed to my parched tongue; but he refused, and rode ahead as if the sight of me annoyed him!

Ahead of us I could see the smoke of a large town, and I told myself over and over again that there would be lots of water there, and food and clean clothes, and in this way I kept myself alive until we reached Roulers.

CHAPTER III

INTO GERMANY

Roulers is a good-sized town in West Flanders, of about thirty thousand population, much noted for its linen manufacture; and has a great church of St. Michael with a very high tower, which we could see for miles. But I do not remember much about the look of the town, for I could hardly drag my feet. It seemed as if every step would be my last. But I held on some way, until we reached the stopping-place, which happened to be an unused school. The men who had not been wounded had arrived several hours ahead of us.

When, at last, I sat down on one of the benches, the whole place seemed to float by me. Nothing would stand still. The sensation was like the water dizziness which makes one feel he is being rapidly propelled upstream. But after sitting awhile, it passed, and I began to recognize some of our fellows. Frost, of my own battalion, was there, and when I told him I had had nothing to eat since the early morning of the day before, he immediately produced a hardtack biscuit and scraped out the bottom of his jam tin. They had been served with a ration of war-bread, and several of the boys offered me a share of their scanty allowance, but the first mouthful was all I could take. It was sour, heavy, and stale.

The school pump had escaped the fate of the last pump I had seen, and was in good working order, and its asthmatic creaking as it brought up the stream of water was music in my ears. We went out in turns and drank like thirsty cattle. I drank until my jaws were stiff as if with mumps, and my ears ached, and in a few minutes my legs were tied in cramps.

While I was vainly trying to rub them out with my one good hand, Fred McKelvey came up and told me a sure cure for leg-cramp. It is to turn the toes up as far as possible, and straighten out the legs, and it worked a cure for me. He said he had taken the cramps out of his legs this way when he was in the water.

I remember some of the British Columbia boys who were there. Sergeants Potentier, George Fitz, and Mudge, of Grand Forks; Reid, Diplock, and Johnson, of Vancouver; Munroe and Wildblood, of Rossland; Keith, Palmer, Larkins, Scott, and Croak. Captain Scudamore, my Company Captain, came over to where I sat, and kindly inquired about my wounds. He wrote down my father's address, too, and said he would try to get a letter to him.

There was a house next door—quite a fine house with a neat paling and long, shuttered windows, at which the vines were beginning to grow. It looked to be in good condition, except that part of the verandah had been torn away. The shutters were closed on its long, graceful windows, giving it the appearance of a tall, stately woman in heavy mourning.

When we were at the pump, we heard a gentle tapping, and, looking up, we saw a very handsome dark-eyed Belgian woman at one of the windows. Instinctively we saluted, and quick as a flash she held a Union Jack against the pane!

A cheer broke from us involuntarily, and the guards sprang to attention, suspecting trouble. But the flag was gone as quickly as it came, and when we looked again, the shutters were closed and the deep, waiting silence had settled down once more on the stately house of shutters.

But to us it had become suddenly possessed of a living soul! The flash of those sad black eyes, as well as the glimpse of the flag, seemed to call to us to carry on! They typified to us exactly what we were fighting for!

After the little incident of the flag, it was wonderful how bright and happy we felt. Of course, I know, the ministrations of the pump helped, for we not only drank all we wanted, but most of the boys had a wash, too; but we just needed to be reminded once in awhile of what the real issues of the war were.

Later in the day, after we had been examined by another medical man, who dressed our wounds very skillfully, and gently, too, we came back to the school, and found there two heavily veiled Belgian women. They had bars of chocolate for us, for which we were very grateful. They were both in deep mourning, and seemed to have been women of high

social position, but their faces were very pale and sad, and when they spoke their voices were reedy and broken, and their eyes were black pools of misery. Some of the boys afterwards told me that their daughters had been carried off by the Germans, and their husbands shot before their eyes.

I noticed the absence of children and young girls on the streets. There were only old men and women, it seemed, and the faces of these were sad beyond expression. There were no outbursts of grief; they seemed like people whose eyes were cried dry, but whose spirits were still unbroken.

Later in the day we were taken to the station, to take the train for the prison-camp at Giessen. Of course, they did not tell us where we were going. They did not squander information on us or satisfy our curiosity, if they could help it.

The station was full of people when we got there, and there seemed to be a great deal of eating done at the stations. This was more noticeable still in German stations, as I saw afterwards.

Our mode of travelling was by the regular prisoner train which had lately—quite lately—been occupied by horses. It had two small, dirty windows, and the floor was bare of everything but dirt. We were dumped into it—not like sardines, for they fit comfortably together, but more like cordwood that is thrown together without being piled. If we had not had arms or legs or heads, there would have been just room for our bodies, but as it was, everybody was in everybody's way, and as many of us were wounded, and all of us were tired and hungry, we were not very amiable with each other.

I tried to stand up, but the jolting of the car made me dizzy, and so I doubled up on the floor, and I don't know how many people sat on me. I remember one of the boys I knew, who was beside me on the floor, Fairy Strachan. He had a bad wound in his chest, given him by a dog of a German guard, who prodded him with a bayonet after he was captured, for no reason at all. Fortunately the bayonet struck a rib, and so the wound was not deep, but not having been dressed, it was very painful.

I could not sleep at all that night, for the air was stifling, and somebody's arm or foot or head was always bumping into me. I wonder if Robinson Crusoe ever remembered to be thankful for fresh air and room to stretch himself! We asked the guards for water, for we soon grew very thirsty, and when we stopped at a station, one of the boys, looking out, saw the guard coming with a pail of water, and cried out, "Here's water—boys!" The thought of a drink put new life in us, and we scrambled to our feet. It was water, all right, and plenty of it, but it was boiling hot and we could not drink it; and we could not tell from the look of opaque stupidity on the face of the guard whether he did it intentionally or not. He may have been a boiling-water-before-meals advocate. He looked balmy enough for anything!

Officers' Quarters in a German Military Prison

At some of the stations the civilians standing on the platform filled our water-bottles for us, but it wasn't enough. We had only two water-bottles in the whole car. However, at Cologne, a boy came quickly to the car window at our call, and filled our water-bottles from a tap, over and over again. He would run as fast as he could from the tap to the window, and left a bottle filling at the tap while he made the trip. In this way every man in the car got enough to drink, and this blue-eyed, shock-headed lad will ever live in grateful memory.

The following night after midnight we reached Giessen, and were unloaded and marched through dark streets to the prison-camp, which is on the outskirts of the city. We were put into a dimly lighted hut, stale and foul-smelling, too, and when we put up the windows, some of our own Sergeants objected on account of the cold, and shut them down. Well, at least we had room if we hadn't air, and we huddled together and slept, trying to forget what we used to believe about the need of fresh air.

As soon as the morning came, I went outside and watched a dull red, angry sky flushing toward sunrise. Red in the morning sky denotes wind, it is said, but we didn't need signs that morning to proclaim a windy day, for the wind already swept the courtyard, and whipped the green branches of the handsome trees which marked the driveway. My spirits rose at once when I filled my lungs with air and looked up at the scudding clouds which were being dogged across the sky by the wind.

A few straggling prisoners came out to wash at the tap in the courtyard, and I went over to join them, for I was grimy, too, with the long and horrible ride. With one hand I could make but little progress, and was spreading the dirt rather than removing it, until a friendly Belgian, seeing my difficulty, took his cake of soap and his towel, and washed me well.

We were then given a ration of bread about two inches thick, and a drink of something that tasted like water boiled in a coffee-pot, and after this we were divided into ten groups. Those of us who knew each other tried hard to stay together, but we soon learned to be careful not to appear to be too anxious, for the guards evidently had instructions to break up previous acquaintanceships.

The wounded were marched across the compound to the "Revier," a dull, gray, solid-looking building, where again we were examined and graded. Those seriously wounded were sent to the lazaret, or hospital proper. I, being one of the more serious cases, was marched farther on to the lazaret, and we were all taken to a sort of waiting-room, and taken off in groups to the general bathroom to have a bath, before getting into the hospital clothes.

With me was a young bugler of the Fifth Royal Highlanders, Montreal, a little chap not more than fifteen, whose pink cheeks and curly hair would have made an appeal to any human being: he looked so small and lonesome and far from home. A smart young military doctor jostled against the boy's shattered arm, eliciting from him a cry of pain, whereupon he began to make fun of the little bugler, by marching around him, making faces. It gave me a queer feeling to see a grown-up man indulging in the tactics of a spoiled child, but I have heard many people express the opinion, in which I now heartily agree, that the Germans are a childish sort of people. They are stupidly boastful, inordinately fond of adulation and attention, and peevish and sulky when they cannot have their own way. I tried to imagine how a young German boy would have been treated by one of our doctors, and laughed to myself at the absurdity of the thought that they would make faces at him!

The young bugler was examined before I was, and as he was marched out of the room, the doctor who had made the faces grabbed at his kilt with an insulting gesture, at which the lad attempted to kick him. The doctor dodged the kick, and the Germans who were in the room roared with laughter. I hated them more that minute than I had up to that time.

The Belgian attendants who looked after the bathing of us were kind and polite. One of them could speak a little English, and he tried hard to get information regarding his country from us.

"Is it well?" he asked us eagerly. "My country—is it well?"

We thought of the shell-scarred country, with its piles of smouldering ashes, its pallid women with their haunted faces, the deathlike silence of the ruined streets. We thought of these things, but we didn't tell him of them. We told him the war was going on in great shape: the Allies were advancing all along the line, and were going to be in Berlin by Christmas. It was worth the effort to see his little pinched face brighten. He fairly danced at his work after that, and when I saw him afterwards, he eagerly asked—"My country—is it well?" I do not know why he thought I knew, or maybe he didn't think so. But, anyway, I did my best. I gave him a glowing account of the Allied successes, and painted a

gloomy future for the Kaiser, and I again had my reward, in his glowing face.

Everything we had was taken from us except shoes, socks, cap, and handkerchief, and we did not see them again: neither did we get another bath, although I was six weeks in the hospital.

The hospital clothes consisted of a pajama suit of much-faded flannelette, but I was glad to get into it, and doubly glad to get rid of my shirt and tunic, which were stiff on one side with dried blood. From the lazaret, where I had my bath, I could see the gun platform with its machine guns, commanding every part of the Giessen Prison. The guard pointed it out to me, to quiet my nerves, I suppose, and to scare me out of any thought of insubordination. However, he need not have worried —I was not thinking of escaping just then or starting an insurrection either. I was quite content to lie down on the hard straw bed and pull the quilt over me and take a good long rest.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAZARET

The lazaret in which I was put was called "M.G.K.," which is to say Machine Gun Company, and it was exactly like the other hospital huts. There were some empty beds, and the doctor seemed to have plenty of time to attend to us. For a few days, before my appetite began to make itself felt, I enjoyed the rest and quiet, and slept most of the time. But at the end of a week I began to get restless.

The Frenchman whose bed was next to mine fascinated me with his piercing black eyes, unnaturally bright and glittering. I knew the look in his eyes; I had seen it—after the battle—when the wounded were coming in, and looked at us as they were carried by on stretchers. Some had this look—some hadn't. Those who had it never came back.

And sometimes before the fighting, when the boys were writing home, the farewell letter that would not be mailed unless—"something happened"—I've seen that look in their faces, and I knew... just as they did... the letter would be mailed!

Emile, the Frenchman, had the look!

He was young, and had been strong and handsome, although his face was now thin and pinched and bloodless, like a slum child's; but he hung on to life pitifully. He hated to die—I knew that by the way he fought for breath, and raged when he knew for sure that it was going from him.

In the middle of his raging, he would lean over his bed and peer into my face, crying "L'Anglaise—l'Anglaise," with his black eyes snapping like dagger points. I often had to turn away and put my pillow over my eyes.

But one afternoon, in the middle of it, the great silence fell on him, and Emile's struggles were over.

Our days were all the same. Nobody came to see us; we had no books. There was a newspaper which was brought to us every two weeks, printed in English, but published in German, with all the German fine disregard for the truth. It said it was "printed for Americans in Europe." The name of it was "The Continental Times," but I never heard it called anything but "The Continental Liar." Still, it was print, and we read it; I remember some of the sentences. It spoke of an uneasy feeling in England "which the presence of turbaned Hindoos and Canadian cowboys has failed to dispel." Another one said, "The Turks are operating the Suez Canal in the interests of neutral shipping." "Fleet-footed Canadians" was an expression frequently used, and the insinuation was that the Canadians often owed their liberty to their speed.

But we managed to make good use of this paper. I got one of the attendants, Ivan, a good-natured, flat-footed Russian, to bring me a pair of scissors, and the boy in the cot next to mine had a stub of pencil, and between us we made a deck of cards out of the white spaces of the paper, and then we played solitaire, time about, on our quilts.

I got my first parcel about the end of May, from a Mrs. Andrews whose son I knew in Trail and who had entertained me while I was in London. I had sent a card to her as soon as I was taken. The box was like a visit from Santa Claus. I remember the "Digestive Biscuits," and how good they tasted after being for a month on the horrible diet of acorn coffee, black bread, and the soup which no word that is fit for publication could describe.

I also received a card from my sister, Mrs. Meredith, of Edmonton, about this time. I was listed "Missing" on April 29th, and she sent a card addressed to me with "Canadian Prisoner of War, Germany," on it, on the chance that I was a prisoner. We were allowed to write a card once a

week and two letters a month; and we paid for these. My people in Canada heard from me on June 9th.

I cannot complain of the treatment I received in the lazaret. The doctor took a professional interest in me, and one day brought in two other doctors, and proudly exhibited how well I could move my arm. However, I still think if he had massaged my upper arm, it would be of more use to me now than it is.

Chloroform was not used in this hospital; at least I never saw any of it. One young Englishman, who had a bullet in his thigh, cried out in pain when the surgeon was probing for it. The German doctor sarcastically remarked, "Oh, I thought the English were *brave*."

To which the young fellow, lifting his tortured face, proudly answered, "The English *are* brave—and *merciful*—and they use chloroform for painful operations, and do this for the German prisoners, too."

But there was no chloroform used for him, though the operation was a horrible one.

There was another young English boy named Jellis, who came in after the fight of May 8th, who seemed to be in great pain the first few days. Then suddenly he became quiet, and we hoped his pain had lessened; but we soon found out he had lock-jaw, and in a few days he died.

From the pasteboard box in which my first parcel came, I made a checker-board, and my next-door neighbor and I had many a game.

In about three weeks I was allowed to go out in the afternoons, and I walked all I could in the narrow space, to try to get back all my strength, for one great hope sustained me—I would make a dash for

liberty the first chance I got, and I knew that the better I felt, the better my chances would be. I still had my compass, and I guarded it carefully. Everything of this nature was supposed to be taken from us at the lazaret, but I managed, through the carelessness of the guard, to retain the compass.

The little corral in which we were allowed to walk had a barbed-wire fence around it—a good one, too, eight strands, and close together. One side of the corral was a high wall, and in the enclosure on the other side of the wall were the lung patients.

One afternoon I saw a young Canadian boy looking wistfully through the gate, and I went over and spoke to him. He was the only one who could speak English among the "lungers." The others were Russians, French, and Belgians. The boy was dying of loneliness as well as consumption. He came from Ontario, though I forget the name of the town.

"Do you think it will be over soon?" he asked me eagerly. "Gee, I'm sick of it—and wish I could get home. Last night I dreamed about going home. I walked right in on them—dirt and all—with this tattered old tunic—and a dirty face. Say, it didn't matter—my mother just grabbed me—and it was dinner-time—they were eating turkey—a great big gobbler, all brown—and steaming hot—and I sat down in my old place—it was ready for me—and just began on a leg of turkey..."

A spasm of coughing seized him, and he held to the bars of the gate until it passed.

Then he went on: "Gee, it was great—it was all so clear. I can't believe that I am not going! I think the war must be nearly over—"

Then the cough came again—that horrible, strangling cough—and I knew that it would be only in his dreams that he would ever see his home! For to him, at least, the war was nearly over, and the day of peace at hand.

Before I left the lazaret, the smart-Alec young German doctor who had made faces at the little bugler blew gaily in one day and breezed around

our beds, making pert remarks to all of us. I knew him the minute he came in the door, and was ready for him when he passed my bed.

He stopped and looked at me, and made some insulting remark about my beard, which was, I suppose, quite a sight, after a month of uninterrupted growth. Then he began to make faces at me.

I raised myself on my elbow, and regarded him with the icy composure of an English butler. Scorn and contempt were in my glance, as much as I could put in; for I realized that it was hard for me to look dignified and imposing, in a hospital pajama suit of dirt-colored flannelette, with long wisps of amber-colored hair falling around my face, and a thick red beard long enough now to curl back like a drake's tail.

I knew I looked like a valentine, but my stony British stare did the trick in spite of all handicaps, and he turned abruptly and went out.

The first week of June, I was considered able to go back to the regular prison-camp. A German guard came for me, and I stepped out in my pajamas to the outer room where our uniforms were kept. There were many uniforms there—smelling of the disinfectants—with the owners' names on them, but mine was missing. The guard tried to make me take one which was far too short for me, but I refused. I knew I looked bad enough, without having elbow sleeves and short pants; and it began to look as if I should have to go to bed until some good-sized patient came in.

But my guard suddenly remembered something, and went into another hut, bringing back the uniform of "D. Smith, Vancouver." The name was written on the band of the trousers. D. Smith had died the day before, from lung trouble. The uniform had been disinfected, and hung in wrinkles. My face had the hospital pallor, and, with my long hair and beard, I know I looked "snaggy" like a potato that has been forgotten in a dark corner of the cellar.

When we came out of the lazaret, the few people we met on the road to the prison-camp broke into broad grins; some even turned and looked after us.

CHAPTER V

THE PRISON-CAMP

The guard took me to Camp 6, Barrack A, where I found some of the boys I knew. They were in good spirits, and had fared in the matter of food much the same as I had. We agreed exactly in our diagnosis of the soup.

I was shown my mattress and given two blankets; also a metal bowl, knife, and fork.

Outside the hut, on the shady side, I went and sat down with some of the boys who, like myself, were excused from labor. Dent, of Toronto, was one of the party, and he was engaged in the occupation known as "reading his shirt"—and on account of the number of shirts being limited to one for each man, while the "reading" was going on, he sat in a boxer's uniform, wrapped only in deep thought.

Now, it happened that I did not acquire any "cooties" while I was in the army, and of course in the lazaret we were kept clean, so this was my first close acquaintanceship with them. My time of exemption was over, though, for by night I had them a-plenty.

I soon found out that insect powder was no good. I think it just made them sneeze, and annoyed them a little. We washed our solitary shirts regularly, but as we had only cold water, it did not kill the eggs, and when we hung the shirt out in the sun, the eggs came out in full strength, young, hearty, and hungry. It was a new generation we had to deal with, and they had all the objectionable qualities of their ancestors, and a few of their own.

Before long, the Canadian Red Cross parcels began to come, and I got another shirt—a good one, too, only the sleeves were too long. I carefully put in a tuck, for they came well over my hands. But I soon found that these tucks became a regular rendezvous for the "cooties," and I had to let them out. The Red Cross parcels also contained towels, toothbrushes, socks, and soap, and all these were very useful.

After a few weeks, with the lice increasing every day, we raised such a row about them that the guards took us to the fumigator. This was a building of three rooms, which stood by itself in the compound. In the first room we undressed and hung all our clothes, and our blankets too, on huge hooks which were placed on a sliding framework. This framework was then pushed into the oven and the clothes were thoroughly baked. We did not let our boots, belts, or braces go, as the heat would spoil the leather. We then walked out into the next room and had a shower bath, and after that went into the third room at the other side of the oven, and waited until the framework was pushed through to us, when we took our clothes from the hooks and dressed.

This was a sure cure for the "cooties," and for a few days, at least, we enjoyed perfect freedom from them. Every week after this we had a bath, and it was compulsory, too.

Giessen Prison-Camp

As prison-camps go, Giessen is a good one. The place is well drained; the water is excellent; the sanitary conditions are good, too; the sleeping accommodations are ample, there being no upper berths such as exist in all the other camps I have seen. It is the "Show-Camp," to which visitors are brought, who then, not having had to eat the food, write

newspaper articles telling how well Germany treats her prisoners. If these people could see some of the other camps that I have seen, the articles would have to be modified.

News of the trouble in Ireland sifted through to us in the prison-camp. The first I heard of it was a letter in the "Continental Times," by Roger Casement's sister, who had been in Germany and had visited some of the prison-camps, and was so pleased with the generous treatment Germany was according her prisoners. She was especially charmed with the soup!!! And the letter went on to tell of the Irish Brigade that was being formed in Germany to fight the tyrant England. Every Irish prisoner who would join was to be given the privilege of fighting against England. Some British prisoners who came from Limburg, a camp about thirty miles from Giessen, told us more about it. Roger Casement, himself, had gone there to gather recruits, and several Irishmen had joined and were given special privileges accordingly. However, there were many Irishmen who did *not* join, and who kept a list of the recruits—for future reference, when the war was over!

The Irishmen in our camp were approached, but they remained loyal.

The routine of the camp was as follows: Reveille sounded at six. We got up and dressed and were given a bowl of coffee. Those who were wise saved their issue of bread from the night before, and ate it with the coffee. There was a roll-call right after the coffee, when every one was given a chance to volunteer for work. At noon there was soup, and another roll-call. We answered the roll-call, either with the French word "Présent" or the German word "Hier," pronounced the same as our word. Then at five o'clock there was an issue of black bread made mostly from potato flour.

I was given a light job of keeping the space between A Barrack and B Barrack clean, and I made a fine pretense of being busy, for it let me out of "drill," which I detested, for they gave the commands in German, and it went hard with us to have to salute their officers.

On Sundays there was a special roll-call, when every one had to give a full account of himself. The prisoners then had the privilege of asking for any work they wanted, and if the Germans could supply it, it was given.

None of us were keen on working; not but what we would much rather work than be idle, but for the uncomfortable thought that we were helping the enemy. There were iron-works near by, where Todd, Whittaker, Dent, little Joe, and some others were working, and it happened that one day Todd and one of the others, when going to have teeth pulled at the dentist's, saw shells being shipped away, and upon inquiry found the steel came from the iron mines where they were working. When this became known, the boys refused to work! Every sort of bullying was tried on them for two days at the mines, but they still refused. They were then sent back to Giessen and sentenced to eighteen months' punishment at Butzbach—all but Dent, who managed some way to fool the doctor pretending he was sick!

That they fared badly there, I found out afterwards, though I never saw any of them.

Some of the boys from our hut worked on the railroad, and some went to work in the chemical works at Griesheim, which have since been destroyed by bombs dropped by British airmen.

John Keith, who was working on the railroad,—one of the best-natured and inoffensive boys in our hut,—came in one night with his face badly swollen and bruised. He had laughed, it seemed, at something which struck him as being funny, and the guard had beaten him over the head with the butt of his rifle. One of our guards, a fine old, brown-eyed man called "Sank," told the guard who had done this what he thought of him. "Sank" was the "other" kind of German, and did all he could to make our lives pleasant. I knew that "Sank" was calling down the guard, by

his expression and his gestures, and his frequent use of the word "blödsinnig."

Another time one of the fellows from our hut, who was a member of a working party, was shot through the legs by the guard, who claimed he was trying to escape, and after that there were no more working parties allowed for a while.

Each company had its own interpreter, Russian, French, or English. Our interpreter was a man named Scott from British Columbia, an Englishman who had received part of his education at Heidelberg. From him I learned a good deal about the country through which I hoped to travel. Heidelberg is situated between Giessen and the Swiss boundary, and so was of special interest to me. I made a good-sized map, and marked in all the information I could dig out of Scott.

The matter of escaping was in my mind all the time, but I was careful to whom I spoke, for some fellows' plans had been frustrated by their unwise confidences.

The possession of a compass is an indication that the subject of "escaping" has been thought of, and the question, "Have you a compass?" is the prison-camp way of saying, "What do you think of making a try?"

One day, a fellow called Bromley who came from Toronto, and who was captured at the same time that I was, asked me if I had a compass. He was a fine big fellow, with a strong, attractive face, and I liked him, from the first. He was a fair-minded, reasonable chap, and we soon became friends. We began to lay plans, and when we could get together, talked over the prospects, keeping a sharp lookout for eavesdroppers.

Tom Bromley In Red Cross overcoat with prison number and marked sleeve

There were difficulties!

The camp was surrounded by a high board fence, and above the boards, barbed wire was tightly drawn, to make it uncomfortable for reaching hands. Inside of this was an ordinary barbed-wire fence through which we were not allowed to go, with a few feet of "No Man's Land" in between.

There were sentry-boxes ever so often, so high that the sentry could easily look over the camp. Each company was divided from the others by two barbed-wire fences, and besides this there were the sentries who walked up and down, armed, of course.

There were also the guns commanding every bit of the camp, and occasionally, to drive from us all thought of insurrection, the Regular

Infantry marched through with fixed bayonets. At these times we were always lined up so we should not miss the gentle little lesson!

One day, a Zeppelin passed over the camp, and we all hurried out to look at it. It was the first one I had seen, and as it rode majestically over us, I couldn't help but think of the terrible use that had been made of man's mastery of the air. We wondered if it carried bombs. Many a wish for its destruction was expressed—and unexpressed. Before it got out of sight, it began to show signs of distress, as if the wishes were taking effect, and after considerable wheeling and turning it came back.

Ropes were lowered and the men came down. It was secured to the ground, and floated serenely beside the wood adjoining the camp.... The wishes were continued....

During the afternoon, a sudden storm swept across the camp—rain and wind with such violence that we were all driven indoors....

When we came out after a few minutes—probably half an hour—the Zeppelin had disappeared. We found out afterwards that it had broken away from its moorings, and, dashing against the high trees, had been smashed to kindling wood; and this news cheered us wonderfully!

A visitor came to the camp one day, and, accompanied by three or four officers, made the rounds. He spoke to a group of us who were outside of the hut, asking us how many Canadians there were in Giessen. He said he thought there were about nine hundred Canadians in Germany altogether. He had no opportunity for private conversation with us, for the German officers did not leave him for a second; and although he made it clear that he would like to speak to us alone this privilege was not granted. Later we found out it was Ambassador James W. Gerard.

It soon became evident that there were spies in the camp. Of course, we might have known that no German institution could get along without spies. Spies are the bulwark of the German nation; so in the Giessen camp there were German spies of all nationalities, including Canadian.

But we soon saw, too, that the spies were not working overtime on their job; they just brought in a little gossip once in a while—just enough to save their faces and secure a soft snap for themselves.

One of these, a Frenchman named George Clerque, a Sergeant Major in the French Army, was convinced that he could do better work if he had a suit of civilian clothes; and as he had the confidence of the prison authorities, the suit was given him. He wore it around for a few days, wormed a little harmless confidence out of some of his countrymen, and then one day quietly walked out of the front gate—and was gone!

Being in civilian dress, it seemed quite likely that he would reach his destination, and as days went on, and there was no word of him, we began to hope that he had arrived in France.

The following notice was put up regarding his escape:

> NOTICE!
>
> Owing to the evasions recently done, we beg to inform the prisoners of war of the following facts. Until present time, all the prisoners who were evased, have been catched. The French Sergt. Major George Clerque, speaking a good German and being in connection in Germany with some people being able to favorise his evasion, has been retaken. The Company says again, in the personal interests of the prisoners, that any evasion give place to serious punition (minima) fortnight of rigourous imprisonment after that they go in the "Strafbaracke" for an indeterminate time.
>
> GIESSEN, den 19th July, 1915.

Although the notice said he had been captured we held to the hope that he had not, for we knew the German way of using the truth only when it suits better than anything they can frame themselves. They have no

prejudice against the truth. It stands entirely on its own merits. If it suits them, they will use it, but the truth must not expect any favors.

The German guards told us quite often that no one ever got out of Germany alive, and we were anxious to convince them that they were wrong. One day when the mail came in, a friend of George Clerque told us he had written from France, and there was great, but, of necessity, quiet rejoicing.

That night Bromley and I decided that we would volunteer for farm service, if we could get taken to Rossbach, where some of the other boys had been working, for Rossbach was eighteen miles south of Giessen—on the way to Switzerland. We began to save food from our parcels, and figure out distances on the map which I had made.

The day came when we were going to volunteer—Sunday at roll-call. Of course, we did not wish to appear eager, and were careful not to be seen together too much. Suddenly we were called to attention, and a stalwart German soldier marched solemnly into the camp. Behind him came two more, with somebody between them, and another soldier brought up the rear. The soldiers carried their rifles and full equipment, and marched by in front of the huts.

We pressed forward, full of curiosity, and there beheld the tiredest, dustiest, most woe-begone figure of a man, whose clothes were in rags, and whose boots were so full of holes they seemed ready to drop off him. He was handcuffed and walked wearily, with downcast eyes—

It was George Clerque!

German Prison Stamp

CHAPTER VI

ROSSBACH

It was September 25th that we left the prison-camp and came to Rossbach—eighteen miles south on the railway. The six of us, with the German guard, had a compartment to ourselves, and as there was a map on the wall which showed the country south of Rossbach, over which we hoped to travel, I studied it as hard as I could without attracting the attention of the guard, and afterwards entered on my map the information I had gained.

It was rather a pretty country we travelled through, with small farms and fairly comfortable-looking buildings. The new houses are built of frame or brick, and are just like our own, but the presence of the old stone buildings, gray and dilapidated, and old enough to belong to the time of the Crusaders, kept us reminded that we were far from home.

However, we were in great humor that morning. Before us was a Great Adventure; there were dangers and difficulties in the way, but at the end of the road was Liberty! And that made us forget how rough the going was likely to be. Besides, at the present time we were travelling south—toward Switzerland. We were on our way.

At Wetzlar, one of the stations near Giessen, a kind-faced old German came to the window and talked to us in splendid English.

"I would like to give you something, boys," he said, "but"—he shrugged his shoulders—"you know—I daren't."

The guard pretended not to hear a word, and at that moment was waving his hand to a group of girls—just the regular station-goers, who meet the trains in Canada. This was, I think, the only place I saw them, for the women of Germany, young and old, are not encouraged to be idle or frivolous.

"I just wish I could give you something," the old man repeated, feeling in his pocket as if looking for a cigar.

Then Clarke, one of our boys, leaned out of the window and said, "I'll tell you what we would like best of all, old man—if you happen to have half a dozen of them on you—we'll take tickets to Canada—six will do —if you happen to have them right with you! And we're ready to start right now, too!"

The German laughed and said, "You'd better try to forget about Canada, boys."

The guards who brought us to Rossbach went straight back to Giessen, after handing us over to the guards there, and getting, no doubt, an official receipt for us, properly stamped and signed.

Rossbach has a new town and an old, and, the station being in the new town, we were led along the road to the old town, where the farming people live. It is an old village, with the houses, pig-pens, and cow-stables all together, and built so close that it would be quite possible to look out of the parlor window and see how the pigs are enjoying their evening meal or whether the cow has enough bedding.

There have been no improvements there for a hundred years, except that they have electric lighting everywhere, even in the pig-pens. There were no lights in the streets, though, I noticed, and I saw afterwards that a street light would be a foolish extravagance, for the people go to bed at dark. They have the real idea of daylight-saving, and do not let any of it escape them.

The guards took us around to the houses, and we created considerable interest, for strangers are a sensation at Rossbach; and, besides, prisoners are cheap laborers, and the thrifty German farmer does not like to miss a bargain.

The little fellows were the first choice, for they looked easier to manage than those of us who were bigger. Clarke was taken by a woman whose husband was at the front, and who had five of as dirty children as I ever saw at one time. We asked one little boy his age, which he said was

"fünf," but we thought he must be older—no child could get as dirty as that in five years!

I was left until almost the last, and when a pleasant-looking old gentleman appeared upon the scene, I decided I would take a hand in the choosing, so I said, "I'll go with you."

I was afraid there might be another large family, all with colds in their heads, like the five which Clarke had drawn, waiting for me, so that prompted me to choose this benevolent-looking old grandfather.

The old man took me home with him to one of the best houses in the village, although there was not much difference between them. His house was made of plaster which had been whitewashed, and had in it a good-sized kitchen, where the family really lived, and an inner room which contained a large picture of the Royal Family, all in uniform, and very gorgeous uniforms, too. Even the young daughter had a uniform which looked warlike enough for a Lieutenant-Colonel's. There was also a desk in this room, where the father of the family—for the old man who brought me in was the grandfather—conducted his business. He was some sort of a clerk, probably the reeve of the municipality, and did not work on the farm at all. There was a fine home-made carpet on the floor, but the room was bare and cheerless, with low ceiling, and inclined to be dark.

When we entered the kitchen, the family greeted me cordially, and I sat down to dinner with them. There were three girls and one brother, who was a soldier and home on leave.

Bromley went to work for a farmer on the other side of the village, but I saw him each night, for we all went back to a large three-storied building, which may once have been a boarding-house, to sleep each night, the guard escorting us solemnly both to and from work each day. This was a very good arrangement for us, too, for we had to be through work and have our supper over by eight o'clock each night.

After our prison diet, the meals we had here were ample and almost epicurean. We had soup—the real thing—made from meat, with plenty of vegetables; coffee with milk, but no sugar; cheese, homemade but

very good; meat, both beef and pork; eggs in abundance; but never any pastry; and lots of potatoes, boiled in their skins, and fried.

There were plenty of fruit-trees, too, in Rossbach, growing along the road, and, strange to say, unmolested by the youngsters. The trees appear to belong to the municipality, and the crop is sold by auction each year to the highest bidder. They are quite ornamental, too, standing in a straight row on each side of the road.

The farmers who lived in this village followed the oldest methods of farming I had ever seen, though I saw still more primitive methods in Hanover. Vegetables, particularly potatoes and mangels, were grown in abundance, and I saw small fields of stubble, though what the grain was I do not know. I saw a threshing-machine drawn by a tractor going along the road, and one of the girls told me it was made in England. The woman who had the farm next to the one I was on was a widow, her husband having been killed in the war, and she had no horses at all, and cultivated her tiny acres with a team of cows. It seems particularly consistent with German character to make cows work! They hate to see anything idle, and particularly of the female sex.

Each morning we rode out to the field, for the farms are scattered over a wide area, and three-acre and five-acre fields are the average size. The field where we went to work digging potatoes was about a mile distant from the house, and when I say we rode, I mean the brother and I—the girls walked. I remonstrated at this arrangement, but the girls themselves seemed to be surprised that it should be questioned, and the surly young brother growled something at me which I knew was a reflection on my intelligence.

When we got into the field and began to dig potatoes, good, clear-skinned yellow ones, Lena Schmidt, one of the girls, who was a friend of the family, though not a relation, I think, began to ask me questions about Canada (they put the accent on the third syllable). Lena had been to Sweden, so she told me proudly, and had picked up quite a few English words. She was a good-looking German girl, with a great head of yellow hair, done in braids around her head. The girls were all fairly good-looking though much tanned from outdoor work. Lena had heard women worked in the house, and not outside, in Canada—was it true?

I assured her it was true.

"But," said Lena, "what do they do in house—when bread is made and dish-wash?"

I told her our women read books and played the piano and made themselves pretty clothes and went visiting and had parties, and sometimes played cards.

Of course it was not all told as easily as this sounds.

I could see that Lena was deeply impressed, and so were the two others when she passed it on. Then she began to question me again.

"Are there many women in Canada—women in every house—like here?"

I told her there were not nearly so many women in Canada as here; indeed, there were not enough to go around, and there were lots of men who could not get married for that reason.

When Lena passed that on, excitement reigned, and German questions were hurled at me! I think the three girls were ready to leave home! I gently reminded them of the war and the complications it had caused in the matter of travelling. They threw out their hands with a gesture of despair—there could be no Canada for them. "Fertig," they said—which is the word they use to mean "no chance," "no use to try further."

Lena, however, having travelled as far as Sweden, and knowing, therefore, something of the world's ways, was not altogether without hope.

"The war—will be some day done!" she said—and we let it go at that.

Lena began to teach me German, and used current events as the basis of instruction. Before the end of the first day I was handling sentences like this—"Herr Schmidt expects to have his young child christened in the church next Sunday at 2 o'clock, God willing."

Helene Romisch, the daughter of the house, had a mania for knowing every one's age, and put the question to me in the first ten minutes of

our acquaintance. She had evidently remembered every answer she had ever received to her questions, for she told me the age of every one who passed by on the road, and when there was no one passing she gave me a list of the family connections of those who had gone, or those who were likely to go, with full details as to birthdays.

I think it was Eliza, the other girl, who could speak no English and had to use Lena as interpreter, who first broached the tender subject of matrimony.

Was I married?

I said, "No."

Then, after a few minutes' conference—

Had I a girl?

"No—I hadn't," I told them.

Then came a long and heated discussion, and Lena was hard put to it, with her scanty store of English words, and my recently acquired German, to frame such a delicate question. I thought I knew what it was going to be—but I did not raise a hand to help.

Why hadn't I a girl? Did I not like girls? or what?

I said I did like girls; that was not the reason. Then all three talked at once, and I knew a further explanation was going to be demanded if Lena's English could frame it. This is the form in which the question came:

"You have no girl, but you say you like girls; isn't it all right to have a girl?"

Then I told them it was quite a proper thing to have a girl; I had no objections at all; in fact, I might some day have a girl myself.

Then Lena opened her heart, seeing that I was not a woman-hater, and told me she had a beau in Sweden; but I gathered from her manner of telling it that his intentions were somewhat vague yet. Eliza had already admitted that she had a "fellow," and had shown me his picture. Helene

made a bluff at having one, too, though she did not seem able to give names or dates. Then Lena, being the spokeswoman, told me she could get a girl for me, and that the young lady was going to come out to the potato digging. "She see you carry water—she like you," declared Lena. This was interesting, too, and I remembered that when I was carrying water from the town pump the first day I was there, I had seen a black-eyed young lady of about sixteen standing in the road, and when I passed she had bade me "Good-day" in splendid English.

On Saturday, Fanny Hummel, for that was the black-eyed one's name, did come out. The three girls had a bad attack of giggles all the time Fanny and I were talking, for Fanny could speak a little English, having studied a year at Friedberg. She had a brother in the army who was an officer, and she told me he could speak English "perfect." As far as her English would go, she told me about Friedberg and her studies there, but when I tried to find out what she thought about the war, I found that Fanny was a properly trained German girl, and didn't think in matters of this kind.

When the day's work was over, Fanny and I walked back to town with the three girls following us in a state of partial collapse from giggles. That night, Lena wanted to know how things stood. Was Fanny my girl? I was sorry to break up such a pleasant little romance, but was compelled to state with brutal frankness that Fanny was not my girl!

I do not know how Fanny received this report, which I presumed would be given to her the next day, for the next day was the one we had selected for our departure.

CHAPTER VII

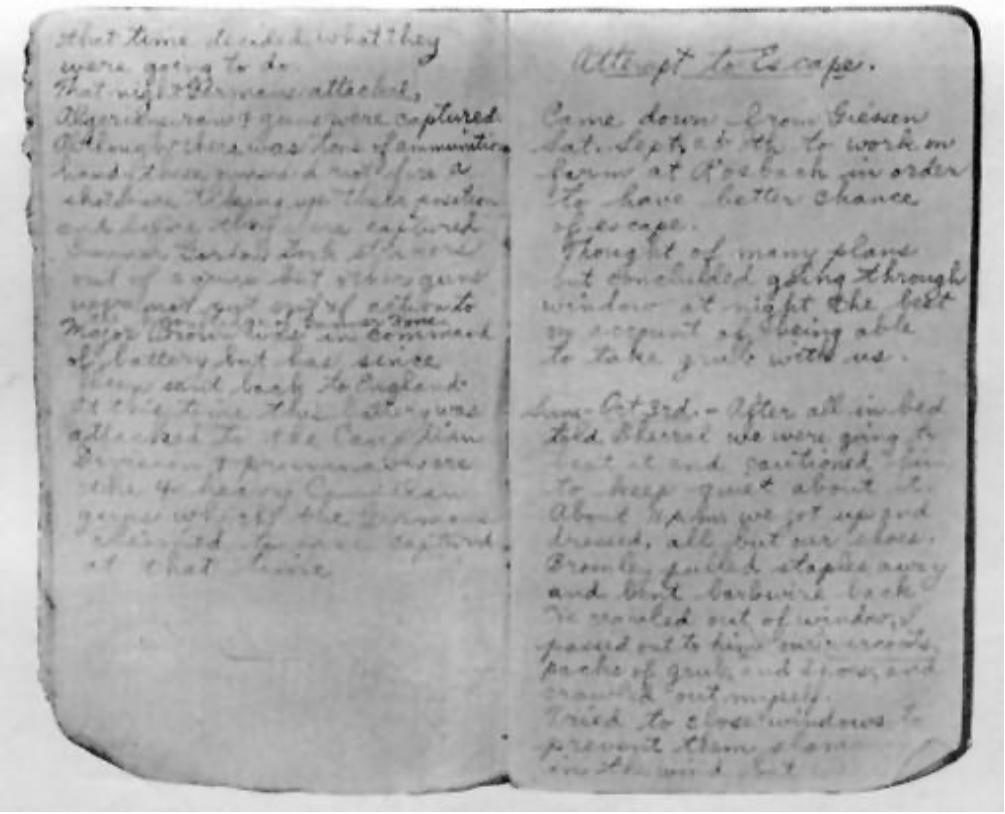
THE ESCAPE

Sunday, October 3d, was the day we had chosen as our "going-away" day. We did no work on Sundays, and so had a full day's rest. Besides, we had a chance for a bath on Sunday, and knew we needed every advantage we could get, for it was a long way to Switzerland.

The day had been sunny and bright, but toward evening big, heavy clouds rolled up from the southwest, and the darkness came on early. This. suited our purpose, and it was hard for Bromley and me to keep our accustomed air of unconcern.

By a fortunate arrangement, we were occupying a room downstairs in the old boarding-house, which made our escape less difficult. The upstairs sleeping-place would hold only three more when the six of us arrived from Giessen the week previous, and that left three of us for a downstairs room. For this, Bromley and I, and a young Englishman called Bherral were chosen.

The walls of the house were of plaster, and the windows had a double barring of barbed wire, stapled in; but plaster does not make a very secure bedding for staples, and we figured it would not be hard to pry them out.



Two Pages from Private Simmons's Diary

There was a light outside which burned all night at the corner of the house, and by it the windows were brightly illumined. This made our exit rather difficult. The doors were all locked, and there were about a dozen guards who slept in another room adjoining ours. Some of them slept, we knew, and we hoped they all did.

None of the prisoners at this place had ever attempted to escape, and so the guard had become less vigilant. I suppose they figured it out that if any of us were determined to go, we would make the start from the field where we were working, and where there were no guards at all.

But they made a fine bluff at being awake all night, for we heard them walking up and down in the early evening. However, we reasoned that they were not any keener on sitting up than any of the rest of us would be if we didn't have to; and it turned out that our faith in them was justified.

Although we did not have to work on Sunday, those who had to work in the mines had no seventh day of rest, and the night-shift went out each night about ten-thirty when the day-shift men came in. We had decided on eleven-thirty as the hour for our departure, giving the guard one hour in which to settle down after this disturbance.

We were lying on our mattresses, apparently wrapped in a heavy slumber, but in reality eagerly listening to every sound.... We heard the night-workers going out, and the day-men coming in and going heavily to rest.... A guard seemed restless for a while and tramped up and down the creaking floor... but at last the only sound to be heard was the deep breathing of tired men.

I heard Bromley gently reaching for his clothes, and I did not lose any time in getting into mine. Bherral and a little Frenchman, who were in our room, were wide awake and full of fear. They had tried to dissuade us.

But the guards, all unsuspecting, slept on.

They slept the sweet sleep of childhood while we pushed out the strands of barbed wire which protected the window; they slept while Bromley slipped cautiously to the ground, and while I handed him down the overcoats, boots, and parcels of food (which we had been saving for a month); they slept while I slid through the window and dropped to the ground, too.

Just then the wind caught the window, which was on a hinge, and slammed it noisily against the wall.

We grabbed our belongings, and ran!

CHAPTER VIII

OFF FOR SWITZERLAND!

We ran as if the whole German Army were in pursuit. Our feet did not seem to touch the ground. I believe if we could have held that pace we should have been in Switzerland in the morning!

Reaching a little hollow, we slackened our pace and listened. There was not a sound from behind. Either there was no more wind, or the boys had closed the window from within. We figured that they would do this, and open it before morning so they could claim they had not heard us go. Then we put on our boots.

The night was at its blackest, and a drizzling rain began to fall. This was in our favor, for nobody was likely to be about on such a night. When we saw we were not pursued, we took time to arrange our packs. I carried my compass, which I had been able to secrete during numerous searchings, and my map, a pair of socks, pipe, tobacco, matches in a tin box, an empty beer-bottle, and several things to eat, saved from our parcels,—chocolate, tinned meat, biscuits, cheese, and bread. Bromley had a pack similar to mine, and when we got them ready and our overcoats on, we started off in a southeasterly direction, guided by the light from the place we had left. We walked as fast as we could in the darkness, which was heavy enough to hide in, but made progress very difficult, for we could not see each other or one step before us. We tripped over a railway track once, and if there had been any one near they might have heard us.

But in spite of the rain, which fell with steady insistence and began to weigh down our overcoats; in spite of the blackness which made the travelling unbelievably difficult; in spite of the fact that we were in a land of enemies, playing a desperate game against terrible odds, we were happier than either of us had been since being taken to Germany, for a weight had been rolled off our souls. We were on our way to freedom!

When we found it necessary to consult the compass, I took off my overcoat and lay flat on the ground with my compass and matches ready. Bromley put my coat over my head and shoulders, tucking it well in around me, so no light could shine through. Then I struck a match, and in its light made the observation, always taking into consideration the fact that in that part of Europe the compass points sixteen or seventeen degrees west of due north.

We were careful to avoid the main roads and to seek out the seldom-travelled, ones, for we knew that our only chance was in not being seen at all, as we wore our own Canadian uniforms, which would brand us at once for what we were. Added to that, we could not form a single German sentence if we were challenged. Of course, I could say "that Herr Schmidt expected to have his young child baptized in the church next Sunday, God willing," but I felt that that was not altogether the proper reply to make to the command—"Halt! Wer da?"

The villages were very thick here, and our chief difficulty was to keep out of them. Once we ventured rather close to the road which ran near the railroad, and heard a number of people talking. They were travellers who had alighted from the train which had raced past us in the darkness a few minutes before. The station is often quite a distance from the village, and these were the passengers walking back to their homes—the village which we had been avoiding.

We dropped to the ground, and the people went by, one old man singing. I knew he was old, for his voice was cracked and thin, but of great sweetness, and he sang an aria from a musical comedy which was popular then, called "The Joy of Life." I had heard a doctor in the lazaret singing it.

When the sound had grown fainter in the distance, we came out of our hiding-place and went on.

"It seems hard," said Bromley, "to be fighting with people who can sing like that. I can't work up any ill-will to that good old soul, going home singing—and I don't believe he has any ill-will to us. I couldn't fight the Germans if they were all like this old chap and Sank!"

"You wouldn't need to," I said. "There would not have been any fighting."

And then we strained our ears to listen to the song, not a word of which we understood, though to us the music was full of good-will and joy.

"We've got to keep farther out," I said at last. "We are sure to run into some one and then it will be all up with us!"

We found, at last, after much stumbling over rough ground, a road quite grass-grown and apparently abandoned. We followed it for about a mile, making good progress, until we came to a stream over which there was a bridge. We hesitated a minute before going over, but the place was as silent as a cemetery, and seemed perfectly safe. So we cautiously went over, keeping a sharp outlook all the time. When we were over the bridge, we found ourselves in the one street of another village.

We stopped for a minute and listened. There was not a sound. We then went forward. Most of the streets of the villages are paved with cobblestones, but these were not, and our boots made no sound on the dirt road. Not even a dog barked, and just as we were at the farther end of it, the village clock rang the hour of three!

"That's all right for once," I said, "but it's risky; I don't think we'd better try it again. Some barking dog is sure to awake."

Soon after that the east grew red with morning, and we struck straight into the woods to find shelter. We soon found ourselves in high rushes growing out of swampy ground, and as we plunged along, we came to a high woven-wire fence, which we supposed marked the bounds of a game preserve.

We quickened our pace, although the going was bad, for the light was growing and we knew these German peasants are uncomfortably early in their habits. We came on a garden, carefully fenced with rails, and helped ourselves to a few carrots and turnips to save our supply of food, and, finding near there a fairly thick wood, decided to camp for the day.

That was Monday, October 4th, and was a miserable day with sudden bursts of sunshine that made our hearts light with the hope of getting

both warm and dry; but the sunshine no sooner came than it was gone, and then a shower of rain would beat down on us.

However, we managed to make our feet comfortable with the extra pair of socks, and we ate some carrots, bread, and cheese. But it was so cold, we could not sleep.

We were glad when it grew dark enough for us to start out again. We found we were in a well-cultivated district; almost every acre was in garden, potatoes and sugar beets, whose stalks rustled and crackled as we went through them, and this made our going slower than it otherwise would have been. There were a few late apples on the trees, but they were poor, woody ones. I do not know whether they were a sample of the crop or just the culls that were not considered worth picking. But we were glad of them, and filled our pockets.

The streams which we came to gave us considerable trouble. We were not exactly dry, but then we could have been wetter, and so we hunted for bridges, thereby losing much time and taking grave chances of being caught. We were new in the matter of escaping, and had a lot to learn. Now we know we should have waded through without losing a minute.

That morning, just before stopping-time, in crossing a railway Bromley tripped over a signal wire, which rang like a burglar alarm and seemed to set a dozen bells ringing. We quickened our pace, and when the railway man came rushing out of his house and looked wildly up and down the track, we were so far away he could not see us!

We kept well to the east, for we knew the location of Frankfort and that we must avoid it. Bromley had difficulty in keeping his direction, and I began to suspect that he thought I was lost, too. So I told him the direction the road ran, and then made an observation with the compass to convince him, but many a time in the long, black middle of the night, I thought I detected a disposition to doubt in his remarks.

When the North Star shone down on us, we could find our way without trouble, but when the night was clouded, as most of the nights were, it became a difficult matter.

The third night there was a faintly light patch in the sky, by which I guided my course and did not use my compass at all. Bromley had evidently not noticed this, and declared that no human being could keep his direction on as black a night as this. The faint light in the sky continued to hold, and I guided our course by it until we came to a road. Here Bromley insinuated that I had better use my compass (I was thinking the same thing, too). I assured him it was not necessary, for I knew the road was running east and west. It was, I knew, if the light patch in the sky had not shifted.

When we made the observation with the compass, we found it was so; and Bromley asked me, wonderingly, how I could do it. I told him it was a sort of sixth sense that some people had. After that he trusted me implicitly. This saved him a lot of anxiety, and also made it easier for me.

Soon after this we got into a miry part of the country, with the woods so thick and the going so bad that we knew we could not make any progress. It was a veritable dismal swamp, where travellers could be lost forever.

As we stumbled along in this swampy place, we came to a narrow-gauge railway, which we gladly followed until we saw we were coming to a city. This we afterwards knew to be the city of Hanau. Just in the gray dawn, we left the track and took refuge in a thick bush, where we spent the day. This was October 5th.

Our first work was to change our socks, spreading the ones we took off on a tree to dry. We then carefully rubbed our feet until they were dry, and put on the dry socks. We soon learned that we must leave our boots off for a while each day, to keep our feet in good condition. The pressure of the boots, especially with the dampness, made the feet tender and disposed to skin.

This day was a showery one, too, but the sun shone for about an hour in the morning, and when Bromley lay down to sleep, I decided to go out and see what sort of country we were in. I wanted to check up my map, too, for if it were correct, we should be near the Main River.

I made my way cautiously to the edge of the wood, marking the way by breaking the top of a twig here and there, to guide me safely back to Bromley. Ordinary travellers can call to each other, but the ways of escaping prisoners must all be ways of quietness, although their paths are not all paths of peace!

I saw a beautiful little lodge, vine-covered, with a rustic fence around it, with blue smoke curling out of its red-brick chimney, and I just knew they were having bacon and eggs and coffee for breakfast.

Two graceful deer, with gentle eyes, looked out at me from a tangle of willows, and then I knew the brown lodge was the game-keeper's house. A hay meadow, green with after-grass, stretched ahead of me, but there was no sign of the Main River.

I had kept well under cover, I thought, but before long I had the uncomfortable feeling that some one was following me; the crackling of the bushes, which ceased when I stopped, and began again when I went on, seemed very suspicious. I abruptly changed my course, making a wide circle, and was able to elude my pursuer and find my way back to Bromley.

I had an uneasy feeling that I had been too careless, and that some one had seen me. However, I lay down to sleep, for I was dead tired, and we had a splendid hiding-place in the thick bush.

I do not know how long I slept; it seemed only a few minutes when a bugle-call rang out. We wakened with a start, for it went through us like a knife.

We heard loud commands, and knew there was a company of soldiers somewhere near, and I gathered from my recent observations that these sounds came from the hay meadow in front of us.

We did not connect the demonstration with our presence until the soldiers began shouting and charging the wood where we lay. Then we knew we were what the society papers call the "raison d'être" for all this celebration.

We lay close to the earth and hardly dared to breathe. The soldiers ran shouting and firing (probably blank cartridges) in every direction. Through the brush I saw their feet as they passed—not ten feet from where we lay.

The noise they made was deafening; evidently they thought if they beat the bushes sufficiently hard, they could scare us out like rabbits, and I knew they were watching the paths and thin places in the woods. But we lay tight, knowing it was our only safety.

Soon the noise grew fainter, and they passed on to try the woods we had just come through, and we, worn with fatigue, fell asleep.

In the afternoon they gave our woods another combing. They seemed pretty sure we were somewhere near! But they did not come quite so close to us as they had in the morning.

However, we had heard enough to convince us that this was a poor place to linger, and when it got real dark, we pushed on south across the hay meadow. This meadow was full of ditches which were a little too wide to jump and were too skwudgy in the bottom to make wading pleasant. They delayed us and tired us a great deal, for it was a tough climb getting out of them.

At last we decided to take the road, for the night was dark enough to hide us, and by going slowly we thought we could avoid running into any one.

We had not gone very far when we heard the sound of wagons, and when we stopped to listen we could hear many voices, and knew our road was bringing us to a much-used thoroughfare. In the corner formed by the intersecting roads there was a thick bush of probably ten acres, and I could not resist the desire to scout and see what sort of country we were in. So I left Bromley, carefully marking where he was by all the ways I could, and then went out to the edge of the bush. I went along the edge of the road, keeping well into the bush. It was too dark to see much, but I could make out that there was a well-wooded country ahead of us. I came back to the exact place where I had left Bromley, or at least where I thought I had left him, but not a trace of him could I see. Of course, I dared not call, so I gave a soft whistle, as near like a bird-

call as I could. Bromley reached out his hand and touched me! He was right beside me. That gave me the comfort of knowing how well the darkness and bushes hide one if he is perfectly still.

We thought this road led to the river Main, and decided to keep close to it so we could get across on the bridge. We followed along the road until it branched into two roads. We took the right branch first, but as it turned more and more sharply to the west, we concluded it was the road to Frankfort, and retraced our steps to the place where we had picked it up, and went the other way. There was heavy forest along the road, and it seemed to us to run southeast by east. We wanted to go south, so we turned off this road through a chance hay meadow, and then through the forest, until we found a sort of road which ran south.

All German forests have roads, more or less distinct, traversing them according to some definite plan, but they do not necessarily follow the cardinal points of the compass. We followed the south road, which was little used, until we came to a stream. There was no way of getting across it, so we followed its bank until it flowed into the Kinzig River. We knew by our map this must be the Kinzig River.

We tried to find a path along the Kinzig, but there did not seem to be any, and the underbrush was impenetrable. We decided to wait until morning came, took some chocolate and biscuits and filled our beer-bottle in the stream. Then we found a comfortable bank, and put some brush under our heads and slept. But not very soundly, for we did not want to miss that misty light which comes about an hour before sunrise.

We wakened just as the light began to show in the east, and, stiff and cold, with our teeth chattering, we started on our way to find some means of getting across the Kinzig. Bridge, boat, or raft, anything would do us, provided only it came soon, before the daylight.

In a few minutes we came to a foot-bridge, with a well-beaten path running down to it and up the opposite bank. So we made a dash across it. We knew enough, though, to get off the path at once, for we could see it was a well-travelled one. We struck into the wood, keeping our southerly direction, but soon came out on another road, and as the light

was too strong now for us, we went back into the woods and kept hidden.

That was Wednesday, October 6th. Again it rained; not in showers this time with redeeming shots of sunshine, but a dull, steady, miserable rain that wet us clear through to the skin. Still, we ate our cheese and bread, and opened a tin of sardines, and managed to put the day in. We were near a town, and could hear people driving by all day long. We were kept so on the alert that we had no time to feel uncomfortable. However, we were very glad when the darkness came and we could stretch our legs and get warm again.

We had great difficulty to clear the town and the railway yards ahead of us, but at last found a road leading south, and followed it through the forest. In one place, as I was going along ahead, intent on keeping the road, which seemed to be heaped up in the middle, I heard a cry behind me, and almost jumped across the road in my excitement. Instinctively I began to run, but a second cry arrested me, for it was Bromley's voice. I ran back and found he had fallen into a hole in the road. The heaped-up appearance I had noticed was the dirt thrown out of a six-foot drain, in which they were laying water-pipes, and into this Bromley had fallen. He was not hurt at all, but jarred a little by the fall.

We knew we had passed the Hesse boundary, and were now in Bavaria.

Our one beer-bottle did not hold nearly enough water, and in our long walk through the forest on this night we suffered from thirst. We had thought we should be able to find cows to milk, but on account of the people living in villages, there was but little chance of this.

When we got out of the forest we found ourselves in an open country. We came to a good-sized stream, and crossed the bridge and to our horror found ourselves in a town of considerable size. The streets were dark, but from one or two windows lights shone. We pushed rapidly on, and thought we were nearly through, when a little upstart of a fox-terrier came barking out at us from a doorway. We stepped into a space between two houses, and just then a cat crossed the street and he transferred his attentions to her.

"I always did like cats," Bromley whispered.

We came out again and went on, breathing out our condemnation of all German dogs. And we were not done with them yet! For before we got out another cur flew at us and raised enough noise to alarm the town. I believe the only thing that saved us was this dog's bad character. Nobody believed he had anything—he had fooled them so often—and so, although he pursued us until we slipped down an alley and got into a thick grove, there was not even a blind raised. He ran back, yelping out his disappointment, and the bitterest part of it would be that no one would ever believe him—but that is part of the liar's punishment.

We got out of the town as soon as we could, and pushed on with all haste; we were afraid that news of our escape had been published, and that these people might be on the lookout for us. The telephone poles along the roads we were travelling kept us reminded of the danger we were in.

Loaded apple-trees growing beside the road tempted us to stop and fill our pockets, and as we were doing so a man went by on a bicycle. We stepped behind the tree just in time to avoid being seen, and although he slackened his pace and looked hard at the place where we were, he evidently thought it best to keep going.

We met two other men later in the night, but they apparently did not see us, and we went on.

We left the road after that, and plunged into the woods, for the daylight was coming.

During the day of October 7th we stayed close in the woods, for we knew we were in a thickly settled part of the country. Lying on the ground, we could see a German farmer gathering in his sugar beets, ably assisted by his women-folk. We could also hear the children from a school near by, playing "Ring-a-ring-a-röselein."

The rain that day was the hardest we had yet encountered, but in the afternoon the sun came out and we got some sleep. At dusk we started out again, on a road which had forest on one side and open country on the other. We could see the trains which ran on the main line from Hanau to Aschaffenburg. The Main River was at our right. Soon the

forest ended abruptly, and we found ourselves in an open country, and with a railroad to cross.

As we drew near, the dog at the station gave the alarm. We stepped into a clump of trees and "froze." The man at the station came rushing out and looked all around, but did not see us, and went back. We then made a wide detour and crawled cautiously over the road on our hands and knees, for this road had rock ballast which would have crunched under our feet.

We then went on through the village, where another dog barked at us, but couldn't get any support from his people, who slept on. We were worried about the time, for neither of us had a watch, and we suspected that it was near morning. We hurried along, hoping to find a shelter, but the country seemed to be open and treeless. A thick mist covered the ground and helped to hide us, but it might lift at any minute.

We struck straight east at last, in the hope of finding woods. Through the mist we saw something ahead of us which when we came nearer proved to be a hill. Hoping it might be wooded on the top, we made for it with all haste. When we reached the top we found no woods, but an old cellar or an excavation of a building. It was seven or eight feet deep, and the bottom was covered with rubbish. Into it we went, glad of any sort of shelter.

When daylight came, we looked cautiously over the edge, and saw we were near a village; also we saw that about two hundred yards away there was a good thick wood, but it was too late now to think of changing our position. There was a potato patch on the face of the hill, with evidence of recent digging. About eight o'clock we heard voices. Women were digging the potatoes.

Our feet were very sore that day, on account of the rain and of our not being able to keep our boots off enough each day, but we lay perfectly lifeless and did not even speak, for fear of attracting the attention of the potato-diggers. We wished it would rain and drive the potato-diggers in. But about nine o'clock a worse danger threatened us. We heard firing, and could hear commands given to soldiers. Soon it dawned on us that they were searching the wood for us.

The hours dragged on. We were cramped and sore of feet, hungry, and nervous from lack of sleep, but managed to remain absolutely motionless.

About three o'clock a five-year-old boy belonging to the potato-digging party, strolled up to the top of the hill. Bromley saw him first, and signed to me. He loitered around the top of the cellar a few minutes, threw some stones and dirt down, and then wandered away. There was nothing to indicate that he had seen us.

But in a few moments a woman and little girl came. The woman looked straight at us, and made away at full speed. We knew she had seen us. Then we heard the soldiers coming, shouting. It was not a pleasant time to think of.

When they surrounded the place, we stood up, and surrendered.

There was nothing else to do.

CHAPTER IX

CAUGHT!

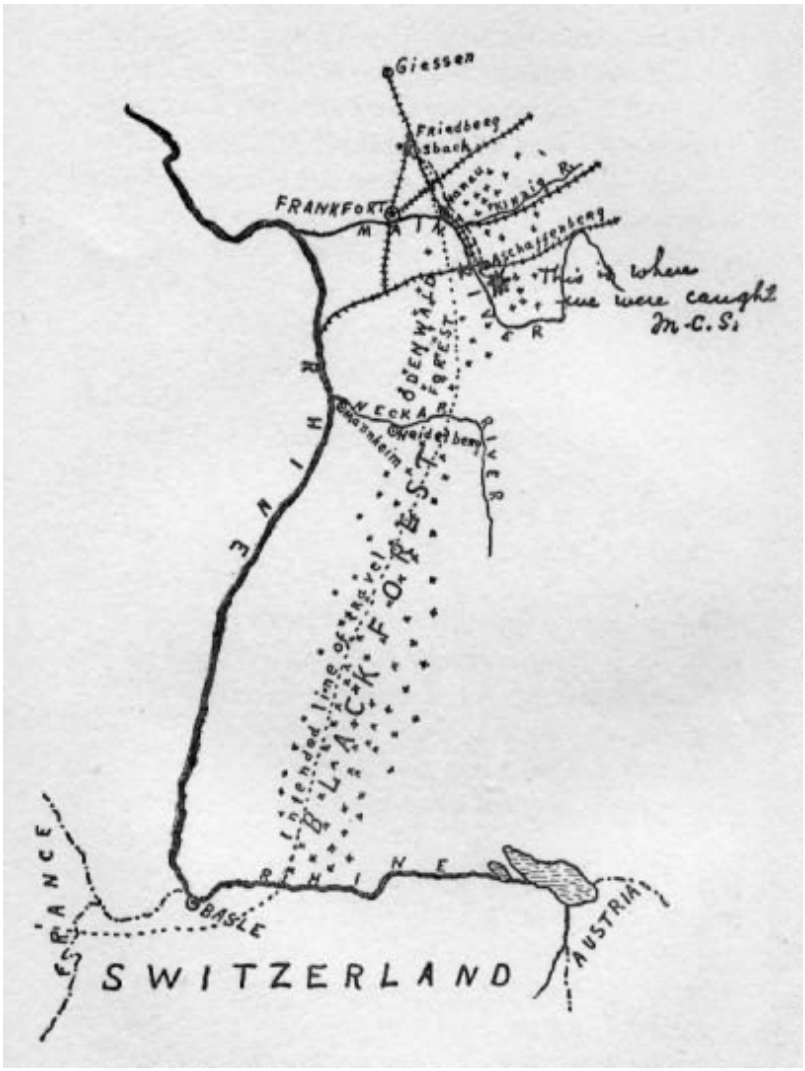
At first it seemed as if there were a platoon of soldiers: they were everywhere I looked, and there were more coming! They were, for the most part, young fellows from the training camp at Aschaffenburg, and it was not every day they got a chance to catch a couple of prisoners. So it was done with a flourish!

The Captain instructed us to put up our hands, and two of the soldiers searched us. They were welcome to my map, because already I was thinking of making another, but I did not like to see my compass go—I kept wondering how I would ever get another.

There was no hostility in their attitude toward us, either from the soldiers or the civilians. The potato-diggers, mostly women, went straight back to their work as if they had done their share and now some one else could "carry on." Prisoners or no prisoners, the potatoes had to be dug.

A few children gathered around us, but they kept back at a respectful distance and made no remarks. Where the military are concerned, the civilian population do not interfere, even by words or looks.

The village women who gathered around us had most apathetic, indifferent, sodden faces; I don't believe they knew what it was all about. They were no more interested in what was going on than the black-and-white Holstein cows that grazed in the meadow near by.



Map made by Private Simmons of the First Attempt

I spoke of this afterwards to Bromley.

"But you must remember," he said, "they knew enough to go and tell on us. That wasn't so slow."

We could see that the soldiers were greatly pleased with their catch, by the way they talked and gesticulated. Every one was pleased but us! Then the commander, addressing his men in what we took to be a congratulatory speech, called for volunteers. We knew the word.

I looked at Bromley, and saw the same thought in his face, but his sense of humor never failed him.

"Cheer up, Sim!" he said. "They are just calling for volunteers to shoot us. The boys must have something to practise on."

We laughed about it afterwards, but I must say I did not see much fun in it that minute. But it was only volunteers to take us into Aschaffenburg. The commander wished to spread the joy and gladness as far as it would go, and I think it was fully a dozen who escorted us to Aschaffenburg, about a mile and a half away.

They marched us through the principal streets, where I saw the sign "Kleiderfabrik" many times. The people stopped to look at us, but I saw no evidence of hostility. I am not sure that the majority of the people knew who we were, though of course they knew we were foreigners.

There was one person, however, who recognized us, for as we were marching past one of the street-corners, where a group had gathered, a voice spoke out in excellent English, "Canadians, by Jove! And two fine big chaps, too!"

The voice was friendly, but when I turned to look I could not see who had spoken.

Their pride in showing us off was "all right for them," but pretty hard on us, for it was a long time since we had slept, and we did not enjoy being paraded through the city just for fun. We knew we were in for it, and wanted to know just what they were going to do with us.

At last they drew up with great ceremony before the Military Headquarters, where there was more challenging, by more guards. I think another guard fell in behind to see that we did not bolt, and we were conducted into the presence of the Supreme Commander of that Military District.

He sat at a high desk in the centre of the room. There were several clerks or secretaries in the room, all in uniform, and there seemed to be considerable business going on when we came in, for numerous typewriters were going and messengers were moving about. I noticed there was not a woman in the room.

When we entered and were swung up to the Commander's desk, with a few words of introduction, there was complete silence.

The soldiers who brought us in stepped back in a straight line, all in step, and waited to be congratulated, with that conscious air of work well done that a cat has when she throws down a mouse and stands around to hear the kind words which will be spoken.

The Supreme Commander was a grizzled man, with bushy gray eyebrows which were in great need of being barbered, red cheeks, and a curled-up mustache. He spoke through an interpreter.

We were asked our names, ages, previous occupation, when captured, and the most important questions of all, "Why were we fighting against Germany?" and, "Why did we want to leave Germany?"

I was questioned first, and after I had answered all the minor questions, I told him I enlisted in the Canadian Army because we considered ourselves part of the British Empire, and besides, Great Britain's share in the war was an honorable one which any man might well be proud to fight for. I said we were fighting for the little nations and their right to live and govern themselves. I told him it was the violation of Belgium that had set Canada on fire.

When this was passed on by the interpreter, I could see it was not well received, for the old man's eyebrows worked up and down and he said something which sounded like "Onions."

Then he asked me what did Canada hope to get out of the war? I said, "Nothing"—Canada would gain nothing—but we had to maintain our self-respect, and we couldn't have kept that if we had not fought. "But," I said, "the world will gain a great deal from the war, for it will gain the right to live at peace."

At the mention of peace, some of the officers laughed in contempt, but at a glance from the Supreme Commander, the laugh was checked with great suddenness!

He then asked me why I wanted to get out of Germany.

I told him no free man enjoyed being a prisoner, and besides, I was needed in the army.

All these answers were taken down by two secretaries, and Bromley was put through the same list of questions.

He told them no one in Canada had to fight, no one wanted to fight, because we are peaceable people, but we believe a little nation had a right to live, and we had been taught that the strong must defend the weak.

When they asked him why he wanted to get away from Germany, he told them he had a wife and two children in Canada, and he wanted to see them: whereupon the Commander broke out impatiently, "This is no time for a man to think of his wife and children!"

When the Supreme Commander was through with us, we were taken to the station and put on the train for Giessen, escorted by a Sergeant Major, who had an iron cross ribbon on his coat, and two privates.

We got a drink at a tap in the station and ate some bread and cheese from our pack, which they had not taken away from us, but they did not offer us anything to eat.

On the train, where we had a compartment to ourselves, one of the privates bought some fruit, and gave us a share of it. Our German money had been taken away from us when they searched us, and we had nothing but prison-stamps, which are of no use outside the prison-camp. One of the privates was a university man, and in broken English tried to tell us why Germany had to enter the war, to save herself from her enemies. I thought his reasoning was more faulty than his English, but believed in his sincerity.

He told us that every nation in the whole world hated Germany and was jealous of "him," and that England was the worst of all. He said England feared and hated the Bavarians most of all, and that all Bavarian prisoners were shot. I tried to convince him that this was not so; but he was a consistent believer and stuck to it. He said when Germany won the war "he" would be very kind to all the countries "he"

conquered, and do well for them. He told us he hated England, but not all "Engländers" were bad!

At Hanau we changed cars and had a few minutes to wait, and our guards walked up and down with us. The station was crowded with people, and the lunch-tables were crowded, although it was getting late in the evening.

At Friedberg we had an hour's wait, and we saw the same thing. Beer-drinking and eating was going on in a big lunch-room, but the patrons were ninety per cent men. The Sergeant Major with the iron cross did not bother us at all, and at Friedberg he devoted himself to the young lady who sold cigars, beer, and post-cards in the station.

We asked our friend who could speak a little English what they were saying, but he, being a university man and of high degree socially, gave us to understand that the Sergeant Major was lowering his dignity to flirt with the girl behind the counter. He said it was all "verrücktheit" (craziness). We were of the opinion that it was the girl who was stepping down!

When we got into Giessen, they took us on the street-car to the prison-camp, and we were glad, for it had been a long day for us, and the thought of longer ones ahead was not cheering.

We were taken to the hut where the prison-guards sleep, and were given a room at the very end, where we would surely be safe. We were tired enough not to give any trouble, and when they left us, we threw ourselves down without undressing and slept till morning.

At nine o'clock we were taken before the officers of our own Company, and put through the same questions. The answers were written down, as before. We were then marched away to the Strafe-Barrack.

The Strafe-Barrack had in it about thirty prisoners, but it was not nearly full. These were all kept at one end of the hut, and at the other end there were three men whose official standing was somewhat of a mystery to us at first. Two of them were Belgians, a private and a Sergeant, and one was a British Sergeant. They were dressed like ordinary prisoners, but seemed to be able to go about at will.

We soon caught on to the fact that they were spies, whose business it was to watch the prisoners and repeat anything that would be of interest to the authorities. During the five days we were kept there, waiting for "cells," we found them quite friendly.

CHAPTER X

THE CELLS!

On the morning of the fifth day two cells were reported empty, and we were taken to them.

The cells are in a wooden building inside the camp, and in the building we were in there were ten of them, divided from each other by wooden partitions whose cracks are battened with strips of wood to prevent light from coming through. There are two windows, one over the door and one in the outside wall. These have a solid wooden door which can be shut over them, excluding every ray of light.

The cells are about six feet by eight in size, and have a wooden platform to sleep on. There is no bedding of any kind. There is one shelf, on which a pitcher of drinking-water stands, and there is an electric button by which the guard can be called.

We were allowed to keep all our clothing, including our overcoats, and I managed to hold on to a stub of a pencil and a piece of stout string.

When the guard brought me in and told me to "make myself at home" or words to that effect, and went out, locking the door, I sat down on the wooden platform, and looked around.

It was as black as the infernal regions—I might as well have had my eyes shut, for all I could see. However, I kept on looking. There was no hurry—I had time to spare. I had more time than I had ever had before.

Soon I noticed that in the partition at my right there was a place where the darkness was broken, and a ray of light filtered through. As I watched it, into the light spot there came two glistening points which looked very much like a pair of eyes.

I did not move, for I could hear the guards moving up and down the gangway, but I could hardly wait until I heard the gates of the gangway close. Then I went to the crack and whispered.

"Hello!"

"Hello!" came back the answer; and looking through the crack I saw a lighted cell, and in it a man, the owner of the two bright eyes I had seen.

"What are you?" came a whisper.

"Canadian," I answered; "in for trying to escape."

By putting my ear to the crack, I could hear when he whispered.

"I am a Frenchman," he said in perfect English; "Malvoisin is my name, and this is my second attack of cells—for escaping—but I'll make it yet. Have you the rings? No? Well, you'll get them. Look at me."

I could see that his uniform had stripes of bright red wagon paint on the seams, and circles of it on the front of the tunic and on his trousers, with a large one on the back of the tunic between the shoulders.

"You'll get these when you get into the Strafe-Barrack," he said.

"How long shall I be there?" I asked.

"Nobody knows," he answered. "If they like you, they may keep you! It's an indeterminate sentence.... That's a good cell you have. I was in that cell the last time, and I fixed it up a little."

"What did you do to it?" I asked.

"There's a built-in cupboard over at the other side, where you can keep your things!"

"Things!" I said—"what things? I've nothing but a pencil and a string."

"The boys will bring you stuff," he said; and then he gave me instructions.

"Write a note," he said. "Here's a piece of paper," shoving a fragment of newspaper through the crack. "Write a note addressed to one of your friends, tell him you are in cells, but get out every day to lavatory in Camp 8—they'll bring you food, and books."

"Books!" I said. "What good would books be to me in this black hole?"

"I am just coming to that," he whispered back; "there's a crack like this with a movable batten over on the other side. You can stand on the platform, pull down the strip of wood, and get in quite a decent light from the other cell. It is a light cell like mine; and right above it you'll find the board that is loose in the ceiling; you can pull it down and slip your book into the space and then let it up again."

I stepped over to the other side, and found everything just as he said. Life grew brighter all at once, and the two weeks of "cells" were robbed of a great part of their terror.

I set to work to pull a nail with my cord, and was able to do it after considerable labor, but there was no hurry at all. It all helped to put the long hours in! With the nail I made the reading-crack larger, in anticipation of the books which were to come, but was careful not to have it too big for the strip of wood to cover when it was swung back into place.

When morning came I got my issue of bread, the fifth part of a small round loaf, which was my allowance for the day. Then for ten minutes we all swept out our cells and were taken out to the lavatory. I had my note ready, and when the guard was not looking, slipped it into the hand of a Frenchman who was standing near me.

The lavatory was in the same building as Camp 8 Lavatory, and was divided from theirs by a wall with an opening in it, through which parcels might be passed between the strands of barbed wire.

The Frenchman delivered my note quite safely, and the next morning I found several little packages on the floor of the lavatory. Bromley and I managed to get out at the same time, and as the guard did not understand English, we were able to say a few words to each other.

The boys sent us things every day—chocolate, biscuits, cheese, cigarettes, matches, and books. We wore our overcoats to the lavatory each day, so we could use the pockets to carry back our parcels without detection. We were also careful to leave nothing in the cell that would attract the attention of the guard, and Malvoisin and I conserved matches by lighting one cigarette with the other one, through the crack.

Bromley had no reading-crack in his room, but with a nail and string soon made himself one.

Standing on the platform, I could open the reading-crack and get several inches of light on my book. I read three or four books in this way, too, making them last just as long as I could.

On the fourth day I had light in my cell. The two windows were opened and the cell was aired. On the light day I got more to eat, too, coffee in the morning, and soup in the evening. On that night I had a mattress and blankets, too.

Toward the end of my two weeks I had hard luck. The cell next to mine, on which I depended for the light to read by, was darkened. I was right in the middle of "The Harvester." I tried it by the crack between my cell and that of Malvoisin, but the light was too dim and made my eyes ache. However, after two days a light-cell prisoner was put in, and I was able to go on with my story.

Malvoisin did all he could to make my punishment endurable. On account of his cell being lighted, he could tell, by the sunlight on the wall, what time it was, and passed it on to me, and when I couldn't read because the cell next to mine was dark, he entertained me with the story of his adventures—and they were many!

His last escape had been a marvellous one—all but the end. When outside of the grounds, on a digging party, he had entertained the guards so well, by showing them fancy steps in dancing, that they had not noticed that he was circling closer and closer to a wood. Then, when he had made some grotesque movement, which sent the staid German guards into paroxysms of laughter, he had made a dash for the wood. The soldiers at once surrounded the place, but Malvoisin had gone up a tree. The guards fired through the woods, calling on him to surrender, while he sat safe and happy in one of the highest branches, watching the search for him. The searching of the wood continued for two days, but he remained in his nest in the tree, coming down at night to get the food he had buried in the ground while on the digging party.

They gave up the search then, and he started for Switzerland. He got a suit of painter's clothes at one place—overalls and smock—by going

through a window where the painters had been working, and with his knowledge of German was passing himself off for a painter, and working toward home. But his description was in the newspapers, and a reward offered for his capture. His brilliant black eyes and the scar on his cheek gave him away, and one of his fellow-workmen became suspicious, and for the sake of the reward notified the military.

But he said he would be sure to reach home next time!

He had a week longer punishment than we had, and so when our two weeks were up we left him there.

When I said "Good-bye" to him through the crack, and tried to tell him how much he had done for me, he laughed light-heartedly and called back, "Good-bye, old man, I'll meet you in Paris—if not sooner!"

CHAPTER XI

THE STRAFE-BARRACK

When they took us to the Strafe-Barrack, the Company painter was summoned and put on our rings, which stamped us as desperate characters who would have to be watched. There was something to me particularly distasteful about the rings, for I hated to have my Canadian uniform plastered with these obnoxious symbols. But I did not let the guards see that it bothered me at all, for we knew that the object of all their punishment was to break our spirits.

The Strafe-Barrack was supposed to finish the work begun in the cells. It followed up the weakening of our bodies and minds, caused by the fourteen days' solitude and starvation, and was intended to complete the job with its deadly monotony and inaction.

We got no parcels; so the joy of expectation was eliminated. We did not know how long we were in for, so we could not even have the satisfaction of seeing the days pass, and knowing we were nearing the end! We had no books or papers; even the "Continental Times" was denied us! We got the same food as they had in the prison-camp, and we had a mattress to sleep on, and two blankets.

So far as physical needs were concerned, we were as well off as any of the fellows, but the mental stagnation was calculated, with real German scientific reasoning, to break us down to the place where we could not think for ourselves. They would break down our initiative, they thought, and then we should do as they told us. As usual in dealing with spiritual forces, they were wrong!

In the morning we swept the floor of the hut, and spread up our beds and had our breakfast. Then we sat on stools for an indefinite period, during which time we were not supposed to speak or move. It was the duty of the guards to see that we obeyed these rules. It is a mean way to treat a human being, but it sent us straight back upon our own mental resources, and I thought things out that I had never thought about

before. Little incidents of my childhood came back to me with new significance and with a new meaning, and life grew richer and sweeter to me, for I got a longer view of it.

It had never occurred to me, any more than it does to the average Canadian boy, to be thankful for his heritage of liberty, of free speech, of decency. It has all come easy to us, and we have taken all the apples which Fortune has thrown into our laps, without thinking.

But in those long hours in the Strafe-Barrack I thought of these things: I thought of my father and mother... of the good times we had at home... of the sweet influences of a happy childhood, and the inestimable joy of belonging to a country that stands for fair play and fair dealing, where the coward and the bully are despised, and the honest and brave and gentle are exalted.

I thought and thought and thought of these things, and my soul overflowed with gratitude that I belonged to a decent country. What matter if I never saw it again? It was mine, I was a part of it, and nothing could ever take it from me!

Then I looked at the strutting, cruel-faced cut-throat who was our guard, and who shoved his bayonet at us and shook his dirty fist in our faces to try to frighten us. I looked at his stupid, leering face and heavy jowl, and the sloped-back forehead which the iron heel had flattened with its cruel touch. He could walk out of the door and out of the camp, at will, while I must sit on a chair without moving, his prisoner!

Bah! He, with the stupid, *verboten* look in his face, was the bondsman! I was free!

There were other guards, too, decent fellows who were glad to help us all they dared. But the fear of detection held them to their distasteful work. One of them, when left in charge of us as we perched on our chairs, went noisily out, in order to let us know he was going, so that we could get off and walk about and talk like human beings, and when he came back—he had stayed out as long as he dared—I think he rattled the door to warn us of his coming!

Then the head spy, the Belgian private, who had his headquarters in the Strafe-Barrack, showed us many little kindnesses. He had as his batman one of the prisoners whose term of punishment had expired, and Bromley, who was always quick-witted and on the alert, offered himself for the job, and was taken, and in that way various little favors came to us that we should not otherwise have had.

Being ring-men, there were no concessions for us, and the full rigor of the *strafe* would have fallen on us—and did at first; but when Bromley got to be batman, things began to loosen a little for us and we began to get *part* of our parcels.

The head spy claimed more than the usual agent's commission for all these favors, but we did not complain, for according to the rules we were not entitled to any.

The process regarding the parcels was quite simple. Spies in the parcel party, working under the Belgian, brought our parcels to his room at the end of the Strafe-Barrack. He opened them and selected what he wanted for himself, giving Bromley what was left.

Sometimes, in his work of batman, Bromley got "tired," and wanted help, suggesting that a friend of his be brought in to assist him. I was the friend, and in this way I was allowed to go up to the Belgians' room to sweep, or do something for them, and then got a chance at our parcels. At night, too, when the guard had gone and the lights were out, we got a chance to eat the things we had secreted under the mattress; but generally we kept our supplies in the Belgians' room, which was not in danger of being searched.

Bromley, as usual, made a great hit in his new position of batman. He had a very smooth tongue, and, finding the British Sergeant susceptible to flattery, gave him plenty of it, and when we got together afterwards, many a laugh I had over his description of the British Sergeant's concern for his appearance, and of how he sent home to England for his dress uniform.

We got out together when we went back to our own Company to get extra clothes. We stayed out about as long as we liked, too, and when we came back, we had the Belgian with us, so nothing was said. The

strafe-barrack keepers, even the bayonet man, had a wholesome fear of the Belgian.

This Belgian was always more or less of a mystery to us. He was certainly a spy, but it was evident he took advantage of his position to show many kindnesses to the other prisoners.

There was one book which we were allowed to read while in Strafe-Barrack, and that was the Bible. There were no Bibles provided, but if any prisoner had one, he might retain it. I don't think the Germans have ever got past the Old Testament in their reading, and when they read about the word of the Lord coming to some one and telling him to rise up early and go out and wipe out an enemy country—men, women, and children—they see themselves, loaded with *Kultur*, stamping and hacking their way through Belgium.

I read the Books of the Kings and some other parts of the Old Testament, with a growing resentment in my heart every time it said the "Lord had commanded" somebody to slay and pillage and steal. I knew how much of a command they got. They saw something they wanted, a piece of ground, a city, perhaps a whole country. The king said, "Get the people together; let's have a mass-meeting; I have a message from God for the people!" When the people were assembled, the king broke the news: "God wants us to wipe out the Amalekites!" The king knew that the people were incurably religious. They would do anything if it can be made to appear a religious duty. Then the people gave a great shout and said: "The Lord reigneth. Let us at the Amalekites! If you're waking, call me early"—and the show started.

The Lord has been blamed for nearly all the evil in the world, and yet Christ's definition of God is love, and He goes on to say, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor."

I can quite understand the early books in the Bible being written by men of the same cast of mind as the Kaiser, who solemnly and firmly

believed they were chosen of God to punish their fellow-men, and incidentally achieve their ambitions.

But it has made it hard for religion. Fair-minded people will not worship a God who plays favorites. I soon quit reading the Old Testament. I was not interested in fights, intrigues, plots, and blood-letting.

But when I turned to the teachings of Christ, so fair and simple, and reasonable and easy to understand, I knew that here we had the solution of all our problems. Love is the only power that will endure, and when I read again the story of the Crucifixion, and Christ's prayer for mercy for his enemies because he knew they did not understand, I knew that this was the principle which would bring peace to the world. It is not force and killing and bloodshed and prison-bars that will bring in the days of peace, but that Great Understanding which only Love can bring.

I was thinking this, and had swung around on my chair, contrary to rules, when the guard rushed up to me with his bayonet, which he stuck under my nose, roaring at me in his horrible guttural tongue.

I looked down at the point of his bayonet, which was about a quarter of an inch from my tunic, and let my eyes travel slowly along its length, and then up his arm until they met his!

I thought of how the image of God had been defaced in this man, by his training and education. It is a serious crime to destroy the king's head on a piece of money; but what word is strong enough to characterize the crime of taking away the image of God from a human face!

The veins of his neck were swollen with rage; his eyes were red like a bull's, and he chewed his lips like a chained bulldog. But I was sorry for him beyond words—he was such a pitiful, hate-cursed, horrible, squirming worm, when he might have been a man. As I looked at him with this thought in my mind the red went from his eyes, his muscles relaxed, and he lowered his bayonet and growled something about "Englishe schwein" and went away.

"Poor devil," I thought. I watched him, walking away.... "Poor devil,... it is not his fault."...

Malvoisin came to the Strafe-Barrack a week after we did, and I could see that the guards had special instructions to watch him.

None of the ring-men were allowed to go out on the digging parties from the Strafe-Barrack, since Malvoisin had made his get-away in front of the guards, and for that reason, during the whole month we were there, we had no chance at all for exercise.

Malvoisin was thin and pale after his three weeks' confinement in cells, but whenever I caught his eye he gave me a smile whose radiance no prison-cell could dim. When he came into the room, every one knew it. He had a presence which even the guards felt, I think. We went out a week before him, and we smuggled out some post-cards which he had written to his friends and got them posted, but whether they got by the censor, I do not know. The last I saw of him was the day he got out of Strafe-Barrack. He walked by our hut, on the way to his Company. He was thinner and paler still, but he walked as straight as ever, and his shoulders were thrown back and his head was high! His French uniform was in tatters, and plastered with the obnoxious rings. A guard walked on each side of him. But no matter—he swung gaily along, singing "La Marseillaise."

I took my hat off as he went by, and stood uncovered until he disappeared behind one of the huts, for I knew I was looking at something more than a half-starved, pale, ragged little Frenchman. It was not only little Malvoisin that had passed; it was the unconquerable spirit of France!

CHAPTER XII

BACK TO CAMP

After the monotony of the cells and the Strafe-Barrack, the camp seemed something like getting home for Christmas. All the boys, McKelvey, Keith, Clarke, Johnston, Graham, Walker, Smith, Reid, Diplock, Palmer, Larkins, Gould, Salter, Mudge, and many others whom I did not know so well, gathered around us and wanted to know how we had fared, and the story of our attempt and subsequent punishment formed the topic of conversation for days.

All the time we had been in retirement, we were not allowed to write letters or cards, and I began to fear that my people would be very anxious about me. I had given cards to returning "strafers" to post, but I was not sure they had ever got out of Germany. Many parcels had come for me from other friends, too, and the big problem before me now was to find some way to acknowledge them. A card a week, and a letter twice a month, does not permit of a very flourishing correspondence.

A decent German guard consented to take Bromley and me to the building where the parcels were kept for men who were in punishment, and we, being strong in faith, took a wheelbarrow with us. Of course, we had received a number of parcels through our friend the spy, but we hoped there would be many more. However, I got only one, a good one from G. D. Ellis, Weston, England, and that saved me from a hard disappointment. I saw there, stacked up in a pile, numerous parcels for Todd, Whittaker, Little Joe, and others, who were serving their sentences at Butzbach. I reported this to our Sergeant Major, and the parcels were opened. Some of the stuff was spoiled, but what was in good condition was auctioned off among us and the money sent to them.

A letter came to me from my sister, Mrs. Ralph Brown, of Buchanan, Saskatchewan, saying they were worried about me because they had not heard from me, and were afraid I was not receiving my parcels. Then I decided I would have to increase my supply of cards. The Russian

prisoners had the same number of cards we had, but seldom wrote any. Poor fellows, they had nobody to write to, and many of them could not write. So with the contents of my parcels I bought up a supply of cards. I had, of course, to write them in a Russian's name, for if two cards went into the censor's hands from M. C. Simmons, No. 69, Barrack A, Company 6, something would happen.

So cards went to my friends from "Pte. Ivan Romanoff" or "Pte. Paul Rogowski," saying he was quite well and had seen M. C. Simmons to-day, who was grateful for parcel and had not been able to write lately, but would soon. These rather mystified some of the people who received them, who could not understand why I did not write directly. My cousin, Mamie Simmons, and Mrs. Lackie, of Dereham Centre, Ontario, wrote a letter back to the Russian whose card they had received, much to his joy and surprise.

One of my great desires at this time was to have a compass, for Bromley and I were determined to make another attempt at escape, just as soon as we could, and many an hour I spent trying to find a way to get the information out to my friends that I wanted a compass. At last, after considerable thinking, I sent the following card to a friend of mine with whom I had often worked out puzzles, and who I felt would be as likely to see through this as any one I could think of.

This was the message:

DEAR JIM:—I send you this card along with another to come later, which please pass on to Fred. In next parcel, send cheese, please.

Yours as ever

M. C. SIMMONS

In the address I slipped in the words—"Seaforth Wds." This I hoped the censor would take to mean—"Seaforth Woods"; and which I hoped my friend would read to mean—"See fourth words"; and would proceed to do so.

After I had sent this away, I began to fear it might miscarry and resolved to try another one. I wrote a letter to my brother Flint, at Tillsonburg, Ontario, in which I used these words, "I want you to look into this for me"; later on in the letter, when speaking of quite innocent matters which had nothing to do with "compasses," I said, "Look into this for me and if you cannot manage it alone, get Charley Bradburn to help you."

I took the envelope, which had a bluish tint inside and steamed it open, both the ends and bottom flap, and when it was laid open, I wrote in it in a very fine hand, these words: "I tried to escape, but was caught and my compass taken away from me. Send me another; put it in a cream cheese."

When the envelope was closed, this was almost impossible to see. I knew it was risky, for if I had been found out, I would have been "strafed" for this, just as hard as if I had tried to escape. However, I posted my letter and heard nothing more about it.

I had, through the kindness of friends, received a number of books, Mr. Brockington, of Koch Siding, British Columbia, and Miss Grey, of Wimbledon, England, having been very good to me in this way; and as many of the parcels of the other boys contained books, too, we decided to put our books together, catalogue them, and have a library. One of the older men became our librarian, and before we left Giessen I think we had a hundred volumes.

The people who sent these books will never know the pleasure they gave us! The games, too, which the Red Cross sent us were never idle, and made many a happy evening for us.

At night we had concerts, and many good plays and tableaux put on by the boys. There was a catchy French love song, "Marie," which was a great favorite with the boys. From this we began to call the Kilties "Marie," and there were several harmless fights which had this for a beginning. The Kilties had a hard time of it, and had to get another dress before they could be taken on a working party. The Germans did not consider the kilt a "decent dress" for a man.

The parcels were an endless source of delight, and I was especially fortunate in having friends who knew just what to send. Mrs. Palmer, of Plymouth, sent me bacon; Mrs. Goodrich, my sister, and Mrs. Goodrich, Sr., of Vancouver, sent fruit-cakes; Mrs. Hill, wife of the British reservist who gave me my first drill in British Columbia, sent oatmeal, and his sisters, Mrs. Adams and Mrs. Hamer, made candy. Lee Davison, of Trail, whose brother is now a prisoner in Germany, sent me tobacco, and so did Harold Andrews, of Trail, and Billy Newell, of Koch Siding.

The distribution of the mails was a time of thrills. One of the Sergeants called it out, while every one crowded eagerly around.

Poor Clarke, one of the brightest, merriest-hearted boys we had, seldom got a letter, but he was right on hand every time, and when there was no letter for him, would tear his hair dramatically and cry,—

"Gott strafe England."

Clarke had the good gift of making everybody laugh. I remember once seeing him patching his trousers with a Union Jack, and singing, "We'll never let the Old Flag fall!"

The German respect for the military caste was well shown in the punishment of a Russian officer who had offended them by something he had done or had not done. He was sent to our hut—as a punishment. He had a room to himself, a batman, the privilege of sending out to buy food, as much as he liked. His punishment consisted in having to live under the same roof and breathe the same air as common soldiers. He was a very good fellow, and told us many things about his country. Incidentally we found out that his wages as a Lieutenant in the Russian Army were one hundred and fifty dollars a year!

Bromley and I had not worked at all since coming out of Strafe-Barrack. Being ring-men gave us immunity from labor. They would not let us outside of the compound. Even if we volunteered for a parcel party, the guard would cry "Weg!"—which is to say, "Go back."

This made all our time leisure time, and I put in many hours making maps, being as careful as possible not to let the guards see me. I got the maps in a variety of ways. Some of them had been smuggled in in parcels, and some of the prisoners had brought them in when they came.

A Canadian soldier, who was a clever artist, and had a room to himself where he painted pictures for some of the Germans, gave me the best one, and from these I got to know quite a lot about the country. From my last experience I knew how necessary it was to have detailed knowledge of the country over which we must travel to reach the border.

My interest in maps caused the boys to suspect that I was determined to escape, and several broached the subject to me. However, I did not wish to form an alliance with any one but Bromley. We considered two was enough, and we were determined to go together.

One day, in the late fall, when the weather was getting cold, an American, evidently connected with the Embassy, came to see us, and asked us about our overcoats. The German officers in charge of the camp treated him with scant courtesy, and evidently resented his interference. But as a result of his visit every person who did not already have a Red Cross or khaki coat got a German coat.

Just before Christmas Day we got overcoats from the Red Cross, dark blue cloth, full length and well lined. They had previously sent each of

us a blanket.

The treatment of overcoats was to cut a piece right out of one sleeve, and insert a piece of yellowish-brown stuff, such as is shown in Bromley's photograph. We knew that coats were coming for us, and were particularly anxious to get them before they were disfigured with the rings which they would put on or with this band of cloth. If we could get the coats as they came from the Red Cross, they would look quite like civilian's coats, and be a great help to us when we made our next escape. Bromley and I had spent hard thinking on how we could save our coats.

Larkins, one of the boys who worked in the parcels office, watched for our overcoats, and when they came he slipped them into the stack which had been censored, and in that way we got them without having them interfered with. But even then we were confronted with a greater difficulty. The first time we wore them the guards would notice we had no rings, and that would lead to trouble. The piece of cloth on the arm was not so difficult to fix. Two of the boys whose coats were worn out gave us the pieces out of their coats, which we *sewed on*, instead of inserting. The rings had been put on in brown paint lately instead of red, and this gave Bromley an idea. We had a tin of cocoa, saved from our parcels, and with it we painted rich brown rings on our new coats. We were careful not to wear these coats, for we knew the cocoa rings were perishable, but we had our old overcoats to wear when we needed one. This saw us past the difficulty for a while.

On Christmas Day we had the privilege of boiling in the cook-house the puddings which came in our parcels, and we were given a Christmas card to send instead of the ordinary cards—that was the extent of the Christmas cheer provided for us.

Soon after Christmas there was a party of about four hundred picked out to be sent away from Giessen; the ring-men were included, and all those who had refused to work or given trouble. Bromley and I were pretty sure we should be included, and in anticipation of the journey touched up the cocoa rings on our coats. They were disposed to flake off. I also prepared for the projected move by concealing my maps.

I put several in the pasteboard of my cap and left no trace, thanks be to the needle and thread I had bought in the army canteen, and my big one I camouflaged as a box of cigarettes. A box of Players' Cigarettes had been sent to me, which I had not yet broken into. I carefully removed the seal, being careful to break it so that it could be put back again without detection. Then I cut my map into pieces corresponding to the size of a cigarette, and, emptying out the tobacco from a few, inserted the section of map instead, and put them carefully in with the label showing. I then closed the box and mended the band so that it looked as if it had not been broken. I felt fairly safe about this.

The Christmas Card which the Giessen Prison Authorities supplied to the Prisoners

The day came when we were to leave. Sometimes Bromley and I were on the list, sometimes we were not. We did not really know until our names were called.

Our cocoa rings were fresh and fine, and we walked out with innocent faces. I don't know why they suspected me, but the Company officer, with two soldiers, came over to me where I stood at the end of a double line. At the word from the officer, the soldiers tore off my pack, opened my coat, examined the rings on my tunic which were, fortunately, of the

durable red paint, guaranteed not to crock or run. I thought for sure they would search me, which I did not fear at all, for my maps I considered safe, but I did not want them fooling around me too much, for my cocoa rings would not stand any rough treatment. I wished then I had put sugar in the cocoa to make them stick better.

But after considerable argument, they left me. Just before the officer walked away, he shook a warning finger at me and said, "Fini—dead—fertig," which was his French, English, and German for the game idea: "If you don't behave yourself, you are a dead man!"

He directed the soldiers to keep a strict watch on us, and one of them volunteered the opinion that we should have rings in our noses!

CHAPTER XIII

CELLELAGER

The attention given to me by the prison-guards would have been disconcerting to a less modest man than I am. A soldier sat with me all the way on the train. I could not lose him! He stuck to me like a shadow. When I stood up, he stood up. When I changed my seat, he changed his. And he could understand English, too, so Bromley and I could not get a word in. He seemed to me—though I suppose that was simply imagination—to be looking at my rings, and I knew my pack's string was rubbing them. I hardly knew what to do. At last I hastily removed my pack, folded my overcoat so that the rings would not show, and hung it up, but as the train lurched and rolled, I was fearful of the effect this would have on the rings. I fancied I smelled dry cocoa, and seemed to see light brown dust falling on the seat. Why hadn't I thought to put sugar in it when I mixed it up?

When we reached the camp, which was called Cellelager, we found we had come to one which was not in the same class as Giessen. The sleeping-accommodations were insufficient for the crowd of men, and there was one bunk above the other. There was one canteen for the whole camp (instead of one in each hut as we had in Giessen), and here we could buy cakes, needles, thread, and buttons, also apples. The food was the same, except that we had soup in the morning instead of coffee, and it was the worst soup we had yet encountered. As an emetic, it was an honest, hard-working article which would bring results, but it lacked all the qualifications of a good soup. I tried it only once.

We were delighted to see no rings except what we had in our party. The Commandant of the camp did not take any notice of them, so we were able to remove all traces of them from our new overcoats, and when Steve Le Blanc, from Ottawa, gave me a nice navy-blue civilian coat, I gave my ringed tunic to one of the boys, who forthwith passed himself off for a ring-man, to avoid being sent out to work.

I found, however, he only enjoyed a brief exemption, for his record, all written down and sent along with him, showed his character had been blameless and exemplary, and the rings on his coat could not save him. It was "Raus in!" and "Raus out!" every day for him! In this manner did his good deeds find him out.

There was a football ground at this camp, and a theatre for the prisoners to use, but in the week we were there I saw only one game of football.

At the end of a week we were moved again, most of us. They did not, of course, tell us where we were going, but as they picked out all of us who had ever tried to escape—and all those who had refused to work—we were pretty sure it was not a "Reward of Merit" move.

We were awakened at a very early hour and were started off to the station, loaded with stuff. We had blankets, wash-basin, empty mattress, and wooden clogs. The boys did not take kindly to the wooden clogs, and under cover of the darkness—for it was long before daylight—they threw them away. The road to the station the next morning must have looked as if a royal wedding party had gone by.

This time we were glad to be able to see where we were going, although it was a dismal, barren country we travelled through, with many patches of heather moor and marsh. The settlements were scattered and the buildings poor. But even if we did not think much of the country, we liked the direction, for it was northwest, and was bringing us nearer Holland.

At Bremen, the second largest seaport in Germany, we stayed a couple of hours, but were not let out of our car, so saw nothing of the city.

At about four o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived in Oldenburg, and began our eight-mile march to Vehnemoor Camp, which is one of the Cellelager group and known as Cellelager VI. We were glad to dispose of our packs by loading them on a canal-boat, which we pulled along by ropes, and we arrived at the camp late in the evening.

This camp had but a few prisoners in it when we came, but there were nearly four hundred of us, and we filled it to overflowing. There were three tiers of bunks where the roof was high enough to admit of it, and

that first night we were there we slept on our empty mattresses. However, we still had our Red Cross blanket and the two German blankets apiece, and we managed to keep warm. There were two rooms with two peat stoves in each room.

The camp was built beside a peat bog, on ground from which the peat had been removed, and there was no paving of any kind around it. One step from the door brought us to the raw mud, and the dirt inside the camp was indescribable. There were no books or papers; the canteen sold nothing but matches, notepaper, and something that tasted remotely like buckwheat honey.

The first morning the Commandant addressed us, through an interpreter. He told us he had heard about us. There was dead silence at that; we were pretty sure we knew what he had heard. Then he told us that some of us had refused to work and some had tried to escape; he was grieved to hear these things! He hoped they would not happen again. It was foolish to act this way, and would meet with punishment (we knew that). If we would retain his friendship, we must do as we were told. There was no other way to retain his friendship. He repeated that. Some of us felt we could get along without his friendship better than without some other things. We noticed from the first that he didn't seem sure of himself.

Then came roll-call!

None of us like the thought of getting out to work in this horrible climate, cold, dark, and rainy, and the roll-call brought out the fact that we had very few able-bodied men. He had a list of our names, and we were called in groups into an office. Bromley and I gave our occupations as "farmers," for we hoped to be sent out to work on a farm and thus have an opportunity of getting away.

Most of the Canadians were "trappers," though I imagine many of them must have gained their experience from mouse-traps. Many of the Englishmen were "boxers" and "acrobats." There were "musicians," "cornetists," and "trombone artists," "piano-tuners," "orchestra leaders," "ventriloquists," "keepers in asylums," "corsetiers," "private secretaries," "masseurs," "agents," "clerks," "judges of the Supreme

Court," and a fine big fellow, a Canadian who looked as if he might have been able to dig a little, gave his occupation as a "lion-tamer."

The work which we were wanted to do was to turn over the sod on the peat bogs. It looked as if they were just trying to keep us busy, and every possible means was tried by us to avoid work.

The "lion-tamer" and three of his companions, fine, vigorous young chaps, stayed in bed for about a week, claiming to be sick. They got up for a while every afternoon—to rest. The doctor came three times a week to look us over, but in the intervening days another man, not a doctor, who was very good-natured, attended to us.

One day nine went on "sick parade"; that is, lined up before the medical examiner and were all exempted from work. The next day there were ninety of us numbered among the sick, and we had everything from galloping consumption to ingrowing toe-nails, and were prepared to give full particulars regarding the same. But they were not asked for, for armed guards came in suddenly and we were marched out to work at the point of the bayonet.

Steve Le Blanc, one of the party, who was a splendid actor, spent the morning painfully digging his own grave. He did it so well, and with such faltering movements and so many evidences of early decay, that he almost deceived our own fellows. He looked so drawn and pale that I was not sure but what he was really sick, until it was all over. When he had the grave dug down to the distance of a couple of feet, the guard stopped him and made him fill it in again, which he did, and erected a wooden cross to his own memory, and delivered a touching funeral oration eulogizing the departed.

We all got in early that day, but most of us decided we would not try the "sick parade" again.

This was in the month of January, which is the rainy season, and there was every excuse for the boys' not wanting to work—besides the big reason for not wanting to help the Germans.

One night, when some of our fellows came in from work, cold, wet, and tired, and were about to attack their supper of black bread and soup, the

mail came in, and one of the boys from Toronto got a letter from a young lady there who had been out on the Kingston Road to see an Internment Camp. He let me read the letter. She had gone out one beautiful July day, she said, and found the men having their evening meal under the beeches, and they did so enjoy their strawberries and ice-cream; and they had such lovely gardens, she said, and enough vegetables in them to provide for the winter. The conclusion of the letter is where the real sting came: "I am so glad, dear Bert, that you are safe in Germany out of the smoke and roar and dirt of the trenches. It has made me feel so satisfied about you, to see these prisoners. I was worrying a little about you before I saw them. But now I won't worry a bit. I am glad to see prisoners can be so happy. I will just hope you are as well cared for as they are.... Daddy and Mother were simply wild about Germany when they were there two years before the war. They say the German ways are so quaint and the children have such pretty manners, and I am afraid you will be awfully hard to please when you come back, for Daddy and Mother were crazy about German cooking."

I handed the letter back, and Bert and I looked at each other. He rolled his eyes around the crowded room, where five hundred men were herded together. Two smoking stoves, burning their miserable peat, made all the heat there was. The double row of berths lined the walls. Outside, the rain and sleet fell dismally. Bert had a bowl of prison soup before him, and a hunk of bread, black and heavy. He was hungry, wet, tired, and dirty, but all he said was, "Lord! What *do* they understand?"

Every day we devised new ways of avoiding going to work. "Nix arbide" (no work) was our motto. The Russians, however, never joined us in any of our plans, neither did they take any part in the fun. They were poor, melancholy fellows, docile and broken in spirit, and the guards were much harsher with them than with us, which was very unjust, and we resented it.

We noticed, too, that among our own fellows those who would work were made to work, while the "lion-tamer" and his husky followers lay

in bed unmolested. His latest excuse was that the doctor told him to lie in bed a month—for he had a floating kidney. Of course the doctor had not said anything of the kind, but he bluffed it out.

One morning when the guards were at their difficult task of making up a working party, they reported that they were twenty-five men short. Every one had been at roll-call the night before, the guards were on duty, no one could have got away. Wild excitement reigned. Nobody knew what had happened to them. After diligent searching they were found—rolled up in their mattresses.

They were all quickly hauled forth and sent out to work. The mattress trick had worked well until too many had done it, on this morning.

The morning was a troublesome time, and we all felt better when it had passed; that is, if we had eluded or bluffed the guard. Bromley and I had a pretty successful way of getting very busy when the digging party was being made up. We would scrub the table or grab a gadbroom and begin to sweep, and then the guards, thinking this work had been given to us, would leave us alone!

As time went on, the Commandant became more and more worried. I think he realized that he had a tough bunch to handle. If he had understood English, he could have heard lots of interesting things about his Kaiser and his country—particularly in the songs. The "lion-tamer" and his three followers generally led the singing, sitting up in their bunks and roaring out the words.

The singing usually broke out just after the guards had made an unsuccessful attempt to pull the bedclothes off some of the boys who had determined to stay in bed all day; and when the few docile ones had departed for the peat bog, the "shut-ins" grew joyful to the point of singing.

This was a hot favorite:

> "O Germany, O Germany;
> Your fate is sealed upon the sea.
> Come out, you swine, and face our fleet;
> We'll smash you into sausage-meat."

Another one had a distinctly Canadian flavor:

> "Kaiser Bill, Kaiser Bill, you'd better be in hell, be in hell!
> When Borden's beauties start to yell, start to yell,
> We'll hang you high on Potsdam's palace wall—
> You're a damned poor Kaiser after all."

They had another song telling how they hated to work for the Germans, the refrain of which was "Nix arbide" (I won't work).

The Commandant came in one day to inspect the huts. The "bed-ridden" ones were present in large numbers, sitting up enjoying life very well for "invalids." The Commandant was in a terrible humor, and cried out "Schweinstall"—which is to say "pig-pen"—at the sight of the mattresses. He didn't like anything, and raged at the way the fellows had left their beds. It might have seemed more reasonable, if he had raged at the way some of them had not left their beds! The men he was calling down were the gentle ones, those who were out working. But to the "lion-tamer" and his followers, who were lazily lying in their beds, laughing at him, he said never a word.

We knew enough about Germany and German methods to know this sort of a camp could not last. Something was going to happen; either we should all be moved, or there would be a new Commandant and a new set of guards sent down. This Commandant had only handled Russians, I think, and we were a new sort of Kriegsgefangenen (prisoners of war). Bromley and I wanted to make our get-away before there was a change, but we had no compass—my card had not been answered.

There was a man named Edwards, who was captured May 8th, a Princess Pat, who once at Giessen showed me his compass and suggested that we go together next time. He was at Vehnemoor, too, and Bromley and I, in talking it over, decided to ask Edwards and his friend to join us. Then the four of us got together and held many conferences. Edwards had a watch and a compass; I had maps, and Edwards bought another one. We talked over many plans, and to Edwards belongs the honor of suggesting the plan which we did try.

The difficulties in the way of escaping were many. The camp-ground was about three hundred feet long and seventy-five feet wide, surrounded by a barbed-wire fence about ten feet high. The fence had been built by putting strong, high posts in the ground and stretching the wire on with a wire-stretcher, so that it could not be sprung either up or down. The bottom wires were very close together. Inside of this was an ordinary barbed-wire fence with four or five strands, through which we were forbidden to go.

Outside the camp at the northwest corner was the hut where the guards lived when not on duty, and beside this hut was the kennel where the watch-dog was kept. He was a big dog, with a head like a husky! The camp was lighted by great arc-lights about sixty feet apart. German soldiers were stationed outside and all around the camp, and were always on the alert.

We planned to go on Friday night, but an unforeseen event made that impossible. A very dull German soldier had taken out about a dozen Frenchmen to work on the moor. Two of them had slipped away some time during the afternoon, and he did not notice he was short until he got in. Then great excitement prevailed, and German soldiers were sent out in pursuit. We watched them going out, dozens of them, and decided this was a poor time to go abroad. The moon was nearly full and the clouds which had filled the sky all day, were beginning to break, all of which was against us.

On Saturday, just as we feared, an extra guard of about twenty-five men was sent in from Oldenburg, and as the guard changed every two hours, and this was about 5.30 o'clock in the evening when they came, we reasoned that the double guard would go on at seven. After the guard had been doubled, there would be but little chance for us.

It was now or never!

CHAPTER XIV

OFF FOR HOLLAND!

The eastern fence was the one we had marked as our point of departure, and, Saturday being wash-day, there was nothing suspicious in the fact that we had hung our clothes there to dry. They had to be hung somewhere.

The boys were expecting parcels that night, for a canal-boat had come up from Oldenburg, and every one was out in the yard. Several of the boys were in our confidence, and we had asked them to stroll up and down leisurely between the hut and the east fence.

Just at the last minute the fourth man, Edwards's friend, came to me and said:—

"Sim, we will never make it. The guards will see us, and they'll shoot us —you know they'll just be glad to pot us to scare the others. It is madness to think we can get away from here with these lights shining."

I told him I thought we had a chance, but did not try to persuade him. Of course, we all knew we were taking a grave risk, but then, why shouldn't we? It was the only way out.

"Don't go, Sim," he said earnestly.

I told him we were going, but if he felt as he said, it would be better for him not to come, and already I could see that Edwards, who was in the group of strollers, had dropped on his stomach and was filing the lower wire of the inner fence, and when the wire broke he crawled through to the other fence.

I joined the party of strollers then, and walking toward the fence, could see what Edwards was doing.

With his left hand he held the bottom wire and filed it close to the post, which did much to deaden the sound, but when the wire broke, to my

strained ears the crack was loud enough to alarm the guard. But the sound of our voices must have covered it over, for all went well.

We walked back again leisurely, though to my excited imagination the sound of the filing deadened every other sound. We were back to the fence again when I heard the whang of the second wire, and at that I dropped to the ground and began to crawl after Edwards.

The light from the arc-lights caught the horseshoes on the heels of Edwards's boots, and they flashed to my eyes and seemed to me to shine like the headlights of an engine! It seemed to me as if the guards must see them.

On he went—on—and on I followed, and behind me came Bromley. I could hear him breathe above the beating of my own heart.

Crawling is a slow and terrible way to travel when every instinct cries out to run. But for about twenty yards we crawled like snakes—changing then to the easier method of creeping on hands and knees.

Then three shots rang out, and it seemed as if our hearts stopped beating—but we kept on going! Our first thought was, of course, that we had been discovered. But no other sound came to us, and, looking back to the *Lager*, we could still see the men moving carelessly about.

The bog was traversed by many ditches, and had a flat but uneven surface, with tufts of grass here and there. It gave us no shelter, but the winter night had fallen, and we were glad of the shelter afforded by the darkness. We knew the moon would be up before long, and we wanted to be as far away from the camp as possible before that happened.

I had gone out to work for a couple of days, to get a knowledge of the country, and I knew from my map that there was a railway at the edge of the bog, and as this would be the place where they would expect to catch us, we wanted to get past it as soon as possible. But the ditches, filled with water cold as ice, gave us great trouble. Generally we could jump them, but sometimes they were too wide and we had to scramble through the best we could.

About eight o'clock the moon came up, a great ball of silver in a clear blue sky, and turned the stagnant water of the bog to pools of silver. It was a beautiful night to look at, but a bad night for fugitives. Bromley, being a little heavier than either Edwards or I, broke through the crust of the bog several times, and had difficulty in getting out.

About midnight, with the heavy going, he began to show signs of exhaustion. His underwear, shrunken with cold-water washing, bound his limbs, and he told us he could not keep up. Then we carried his overcoat and told him we would stop to rest just as soon as we crossed the track, if we could find a bush, and he made brave efforts to keep up with us.

"You'll be all right, Tom, when we get out of the swamp," we told him.

About half-past two we reached the railroad, and finding a close thicket of spruce on the other side, we went in and tried to make Bromley comfortable. He fell fast asleep as soon as he got his head down, and it was evident to Edwards and me that our comrade was in poor shape for a long tramp. Still we hoped that a day's rest would revive him. He slept most of the day and seemed better before we started out.

The day was dry and fine, but, of course, we were wet from the hard going across the bog, and it was too cold to be comfortable when not moving.

We could hear the children playing, and the wagons passing on a road near by, and once we heard the whistle of a railway train—but no one came near the wood.

At nightfall we stole out and pushed off again. Bromley made a brave attempt to keep going, but the mud and heavy going soon told on him, and he begged us to go on and leave him.

"If you don't go on, boys," he said, "we'll all be taken. Leave me, and you two will have a chance. I can't make it, boys; I can only crawl along."

We came to a road at last and the going was easier. Bromley found he could get along more easily, and we were making pretty fair time when

we saw something dark ahead of us. I was of the opinion that we should go around it, but Bromley could not stand any more travelling across country, and we pushed on.

The dark object proved to be a house, and it was only one of many, for we found ourselves in a small town. Then we took the first road leading out of the town, and, walking as fast as we could, pushed quietly out for the country, Edwards ahead, I next, and Bromley behind.

I heard some one whistling and thought it was Bromley, and waited for him to come up to tell him to keep quiet, but when he came beside me, he whispered, "They are following us."

We went on.

Soon a voice behind us called, "Halt!"

"It's no use, Sim—they have us," Bromley whispered.

Ahead of us was a little bush, toward which we kept going. We did not run, because we thought that the people who were following us were not sure who we were, and therefore would not be likely to shoot. Bromley knew he could not stand a race for it in his condition, but, knowing him as I do, I believe he would have made the effort; but I think he saw that if he went back and surrendered, it would give us more time to get away.

"Go on, Sim," he whispered to me.

We had agreed that if anything happened to one of us, the others were to go on. We could not hope to help each other against such numbers.

When we got opposite the wood, we made a dash for it.

I think it was then that Bromley went back and gave himself up. I often wondered what he told them about the other men they had seen. Whatever he thought was best for our safety, I am sure of that, for Bromley was a loyal comrade and the best of chums.

We lay there for a while, wondering what to do. We were about in the middle of a very small grove, and knew it was a poor place to stay in, for it was a thin wood, and the daylight was not far distant.

Edwards, who was right beside me, whispered that he had just seen a soldier climb a tree and another one handing him a gun. This decided us to crawl to the edge of the wood again. But when we reached it, Edwards, who was ahead, whispered back to me that he saw three civilians right in front of us.

This began to look like a tight corner.

We determined to take a chance on the civilians' not being armed, and make a dash for it. We did, and "the civilians" turned out to be a group of slim evergreens. We saw a forest ahead, and made for it. The ground was sandy and poor, and the trees were scattered and small, and grew in clumps. The going was not hard, but the loss of Bromley had greatly depressed us.

Once we met a man—ran right into him—and probably scared him just as much as he did us. He gave us a greeting, to which we grunted a reply, a grunt being common to all languages.

We saw the headlight of a train about three o'clock in the morning, reminding us of the railroad to the south of us.

Coming to a thick spruce grove, we decided to take cover for the day. The morning was red and cloudy, with a chilly wind crackling the trees over our heads, but as the day wore on, the wind went down and the sun came out. It was a long day, though, and it seemed as if the night would never come. It was too cold to sleep comfortably, but we got a little sleep, some way.

When we started out at night, we soon came to a ditch too wide to jump, and as our feet were dry we did not want to wet our socks, so took them off and went through. January is a cold month for wading streams, and a thin crust of ice was hard on the feet. They felt pretty numb for a while, but when we had wiped them as dry as we could and got on our socks

and boots again, they were soon all right. But our care for our feet did not save them, for the muddy ground, full of bog-holes, which we next encountered, made us as wet and miserable as we could be.

One large town—it may have been Sögel—gave us considerable trouble getting around it.

The time of year made the going bad. There were no vegetables in the gardens or apples on the trees; no cows out at pasture. Even the leaves were gone from the trees, thus making shelter harder to find. The spruce trees and Scotch fir were our stronghold, and it was in spruce thickets we made our hiding-places by day.

The advantage of winter travel was the longer nights, and although it had been raining frequently, and the coldest, most disagreeable rains, the weather was dry during the time we were out. But the going was heavy and bad, and when the time came to rest, we were completely done out.

We had put ourselves on short rations because we had not been able to save much; we had no way of carrying it except in our pockets, and we had to be careful not to make them bulge. We had biscuits, chocolate, and cheese, but not being able to get even a raw turnip to supplement our stores, we had to save them all we could.

On January 25th, our third day out, the bush was so short we had to lie all day to remain hidden. We could not once stand up and stretch, and the day was interminably long. A bird's nest, deserted now, of course, and broken, hung in a stunted Scotch fir over my head, and as I lay looking at it I thought of the hard struggle birds have, too, to get along, and of how they have to be on the watch for enemies.

Life is a queer puzzle when a person has time to figure it out. We make things hard for each other. Here we were, Ted and I, lying all day inactive, not because we wanted to, but because we had to, to save our lives. Lying in a patch of scrub, stiff, cold, and hungry, when we might have been clearing it out and making of it a farm which would raise crops and help to feed the people! Hunger sharpens a man's mind and gives him a view of things that will never come when the stomach is full; and as we lay there under scrub, afraid even to speak to each other,

afraid to move, for a crackling twig might attract some dog who would bark and give the alarm, I took a short course in sociology.... The Catholics are right about having the people come fasting to mass, for that is the time to get spiritual truths over to them!

Hunger would solve all the capital and labor troubles in the world; that is, if the employers could be starved for a week—well, not a whole week—just about as long as we had—say, two biscuits a day for three days, with nothing better ahead. But hunger is just a word of two syllables to most people. They know it by sight, they can say it and write it, but they do not know it.

At these times the thought of liberty became a passion with us. Still, we never minimized the danger nor allowed ourselves to become too optimistic. We knew what was ahead of us if we were caught: the cells and the Strafe-Barrack, with incidentals.

On the fourth day we crossed an open patch of country, lightly wooded, and then came to a wide moor which offered us no protection whatever. Our only consolation was that nobody would be likely to visit such a place. There was not even a rabbit or a bird, and the silence was like the silence of death.

I knew from my map that we had to cross the river Ems, and I also knew that this would probably be the deciding factor in our escape. If we got over the Ems, we should get the rest of the way.

About two o'clock in the morning we reached the Ems. It is a big river in normal times, but it was now in flood, as we could see by the trees which stood in the water, as well as by the uprooted ones that floated down the stream. Swimming was out of the question.

We hunted along the bank that morning, but could find nothing, and as daylight was coming, we had to take cover.

All day we remained hidden in a clump of spruce and looked out upon the cruel sweep of water that divided us from liberty. The west wind came softly to us, bringing sounds from the Holland border, which we knew from our map was only four or five miles away! We heard the shunting of cars and the faint ringing of bells.

We discussed every plan. We would search the riverbank for a boat, though we were afraid the German thoroughness would see to it that there was no boat on this side of any of their border rivers. Still, they could not watch everything, and there might be one.

Failing that, we would make a raft to carry our clothes, and swim it. We had a knife, but no rope. I remember in "Swiss Family Robinson" how easily things came to hand when they were needed, and I actually looked in the dead grass at my feet to see if by any chance I might find a rope or wire—or something.

But there were no miracles or fairies—no fortunate happenings for us; and when night came on again we scoured the bank for a boat, but in vain. Never a boat could we see.

We then drew together some of the driftwood that lay on the shore, but when we tried it in the water it would hardly float its own weight. I felt the hopelessness of this plan, but Ted worked on like a beaver, and I tried to believe he had more hope than I had. But suddenly he looked at me, as he stopped, and I felt that our last plan was gone!

"It's no use," he said.

There was only the bridge left, and that, we knew, was very dangerous. Still, there was a chance. It might not be guarded—the guard might be gone for a few minutes. And all the time the murmurs came to us on the wind from the Holland border, and sounded friendly and welcoming.

We started out to find the bridge.

We were better dressed than Bromley and I had been, for we had on the dark blue overcoats, but not being able to speak the language was dead against us.

"Even if they do get us, Sim," Ted said, "we'll try it again—if we live through the punishment."

"All right," I said, "I'm game."

CHAPTER XV

CAUGHT AGAIN

The bridge was a fine iron one without lights. The road which led to it was not much travelled, and it looked as if it might carry us over—without accident. Anyway, it was our only chance.

We walked on to the bridge, taking care to make no noise, and striking a gait that was neither slow nor fast.

We were nine tenths of the way over the bridge, with hope springing in our tired hearts at each step. Away to the west, straight ahead of us, distant lights twinkled. We thought they were in Holland, and they beckoned to our tired hearts like the lights of home.

We were only about ten feet from the other side of the bridge, when... suddenly a light was flashed on us, a great dazzling light that seemed to scorch and wither us. It seemed to burn our prison-clothes into our very souls. I'm sure the rings on my knees showed through my overcoat!

Into the circle of light three German soldiers came, with rifles levelled.

They advanced upon us until their bayonets were touching us. And again we saw our dream of freedom fade!

The soldiers took us in charge and marched us to Lathen, a town near by, where part of the hotel was used as barracks. They showed us no hostility; it was just part of their day's work to gather in escaping prisoners.

There was a map on the wall, and when they asked us where we came from, we showed them Canada on the map of the North American Continent. They were decent-looking young fellows and asked us many questions about Canada.

Although it was about midnight there seemed to be people on the streets, which were brilliantly lighted. A Sergeant Major came in, with a

gendarme, who had two women with him. They were well-dressed looking women, but I kept wondering what they were doing out so late.

The Sergeant Major and the policeman lacked the friendliness of the privates, and the former began the conversation by saying, "England ist kaputt." The Sergeant Major repeated his statement, with greater emphasis, and I put more emphasis on my reply, and there we stuck! It did not seem that we could get any farther. It seemed a place to say, "Time will tell."

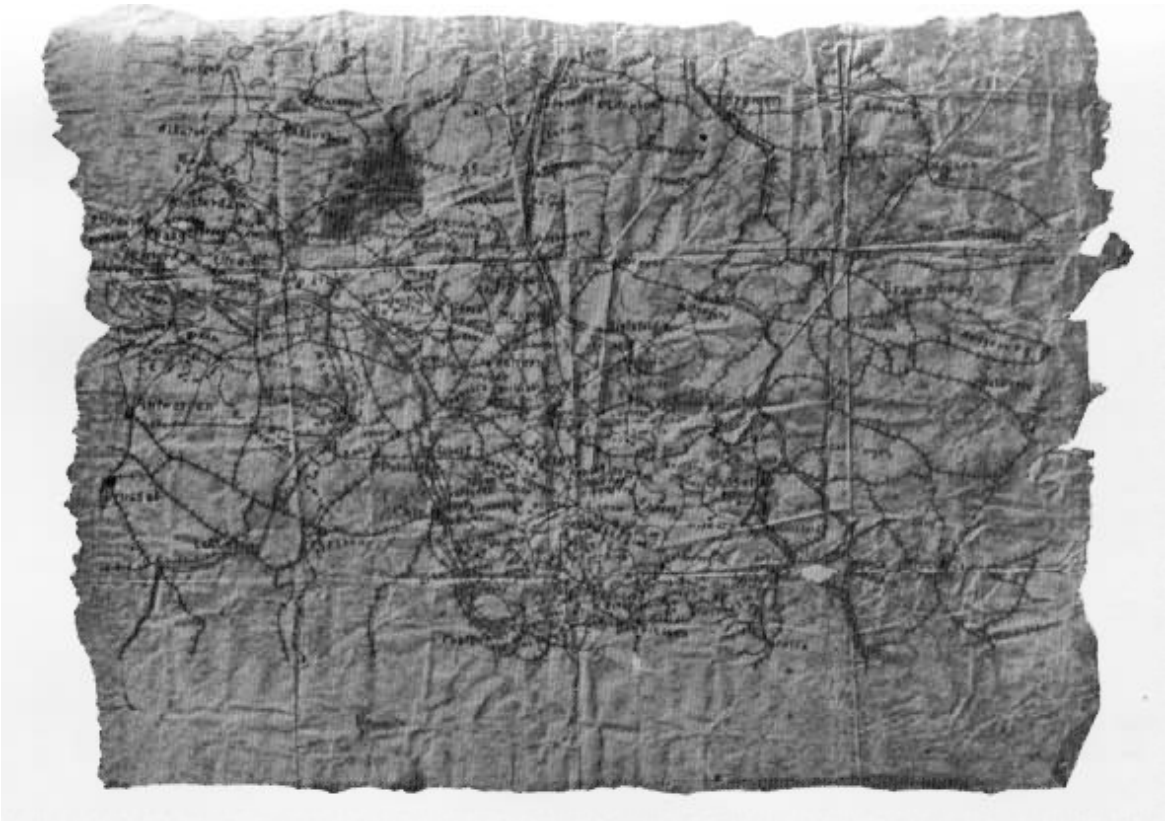
The gendarme was a coarse, beer-drinking type, and I kept wondering how two such fine-looking women came to be with him. The younger and handsomer one was not his wife, I knew—he was so attentive to her. The other one may have been, though she was evidently his superior in every way. Still, even in our own country very fine women are sometimes careless about whom they marry.

The Sergeant Major poured out a volume of questions in German, to which we replied, "Nix forstand."

Then the gendarme thought something was being overlooked, and he suggested that we be searched. I was afraid of that, and had taken the precaution of hiding the compass as well as I could, by putting it in the bottom of the pasteboard box that held our shaving-stick. The stick had been worn down, leaving room for the compass at the bottom of the box.

The soldier who searched us did not notice the compass, and handed the shaving-stick back to me, and I breathed easier. But the gendarme had probably done more searching than the soldier, and asked me for it. He immediately let the stick fall out, and found the compass, which he put in his pocket, with a wink at the others... and it was gone.

All our little articles were taken from us and put into two parcels, which we were allowed to carry, but not keep, and which were eventually returned to us, and, whether it was done by carelessness or not I do not know, but by some fortunate circumstance my maps were left in my pay-book case and put in the package, but I did not see them until after my punishment was over.



Map made from Paper which came in a Parcel, wrapped around a Fruit-Cake. Notice the stain caused by the cake. This is the map that was hidden in the cigarette-box

My notebook attracted the attention of the gendarme, and he took it from me. I had made entries each day, and these he read aloud, translating them into German as he went, much to the apparent entertainment of the two women, who laughed at him, with a forced gaiety which confirmed my diagnosis of their relationship. I think he was crediting me with entries I had never made, for the central figure seemed to be one "Rosie Fräulein," whom I did not have the pleasure of meeting.

We could see that although the privates were friendly, there was no semblance of friendliness in either the gendarme or the Sergeant Major. I think they would have gladly shot us on the spot—if they had dared. They were pronounced cases of anglophobia.

The gendarme at last broke out into English, cutting his words off with a snarl:

"What do you fellows want to get back for anyway? England is no good! England is a liar, and a thief."

When he said this, I could see Edwards's face grow white and his eyes glitter. He was breathing hard, like a man going up a steep hill, and his hands were opening and closing. He walked over to the gendarme and glared in his face,—"What do I want to get back for?" he repeated in a steady voice, stretched tight like a wire, "I'll tell you—this is not any ordinary war, where brave men fight each other. This is a war against women and children and old men. I have fought with the Boers in Africa, but I bore them no ill-will—they fought like men and fought with men. I've been through Belgium—I've seen what you have done. I have boys of my own—little fellows—just like the ones you cut the hands off—and I will tell you why I want to get back—I want to serve my country and my God—by killing Germans—they're not fit to live!"

The women drew back in alarm, though I do not think they understood the words. Instinctively I drew up beside Edwards, for I thought it was the end; but to our surprise the brutal face of the gendarme relaxed into a broad grin, and he turned to the women and Sergeant Major and made some sort of explanation. We did not know what was coming, and then a controversy took place between the two men as to what should be done with us. The gendarme wanted to take us, but the ladies protested, and at last we were led away by the two privates, carrying our two little packages of belongings.

We went into an adjoining room, where a coal fire burned in a small round heater, whose glow promised comfort and warmth. The privates very kindly brought us a drink of hot coffee and some bread, and pulled two mattresses beside the stove and told us to go to sleep. Then they went out and brought back blankets, and with friendly looks and smiles bade us good-night, incidentally taking our shoes with them.

"The Germans are a spotty race," said Ted, as we lay down. "Look at these two fellows—and then think of those two mugs that any decent man would want to kill at sight!"—He pointed to the room where we

had left the gendarme and the Sergeant Major. "Oh—wouldn't I enjoy letting a bit of daylight through that policeman's fat carcass!"

Next morning, when we awakened, our guards came again and brought us some more coffee and bread. It was a bright morning, of sunshine, with a frost which glistened on the pavement and the iron railing surrounding the building we were in.

The streets were full of people, and streamers of bunting festooned the buildings. Children were on the streets, carrying flags, and the place had a real holiday appearance.

"Suppose this is all in our honor, Sim," Ted said as he looked out of the window. "I wonder how they knew we were coming—we really did not intend to."

One of the guards, who had a kodak and was taking pictures of the celebration, asked us if he could take our pictures. So we went out to the front door, which was hung with flags, and had a picture taken.

"What are the flags up for?" we asked him.

"It is the birthday of the All-Highest," he replied proudly.

Ted said to me, so the guard could not hear, "Well, the old man has my sincere wishes—that it may be his last."

During the forenoon we were taken by rail to Meppen. The Sergeant Major came with us, but did not stay in the compartment with the guards and us. On the way the guard who had taken our photograph showed us the proof of it, and told us he would send us one, and had us write down our addresses. He must have been a photographer in civil life, for he had many splendid pictures with him, and entertained us by showing them to us. I remember one very pretty picture of his young daughter, a lovely girl of about fourteen years of age, standing under an apple-tree.

Before the Sergeant Major handed us over to the military authorities at Meppen, he told them what Edwards had said about wanting to go back to kill Germans, but he did not tell all that Edwards had said. However, they treated us politely and did not seem to bear us any ill-will.

In the civil jail at Meppen to which we were taken, and which is a fine building with bright halls and pleasant surroundings, we were put in clean and comfortable cells. There was a bed with mattress and blankets, which in the daytime was locked up against the wall, toilet accommodations, drinking-water, chair, table, wash-basin, and comb. It looked like luxury to us, and after a bowl of good soup I went to sleep.

I wakened the next morning much refreshed and in good spirits. The guard was polite and obliging, and when I said, "Guard, I like your place," his face broke into a friendly grin which warmed my heart. Ted had spoken truly when he said the Germans were a "spotty race." It is a spotty country, too, and one of the pleasant spots to us was the civil jail at Meppen.

Of course, to men who had been sleeping in beds and eating at tables and going in and out at their own pleasure, it would have been a jail; but to us, dirty, tired, hungry, red-eyed from loss of sleep, and worn with anxiety, it was not a jail—it was a haven of rest. And in the twenty-four hours that we spent there we made the most of it, for we well knew there were hard times coming!

CHAPTER XVI

THE INVISIBLE BROTHERHOOD

A special guard was sent from Vehnemoor to bring us back, and we had to leave our comfortable quarters at Meppen and go back with him.

The guard took a stout rope and tied us together, my right wrist to Edwards's left, and when we were securely roped up, he tried to enlighten us further by dancing around us, shouting and brandishing his gun, occasionally putting it against our heads and pretending he was about to draw the trigger. This was his way of explaining that he would shoot us if we didn't behave ourselves.

We tried to look back at him with easy indifference, and when he saw that he had not succeeded in frightening us, he soon ceased to try. However, from the wicked looks he gave us, we could see that he would be glad to shoot us—if he had a reasonable excuse.

At the station in Meppen, where he took us fully an hour before train time, as we stood in the waiting-room with the guard beside us, the people came and looked curiously at us. The groups grew larger and larger, until we were the centre of quite a circle. We did not enjoy the notoriety very much, but the guard enjoyed it immensely, for was he not the keeper of two hardened and desperate men?

We noticed that the majority of the women were dressed in black. Some of them were poor, sad, spiritless-looking creatures who would make any person sorry for them; and others I saw whose faces were as hard as the men's. The majority of them, however, seemed to be quite indifferent; they showed neither hostility nor friendliness to us.

We changed cars at Leer, where on the platform a drunken German soldier lurched against us, and, seeing us tied together, offered to lend us his knife to cut the cord, but the guard quickly frustrated his kind intention.

At Oldenburg we were herded through the crowded station and taken out on the road for Vehnemoor, the guard marching solemnly behind us. He knew we had no firearms, and we were tied together, but when Ted put his free hand in his pocket to find some chocolate, as we walked along, the guard screamed at him in fear. He seemed to be afraid we would in some way outwit him.

But he was quite safe from us; not that we were afraid of either him or his gun, for I think I could have swung suddenly around on him and got his gun away from him, while Edwards cut our cords with the knife which was in my little package. I think he knew that we could do this, and that is why he was so frightened.

But there was one big reason which caused us to walk quietly and peaceably forward to take our punishment, and that was the river Ems, with its cruel sweep of icy water and its guarded bridges. We knew it was impossible to cross it at this season of the year, so the guard was safe. We would not resist him, but already we were planning our next escape when the flood had subsided and the summer had come to warm the water.

He had a malicious spirit, this guard, and when we came to Vehnemoor and were put in our cells, he wanted our overcoats taken from us, although the cells were as cold as outside. The Sergeant of the guard objected to this, and said we were not being punished, but only held here, and therefore we should not be deprived of our coats. Several times that night, when we stamped up and down to keep from freezing, I thought of the guard and his desire that our coats should be taken from us, and I wondered what sort of training or education could produce as mean a spirit as that! Surely, I thought, he must have been cruelly treated, to be so hard of heart—or probably he knew that the way of promotion in the German army is to show no softness of spirit.

But the morning came at last, and we were taken before the Commandant, and wondered what he would have to say to us. We were pretty sure that we had not "retained his friendship."

He did not say much to us when we were ushered into his little office and stood before his desk. He spoke, as before, through an interpreter.

He looked thin and worried, and, as usual, the questions were put to us —"Why did we want to leave?" "What reason had we? Was it the food, or was it because we had to work?"

Friedrichsfeld Prison-Camp in Winter

We said it was not for either of these; we wanted to regain our freedom; we were free men, and did not want to be held in an enemy country; besides, we were needed!

We could see the Commandant had no interest in our patriotic emotions. He merely wanted to wash his hands of us, and when we said it was not on account of the poor food, or having to work, I think he breathed easier. Would we sign a paper—he asked us then—to show this? And we said we would. So the paper was produced and we signed it, after the interpreter had read and explained it to us.

In the cells the food was just the same as we had had before, in the regular prison-camp. They seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of that soup. We wondered if there was a flowing well of it somewhere in the bog. The food was no worse, but sometimes the guards forgot us. The whole camp seemed to be running at loose ends, and sometimes the guards did not come near us for half a day, but we were not so badly off as they thought, for we got in things from our friends.

On the first morning, when we were taken to the lavatory, we saw some of the boys. They were very sorry to know we had been caught, and told us Bromley had been sent to Oldenburg a few days before, for his punishment. They also told us that the night we escaped, no alarm had been given, although the guards may have noticed the hanging wires. Several of the boys had had the notion to go when they saw the wires down, but they were afraid of being caught. The general opinion was that the guards knew we had gone, but did not give the alarm until morning, because they had no desire to cross the bog at night.

Our method of getting stuff to the cell was simple. I wore my own overcoat to the lavatory, and hung it up inside. When I went to get it, I found another coat was hanging beside it, which I put on and wore back to the cell. In the pocket of the "other coat" I found things—bread, cheese, sardines, biscuits, and books. The next day I wore the other coat, and got my own, and found its pockets equally well supplied. It was a fellow called Iguellden, whose coat I had on alternate days. He watched for me, and timed his visit to the lavatory to suit me. Of course, the other boys helped him with the contributions. Edwards was equally well supplied. In the prison-camp the word "friend" has an active and positive quality in it which it sometimes lacks in normal times.

On the second night in the cell I suffered from the cold, for it was a very frosty night, and as the cells were not heated at all, they were quite as cold as outside.

I was stamping up and down, with my overcoat buttoned up to the neck and my hands in my pockets, trying to keep warm, when the new guard came on at seven o'clock. He shouted something at me, which I did not understand, but I kept on walking. Then he pounded on the wall with the butt of his rifle, crying, "Schlafen! schlafen!"

To which I replied, "Nix schlafen!" (I can't sleep!)

I then heard the key turn in the door, and I did not know what might be coming.

When he came in, he blew his breath in the frosty air, and asked, "Kalt?"

I did not think he needed to take my evidence—it certainly was "kalt."

Then he muttered something which I did not understand, and went out, returning about twenty minutes later with a blanket which he had taken from one of the empty beds in the *Revier*. I knew he was running a grave risk in doing this, for it is a serious offense for a guard to show kindness to a prisoner, and I thanked him warmly. He told me he would have to take it away again in the morning when he came on guard again, and I knew he did not want any of the other guards to see it. My word of thanks he cut short by saying, "Bitte! bitte! Ich thue es gerne" (I do it gladly); and his manner indicated that his only regret was that he could not do more.

I thought about him that night when I sat with the blanket wrapped around me, and I wondered about this German soldier. He evidently belonged to the same class as the first German soldier I had met after I was captured, who tried to bandage my shoulder when the shells were falling around us; to the same class as good old Sank at Giessen, who, though he could speak no English, made us feel his kindness in a hundred ways; to the same class as the German soldier who lifted me down from the train when on my way to Roulers. This man was one of them, and I began to be conscious of that invisible brotherhood which is stronger and more enduring than any tie of nationality, for it wipes out the differences of creed or race or geographical boundary, and supersedes them all, for it is a brotherhood of spirit, and bears no relation to these things.

To those who belong to it I am akin, no matter where they were born or what the color of their uniform!

Then I remembered how bitterly we resented the action of a British Sergeant Major at Giessen, who had been appointed by the German officer in charge to see after a working party of our boys. Working parties were not popular—we had no desire to help the enemy—and one little chap, the Highland bugler from Montreal, refused to go out. The German officer was disposed to look lightly on the boy's offense, saying he would come all right, but the British Sergeant Major insisted that the lad be punished—and he was.

I thought of these things that night in the cell, and as I slept, propped up in the corner, I dreamed of that glad day when the invisible brotherhood will bind together all the world, and men will no more go out to kill and wound and maim their fellow-men, but their strength will be measured against sin and ignorance, disease and poverty, and against these only will they fight, and not against each other.

When I awakened in the morning, stiff and cramped and shivering, my dream seemed dim and vague and far away—but it had not entirely faded.

That day the guard who brought me soup was a new one whom I had not seen before, and he told me he was one of the twenty-five new men who had been sent down the night we escaped. I was anxious to ask him many things, but I knew he dared not tell me. However, he came in and sat down beside me, and the soup that he brought was steaming hot, and he had taken it from the bottom of the pot, where there were actual traces of meat and plenty of vegetables. Instead of the usual bowlful, he had brought me a full quart, and from the recesses of his coat he produced half a loaf of white bread—"Swiss bread" we called it—and it was a great treat for me. I found out afterwards that Ted had received the other half. The guard told me to keep hidden what I did not eat then, so I knew he was breaking the rules in giving it to me.

He sat with his gun between his knees, muzzle upwards, and while I ate the soup he talked to me, asking me where I came from, and what I had been doing before the war.

When I told him I had been a carpenter, he said he was a bridge-builder of Trieste, and he said, "I wish I was back at it; it is more to my liking to build things than to destroy them."

I said I liked my old job better than this one, too, whereupon he broke out impatiently, "We're fools to fight each other. What spite have you and I at each other?"

I told him we had no quarrel with the German people, but we knew the military despotism of Germany had to be literally smashed to pieces before there could be any peace, and, naturally enough, the German

people had to suffer for having allowed such a tyrant to exist in their country. We were all suffering in the process, I said.

"It's money," he said, after a pause. "It is the money interests that work against human interests every time, and all the time. The big ones have their iron heel on our necks. They lash us with the whip of starvation. They have controlled our education, our preachers, government, and everything, and the reason they brought on the war is that they were afraid of us—we were getting too strong. In the last election we had nearly a majority, and the capitalists saw we were going to get the upper hand, so to set back the world, they brought on the war—to kill us off. At first we refused to fight—some of us—but they played up the hatred of England which they have bred in us; and they stampeded many of our people on the love of the Fatherland. Our ranks broke; our leaders were put in jail and some were shot; it's hard to go back on your country, too.

"But I don't believe in nationalities any more; nationalities are a curse, and as long as we have them, the ruling class will play us off, one against the other, to gain their own ends. There is only one race—the human race—and only two divisions of it; there are those who represent money rights and special privileges, and those who stand for human rights. The more you think of it, the more you will see the whole fabric of society resolving itself into these two classes. The whole military system is built on the sacrifice of human rights."

I looked at him in astonishment.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I am just a bridge-builder," he answered, "but I'm a follower of Liebknecht... We can't do much until the Prussian system is defeated. There are just a few of us here—the guard who got you the blanket is one of us. We do what we can for the prisoners; sometimes we are caught and strafed.... There is no place for kindness in our army," he added sadly.

"I must go now," he said; "I heard one of the guards say we were going to be moved on to another camp. I may not see you again, but I'll speak to a guard I know, who will try to get the good soup for you. The

Sergeant of the guard is all right, but some of them are devils; they are looking for promotion, and know the way to get it is to excel in cruelty. We shall not meet, but remember, we shall win! Germany's military power will be defeated. Russia's military power is crumbling now, the military power of the world is going down to defeat, but the people of all nations are going to win!"

We stood up and shook hands, and he went out, locking me in the cell as before.

I have thought long and often of the bridge-builder of Trieste and his vision of the victory which is coming to the world, and I, too, can see that it is coming, not by explosions and bombardments, with the shrieks of the wounded and the groans of the dying—not that way will it come—but when these have passed there shall be heard a still, small voice which will be the voice of God, and its words shall be—

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!"

CHAPTER XVII

THE CELLS AT OLDENBURG

It was on February 3d that we were taken from Vehnemoor to Oldenburg, and when we started out on the road along the canal, roped together as before, Ted and I knew we were going up against the real thing as far as punishment goes, for we should not have Iguellden and the rest of the boys to send us things. We came out of the Vehnemoor Camp with somewhat of a reluctant feeling, for we knew we were leaving kind friends behind us. Ted had received the same treatment that I had in the matter of the blankets and the good soup—thanks to the friendly guard.

It was in the early morning we started, and as Vehnemoor was almost straight west of Oldenburg, we had the sun in our faces all the way in. It was good to be out again—and good to look at something other than board walls.

Our road lay along the canal which connected Vehnemoor with Oldenburg. Peat sheds, where the peat was put to dry after it was cut, were scattered along the canal, and we passed several flat-bottomed canal-boats carrying the peat into Oldenburg. They were drawn by man-power, and naturally made slow progress.

The canal furnished a way of transportation for the small farmers living near it, too, whose little farms had been reclaimed from the bog, and their produce was brought into Oldenburg on the canal-boats. We could see better-looking buildings back farther, where the land was more fertile. At one place we saw a canal-boat with sails, but as the day was still it lay inactive, fastened to an iron post.

The settlement seemed to be comparatively recent, judging by the small apple-trees around the buildings, and it looked as if this section of the country had all been waste land until the canal had been put through.

When we arrived at Oldenburg, which we did early in the morning, we were marched through its narrow streets to the military prison. We

could see that the modern part of the city was very well built and up to date, with fine brick buildings, but the old part, which dates back to the eleventh century, was dirty and cheerless.

The prison to which we were taken was a military prison before the war, where the German soldiers were punished, and from the very first we could see that it was a striking example of German efficiency—in the way of punishment. Nothing was left to chance!

We were searched first, and it was done by removing all our clothing. Then, piece by piece, the guard looked them over. He ran his hand under the collar of our shirts; he turned our pockets inside out; he patted the lining of our coats; he turned out our stockings and shook them; he looked into our boots. As he finished with each article, it was thrown over to us and we dressed again. Our caps, overcoats, braces, belts, and knives were taken away from us. They were careful to see that we should not be tempted to commit suicide.

When I saw my cap go, I wondered if my maps, which I had sewed in the pasteboard, would escape this man's hawk eyes. I thought I had lost my other maps, and wondered how we should ever replace them. But it would be time enough to think of that—when we got out.

The guard's manner was typical of the management at Oldenburg. It had no element of humanity in it. It was a triumph of *Kultur*. The men might as well have been dummies, set by a clock and run by electricity.

There was a blackboard on the wall which told how many prisoners were in the institution and what they were getting. The strongest and worst punishment given is called "Streng Arrest," and the number who were getting it was three. The guard, while we were there, rubbed out the 3 and put in a 5.

Ted and I looked at each other.

"That's us," he said.

Our two little parcels were deposited in a locker downstairs, where other parcels of a like nature were bestowed, and we were conducted up

a broad stair and along a passage, and saw before us a long hall, lined with doors sheeted with steel.

The guard walked ahead; Ted and I followed. At last he unlocked a door, and we knew one of us had reached his abiding-place.

"I always did like a stateroom in the middle of the boat," Ted said, as the guard motioned to him to go in. That was the last word I heard for some time, for the guard said not a word to me. He came into the cell with me, and shut the iron door over the window, excluding every particle of light.

I just had time to see that the cell was a good-sized one—as cells go. In one corner there was a steam coil, but it was stone cold, and remained so all the time I was there. There was a shelf, on which stood a brown earthen pitcher for drinking-water—but nothing else. Our footsteps rang hollow on the cement floor, which had a damp feeling, like a cellar, although it was above the ground floor.

Without a word the guard went out, and the key turned in the lock with a click which had a sound of finality about it that left no room for argument.

Well, it has come, I thought to myself—the real hard German punishment... they had me at last. The other time we had outwitted them and gained many privileges of which they knew nothing, and Malvoisin had cheered me through the dark hours.

Here there was no Malvoisin, no reading-crack, no friends, nothing to save us.

They had us!

We had staked the little bit of freedom we had on the chance of getting full freedom. It was a long chance, but we had taken it—and lost!

I knew the object of all their punishment was to break our wills and make us docile, pliable, and week-kneed like the Russians we had seen in the camps—poor, spiritless fellows who could give no trouble.

Well—we would show them they could not break ours!

The eight-mile walk had tired me, and I lay down on the platform to try to sleep, but it was a long time before I could close my eyes: the darkness was so heavy, so choking and horrible. If there had been even one gleam of light it wouldn't have been so bad, but I couldn't even see a gleam under the door, and every time I tried to sleep the silence bothered me—if I could only hear one sound, to tell me some one was alive and stirring about! Still, I kept telling myself, I must put it in, some way—I must—I must—I must.

When I awakened, my first thought was that it was still night! Then I remembered it was all night for me, and the thought set me shivering. My hands were stiff and cold, and I missed my overcoat.

The waking-up was the worst time of all, for my teeth chattered and my knees trembled, so it was hard to stand. But when I had stamped up and down for a while, I felt better. It must be near morning, I thought. I should know when it was morning, because the guard would come and let me have ten minutes to sweep my cell, and then I should see Ted. I should perhaps get a chance to speak to him—even a wink would help!

It was a larger cell than the one at Giessen, and after sitting still for a while I got up and walked up and down. I could take four steps each way, by not stepping too far. My steps echoed on the cement floor, and I quite enjoyed seeing how much noise I could make, and wondered if anybody heard me. But when I stopped and leaned up against the wall, I could hear nothing. Then I sat down again and waited.

I remembered how, after the cells, the Strafe-Barrack did not seem too bad, for we could see people and talk occasionally; and after the Strafe-Barrack the prison-camp was comparative freedom, for we could get our parcels and read, and see the boys, so I thought I will pretend now

that my punishment was sitting still.... I can't move a muscle; the cut-throat guard that was over us in the Strafe-Barrack is standing over me with his bayonet against my chest—I must not move—or he'll drive it in.... I wish I could change my position—my neck is cramped....

Then I jumped up and walked up and down, and tried to tell myself it was good to be able to move! But I caught myself listening all the time—listening for the guard to come and open the door!

It seemed a whole day since we came, and still there was no sound at the door. The guard must have forgotten us, I thought.... The guards at Vehnemoor forgot to bring us soup sometimes.... These mechanical toys may have run down; the power may have gone off, and the whole works have shut down. Certainly the lights seem to have gone out. I laughed at that. Well, I would try to sleep again; that was the best way to get the time in.

I tried to keep myself thinking normally, but the thought would come pushing in upon me, like a ghostly face at a window, that the guard had forgotten us. I told myself over and over again that we had come in at noon, and this was the first day; it was bound to be long, I must wait! They—had—not—forgotten us.

I knew exactly what I should look like when they found me. My hair would be long, falling over my shoulders, and my beard—not red, but white—would be down to my waist,—for people live for weeks on water, and my nails would be so long they would turn back again... and my hands would be like claws, with the white bones showing through the skin, and the knuckles knotted and bruised. I remembered seeing a cat once that had been forgotten in a cellar... It had worn its claws off, scratching at the wall.

Then a chill seized me, and I began to shiver. That frightened me, so I made a bargain with myself—I must not think, I must walk. Thinking is what sends people crazy.

I got up then and began to pace up and down. Twelve feet each way was twenty-four feet. There were five thousand two hundred and eighty feet in a mile—so I would walk a mile before I stopped—I would walk a mile, and I would not think!

I started off on my mile walk, and held myself to it by force of will, one hundred and ten rounds. Once I lost the count and had to go back to where I did remember, and so it was really more than a mile. But when it was done, and I sat down, beyond a little healthy tingling in my legs I did not feel at all different. I was listening—listening just the same.

Ted and I had agreed that if we were side by side, we would pound on the wall as a sign. Four knocks would mean "I—am—all—right." I pounded the wall four times, and listened. There was no response.

Then, for a minute, the horror seized me—Ted was dead—every one was dead—I was the only one left!

If the authorities in our prisons could once feel the horror of the dark cell when the overwrought nerves bring in the distorted messages, and the whole body writhes in the grip of fear,—choking, unreasoning, panicky fear,—they would abolish it forever.

After an eternity, it seemed, the key sounded in the lock and the guard came in, letting in a burst of light which made me blink. He came over to the window, swung open the iron door, and the cell was light!

"What time is it?" I asked him in German.

He knew his business—this guard. He answered not a word. What has a prisoner to do with time—except "do" it. He handed me a broom—like a stable broom—and motioned me to sweep. It was done all too soon.

He then took me with him along the hall to the lavatory. At the far end of the hall and coming from the lavatory, another prisoner was being brought back with a guard behind him. His clothes hung loose on him, and he walked slowly. The light came from the end of the hall facing me, and I could not see very well.

When we drew near, a cry broke from him—

"Sim!" he cried. "Good God!... I thought you were in Holland."

It was Bromley!

Then the guard poked him in the back and sent him stumbling past me. I turned and called to him, but my guard pushed me on.

I put in as much time washing as I could, hoping that Ted would be brought out, but I did not see him that day or the next.

At last I had to go back, and as the guard shoved me in again to that infernal hole of blackness, he gave me a slice of bread. I had filled my pitcher at the tap.

This was my daily ration the first three days. I was hungry, but I was not sick, for I had considerable reserve to call upon, but when the fourth day came I was beginning to feel the weariness which is not exactly a pain, but is worse than any pain. I did not want to walk—it tired me, and my limbs ached as if I had *la grippe.* I soon learned to make my bread last as long as it would, by eating it in instalments, and it required some will-power to do this.

Thoughts of food came to torture me—when I slept, my dreams were all of eating. I was home again, and mother was frying doughnuts.... Then I was at the Harvest-Home Festival in the church, and downstairs in the basement there were long tables set. The cold turkey was heaped up on the plates, with potatoes and corn on the cob; there were rows of lemon pies, with chocolate cakes and strawberry tarts. I could hear the dishes

rattling and smell the coffee! I sat down before a plate of turkey, and was eating a leg, all brown and juicy—when I awakened.

There is a sense in which hunger sharpens a man's perceptions, and makes him see the truth in a clearer light—but starvation, the slow, gnawing starvation, when the reserve is gone, and every organ, every muscle, every nerve cries out for food—it is of the devil. The starving man is a brute, with no more moral sense than the gutter cat. His mind follows the same track—he wants food...

Why do our authorities think they can reform a man by throwing him into a dark cell and starving him?

There was a hole in the door, wide on the inside and just big enough on the outside for an eye, where the guards could spy on us. We could not get a gleam of light through it, though, for it was covered with a button on the outside.

On the fourth day I had light in my cell, and it was aired. Also, I got soup that day, and more bread, and I felt better. I saw Ted for a few seconds. He was very pale, but bearing it well. Though the sunburn was still on his face, the pallor below made it ghastly; but he walked as straight as ever.

I climbed up to the window, by standing on the platform, and could just see over. Down below in the courtyard soldiers were gathering for roll-call, and once I saw recruits getting their issue of uniforms.... Sometimes the courtyard was empty, but I kept on watching until the soldiers came. At least they were something—and alive! During the light day, probably as a result of the additional food, I slept nearly all day.

When I awakened, the cell was getting dark. I have heard people say the sunset is a lonely time, when fears come out, and apprehensions creep over them... and all their troubles come trooping home. I wonder what they would think of a sunset which ushered in eighty-four hours of

darkness!... I watched the light fading on the wall, a flickering, sickly glow that paled and faded and died, and left my eyes, weakened now by the long darkness, quite misty and dim.

And then the night, the long night came down, without mercy.

On one of my light days the guard forgot to bring my soup. He brought the coffee in the morning, and went out again at once. I thought he had gone for the bread, but when he did not come, I drank the coffee—which was hot and comforting. He did not come near me all day. It may have been the expectation of food, together with the hot coffee, which stimulated my stomach, for that day I experienced what starving men dread most of all—the hunger-pain. It is like a famished rat that gnaws and tears. I writhed on the floor and cried aloud in my agony, while the cold sweat dripped from my face and hands. I do not remember what I said... I do not want to remember...

That night when I saw the light growing dim in the cell, and the long black night setting in, I began to think that there was a grave possibility that this sentence might finish me. I might die under it! And my people would never know—"Died—Prisoner of War No. 23445, Pte. M. C. Simmons"—that is all they would see in the casualty list, and it would not cause a ripple of excitement here. The guard would go back for another one, and a stretcher... I shouldn't be much of a carry, either!

Then I stood up and shook my fist at the door, including the whole German nation! I was not going to die!

Having settled the question, I lay down and slept.

When I awakened, I knew I had slept a long time. My tongue was parched and dry, and my throat felt horribly, but my pain was gone. I wasn't hungry now—I was just tired.

Then I roused myself. "This is starvation," I whispered to myself; "this is the way men die—and that's what—I am not going to do!"

The sound of my own voice gave me courage. I then compelled my muscles to do their work, and stood up and walked up and down, though I noticed the wall got in my road sometimes. I had a long way to go yet, and I knew it depended now on my will-power.

My beard was long and my hair tangled and unkempt. I should have liked a shave and a hair-cut, but this is part of the punishment and has a depressing effect on the prisoner. It all helps to break a man down.

I kept track of the days by marking on the wall each day with my finger-nail, and so I knew when the two weeks were drawing to a close. The expectation of getting out began to cheer me—and the last night I was not able to sleep much, for I thought when the key turned next time I should be free! I wondered if we could by any chance hear what had happened on the battle-front. Right away I began to feel that I was part of the world again—and a sort of exultation came to me...

They—had—not—broken me!

CHAPTER XVIII

PARNEWINKEL CAMP

The key turned at last!

Entering, the guard, with face as impassive as ever, motioned to me to sweep out. I wondered if I could have mistaken the number of days, or if... we were going to get longer than the two weeks.

He did not enlighten me! I was taken out to wash, and filled my brown pitcher at the tap—just as usual. Then came the moment of tense anxiety.... Would he lock me in?

He gave me the usual allowance of bread, which I put in my pocket, as a man who was going on a journey and wants to be on his way, without waiting to eat.

Then he motioned to me to come out, and I knew we were free! Ted was at the door of his cell, and we followed the guard downstairs without speaking.

In the room below our things were given back to us. I dared not examine my cap to see if my maps had been touched, but I could not keep from turning it around as if to be sure it was mine. Certainly it looked all right. Our two little parcels, still unopened, were returned to us, and the guard from Vehnemoor who had come for us had brought one of the prisoners with him to carry our stuff that had been left there, blankets, wash-basin, clogs, etc.

Map which Private Simmons got from the Canadian Artist at Giessen, and which was sewed inside the Pasteboard of his Cap. His successful journey from Selsingen to Holland is indicated by the dotted line ..... The unsuccessful attempt is shown ---------- from Oldenburg.

From the prisoner we got the news of the camp.

"How are the folks at home?" we asked him.

"Ninety of the worst ones—since you two fellows and Bromley left—were taken to another camp, and when they were moving them

McKinnon and another fellow beat it—but we're afraid they were caught."

"Why?" we asked him.

"They catch them all; nobody gets out of Germany alive."

"You talk like a guard!" Ted said.

"Well," said the boy (I am sorry I forget his name), "look here. Who do you know that has got away? You didn't; Bromley didn't; the two Frenchmen who went the night before you went didn't. Do you hear of any who did?"

"Keep your ear to the ground and you will!" said Ted.

"They'll shoot you the next time," he said earnestly. "If I were you, I wouldn't try it."

Then the guard came, and we could say no more.

Again we were taken to the station and put on the train. Our hands were not tied this time; we were just ordinary prisoners now—we had done ours. Besides, I suppose they knew we shouldn't run far—that had been taken out of us by the "cells."

But our good spirits came back when the train started. We went east towards Rotenburg, through the same sort of low, marshy country we had travelled before, with scrubby trees and plenty of heather moor.

We passed through Bremen again, where we got a glimpse of white sails, and then on to Rotenburg, where we changed cars and had to wait for two hours.

Of course we were hungry—the Oldenburg prison had not sent us out well fed to meet the world, and the one slice of bread had gone. But we had prison-stamps, and our guard took us to the lunch-counter at Rotenburg, where we got a cup of real coffee, some bread, and an orange. The guard paid for what we got with his own money, accepting our stamps in payment. Our stamps were good only at Vehnemoor Camp, having the name "Vehnemoor" stamped on them.

I suppose we were two tough-looking characters. The people seemed to think so, for they looked at us with startled faces, and a little girl who was crossing the platform ran back in alarm to her mother when she saw us coming.

We arrived at Dienstedt after nightfall, and walked out a mile along a rough road to the camp, which was one of the Cellelager group—Cellelager I.

We saw that it consisted of two huts, and when we entered the hut to which we were taken, we saw nothing but Russians, pale-faced, dark-eyed, bearded Russians. They were sitting around, hardly speaking to each other, some mending their clothes, some reading, some staring idly ahead of them. We were beginning to be afraid they had sent us to a camp where there was no one but Russians, until we saw some British, at the other end.

"By Jove, I'll bet you're hungry," a big fellow said, reaching up into his bunk and bringing out a pasteboard parcel. "Here you are, matey; there's a bit of cheese and biscuits. I've a bit of water heatin', too; we'll get you something to drink. Get something into you; we ain't bad done for 'ere with our parcels comin' reglar."

The other men brought out boxes, too,—currant-loaf, sardines, fruit-cake, and chocolate. There were three coal-stoves in the room, and on one of these a pan of water was steaming. They had condensed milk and cocoa, and made us up mugs of it, and I never, anywhere, tasted anything so good.

There were two tiers of bunks in the room, but around the wall there was an open space where there were some little tables. Two of the Englishmen, who were playing cards, put them away and offered us their table.

"Here, boys, be comfortable; sit right down here and let us see you eat."

We let them see us! We ate like wolf-hounds. We ate, not until we were satisfied, but until we were ashamed! And still the invitations to eat were heard on every side. We were welcome to the last crumb they had!

When at last we stopped, they began to tell us about the camp. It seemed that the distinguishing feature was *lice!* It had never been fumigated, and the condition was indescribable. "We're bad enough," one of the Englishmen said, "but the Russians are in holes."

Then they told us what they had done to attract the attention of the authorities. The branch camps are never inspected or visited, as are the main camps such as Cellelager itself and Giessen, and so conditions in the out-of-the-way camps have been allowed to sink far below the level of these.

"We each wrote a card to some one in England, telling them about the lice. We would have stretched it—if we could—but we couldn't. We drew pictures, and told what these lice could do; especially we told about the Russians, and how bad they were. There are twenty-one of us, and there went out twenty-one cards all dealing with the same subject. The censor began to feel crawly, I'll bet, before he got far into reading them, and he would not let one of those cards out of Germany. It wouldn't have sounded very good to the neutral countries. So along came one of the head officers. He came in swaggering, but, by George, he went out scratching! And he certainly got something moving. We're all going down to Cellelager to-morrow to be fumigated; and while we're out, there's going to be a real old-fashioned house-cleaning! You're just in time, boys. Have you got any?"

"We did not have any," we said, "when we came."

"Well, you'll get them here, just sitting around. They're all over the floor and crawl up the leg of your chair; they crawl up the wall and across the ceiling and drop down on your head and down the back of your collar; they're in the walls and in the beds now. But their days are numbered, for we are all going up to Cellelager to-morrow to be fumigated. They're running a special train, and taking us all."

That night Ted and I slept on two benches in the middle of the room, but we found that what the boys said was true. They had crawled up on us, or else had fallen from the ceiling, or both. We had them!

But the next day we made the trip to Cellelager by special train—"The Louse Train" it was called.

The fumigator was the same as at Giessen, and it did its work well. While the clothes were baking, we stood in a well-heated room to wait for them. The British and French, having received parcels, were in good condition, but the Russians, who had to depend entirely on the prison-fare, were a pitiful sight. They looked, when undressed, like the India famine victims, with their washboard ribs and protruding stomachs, dull eyes and parched skin. The sores caused by the lice were deep and raw, and that these conditions, together with the bad water and bad food, had had fatal results, could be seen in the Russian cemetery at Cellelager I, where the white Russian crosses stand, row on row. The treatment of Russian prisoners will be a hard thing for Germany to explain to the nations when the war is over.

Parnewinkel was the name of the village near Cellelager I, and this name was printed on the prison-stamps which we used. The camp was built on a better place than the last one, and it was well drained, but the water was bad and unfit to drink unless boiled.

As the spring came on, many of the Russians went out to work with the farmers, and working parties, mostly made up of Russians, were sent out each day. Their work was to dig ditches through the marshes, to reclaim the land. To these working parties soup was sent out in the middle of the day, and I, wishing to gain a knowledge of the country, volunteered for "Suppentragen."

A large pot, constructed to hold the heat by having a smaller one inside which held the soup, was carried by two of us, with a stick through the handle, to the place where the Russians were working, and while they were attending to the soup, we looked around and learned what we could of the country. I saw a method of smoking meat which was new to me, at a farmhouse near where the Russians were making a road. Edwards and I, with some others, had carried out the soup. The Russians usually ate their soup in the cow-stable part of the house, but the British and Canadians went right into the kitchen. In this house everything was under one roof—that is, cows, chickens, kitchen, and living-room—and from the roof of the kitchen the hams were hung. The kitchen stove had two or three lengths of pipe, just enough to start the smoke in the right direction, but not enough to lead it out of the house. Up among the beams it wound and curled and twisted, wrapping the

hams round and round, and then found its way out in the best way it could. Of course some of it wandered down to the kitchen where the women worked, and I suppose it bothered them, but women are the suffering sex in Germany; a little smoke in their eyes is not here or there.

The houses we saw had thatched roofs, with plastered walls, and I think in every case the cow-stable was attached. Dairying was the chief industry; that and the raising of pigs, for the land is poor and marshy. Still, if the war lasts long enough, the bad lands of Germany will be largely reclaimed by the labor of Russian prisoners. It's cheap and plentiful. There were ninety thousand of them bagged in one battle in the early days of the war, at the Mazurian Lakes! The Russians are for the most part simple, honest fellows, very sad and plaintive, and deserving of better treatment than they have had.

When the Russians had gone out to work, leaving only the sick ones, and the English and French, sometimes there were not enough well prisoners for "Suppentragen," for the British were clever in the matter of feigning sickness. The *Revier* was in charge of a doctor and a medical Sergeant, who gave exemption from work very easily. Then there were ways of getting sick which were confusing to doctors.

Some one found out how to raise a swelling, and there was quite an epidemic of swollen wrists and ankles. A little lump of earth in a handkerchief, pounded gently on the place, for twenty minutes or so, will bring the desired result. Soap-pills will raise the temperature. Tobacco, eaten, will derange the heart. These are well-known methods of achieving sick-leave.

I had a way all my own. I had a loose toe-nail, quite ready to come off, but I noticed it in time, and took great care not to let it come off. Then I went to the doctor to have it removed. On that I got exemption till the nail grew.

One day at Parnewinkel, Edwards and I were called into the Commandant's office, whither we went with many misgivings—we did not know how much he knew of us and our plans.

But the honest man only wanted to pay us. Edwards had worked quite a bit at Vehnemoor, but I couldn't remember that I had worked at all. However, he insisted that I had one and a half days to my credit, and paid me twenty-seven pfennigs, or six and three quarter cents! I remembered then that I had volunteered for work on the bog, for the purpose of seeing what the country was like around the camp. I signed a receipt for the amount he gave me, and the transaction was entered in a book, and the receipt went back to the head camp.

"Look at that," said Ted; "they starve us, but if we work they will pay us, even taking considerable pains to thrust our wages upon us. Of a truth they are a 'spotty' people."

However, the reason for paying us for our work was not so much their desire to give the laborer his hire as that the receipts might be shown to visitors, and appear in their records.

The Russians had a crucifix at the end of the hut which they occupied, and a picture of the Virgin and the Holy Child before which they bowed and crossed themselves in their evening devotions. Not all of them took part. There were some unbelieving brothers who sat morosely back, and took no notice, wrapped in their own sad thoughts. I wondered what they thought of it all! The others humbly knelt and prayed and cried out their sorrows before the crucifix. Their hymns were weird and plaintive, yet full of a heroic hope that God had not forgotten.

One of them told me that God bottles up the tears of his saints, hears their cry, and in His own good time will deliver all who trust in Him. That deliverance has already come to many of them the white-crossed graves, beyond the marsh, can prove. But surely, somewhere an account is being kept of their sorrows and their wrongs, and some day will come

the reckoning! Germany deserves the contempt of all nations, if it were for nothing else than her treatment of the Russian prisoners.

When my toe-nail began to grow on, I got permanent exemption from work because of my shoulder, and was given the light task of keeping clear the ditches that ran close beside the huts.

I often volunteered on parcel parties, for I liked the mile and a half walk down the road through the village of Parnewinkel to Selsingen, where there was a railway station and post-office. Once in a while I saw German women sending parcels to soldiers at the front.

The road lay through low-lying land, with scrubby trees. There was little to see, but it was a pleasure to get out of the camp with its depressing atmosphere. In Parnewinkel there was an implement dealer who sold "Deering" machinery, mowers and rakes, and yet I never saw either a mower or a rake working. I saw women cutting hay with scythes, and remember well, on one trip to the post-office, I saw an old woman, bare-legged, with wooden clogs, who should have been sitting in a rocking-chair, swinging her scythe through some hay, and she was doing it well, too. The scarcity of horses probably accounted for the mowers and rakes not being used, cows being somewhat too slow in their gait to give good results. Although Hanover is noted for its horses, the needs of the army seem to have depleted the country, and I saw very few. Every one rides a bicycle. I think I saw less than a dozen automobiles.

Having been exempted from work, I was around the camp all day, and one day found a four-legged affair with a ring on the top big enough to hold a wash-basin. In this I saw a possibility of making a stove. Below, I put a piece of tin—part of a parcel-box—to hold the fire, with a couple of bricks under it to save the floor, and then, using the wooden parcel-boxes for fuel, I was ready to look about for ingredients to make "mulligan."

There is nothing narrow or binding about the word "mulligan"; mulligan can be made of anything. It all depended on what we had! On this stove I made some very acceptable mulligan out of young turnip-tops (they had been brought to the camp when very small seedlings, from a farmer's field where one of our boys had been working, and transplanted in the prison-yard,—I only used the outside leaves, and let them go on growing), potatoes (stolen from the guards' garden), oxo cubes (sent in a parcel), oyster biscuits (also sent in a parcel), salt and pepper, and water. The turnip-tops I put in the bottom of the dish, then laid on the potatoes, covering with water and adding salt. I then covered this with another wash-basin, and started my fire. We were not allowed to have fires, and this gave the mulligan all the charm of the forbidden.

When it was cooked, I added the oxo cubes and the oyster biscuit, and mashed all together with part of the lid of a box, and the mulligan was ready. The boys were not critical, and I believe I could get from any one of them a recommendation for a cook's position. In the winter we had had no trouble about a fire, for the stoves were going, and we made our mulligan and boiled water for tea on them.

Our guards were ordinary soldiers—sometimes those who had been wounded or were sick and were now convalescent—and we had all sorts. Usually the N.C.O.'s were the more severe. The privates did not bother much about us: they had troubles enough of their own.

At the school garden, where the Commandant lived, I went to work one day, and made the acquaintance of his little son, a blue-eyed cherub of four or five years, who addressed me as "Englisches Schwein," which was, I suppose, the way he had heard his father speak of us. He did it quite without malice, though, and no doubt thought that was our proper name. He must have thought the "Schwein" family rather a large one!

It was about May, I think, that a letter came from my brother Flint, telling me he was sending me some of the "cream cheese I was so fond of"—and I knew my compass was on the way.

In about three weeks the parcel came, and I was careful to open the cheese when alone. The lead foil had every appearance of being undisturbed, but in the middle of it I found the compass!

After that we talked over our plans for escape. Edwards and I were the only Canadians in the camp, and we were determined to make a break as soon as the nights got longer. In the early summer, when the daylight lasts so long, we knew we should have no chance, for there were only four or five hours of darkness, but in August we hoped to "start for home."

CHAPTER XIX

THE BLACKEST CHAPTER OF ALL

When the days were at their longest, some of the Russians who had been working for the farmers came into camp, refusing to go back because the farmers made them work such long hours. There is daylight-saving in Germany, which made the rising one hour earlier, and the other end of the day was always the "dark." This made about a seventeen-hour day, and the Russians rebelled against it. The farmers paid so much a day (about twenty-five cents) and then got all the work out of the prisoners they could; and some of them were worked unmercifully hard, and badly treated.

Each night, a few Russians, footsore, weary, and heavy-eyed from lack of sleep, trailed into camp with sullen faces, and we were afraid there was going to be trouble.

On the night of July 3d, three tired Russians came into camp from the farms they had been working on after we had had our supper. The N.C.O. was waiting for them. The trouble had evidently been reported to Headquarters, and the orders had come back. The Commandant was there, to see that the orders were carried out.

In a few minutes the N.C.O. started the Russians to run up and down the space in front of the huts. We watched the performance in amazement. The men ran, with dragging footsteps, tired with their long tramp and their long day's work, but when their speed slackened, the N.C.O. threatened them with his bayonet.

For an hour they ran with never a minute's breathing-spell, sweating, puffing, lurching in their gait, and still the merciless order was "Marsch!" "Marsch!" and the three men went struggling on.

When the darkness came, they were allowed to stop, but they were so exhausted they had to be helped to bed by their friends.

We did not realize that we had been witnessing the first act in the most brutal punishment that a human mind could devise, and, thinking that the trouble was over, we went to sleep, indignant at what we had seen.

In the morning, before any of us were awake, and about a quarter of an hour before the time to get up, a commotion started in our hut. German soldiers, dozens of them, came in, shouting to everybody to get up, and dragging the Russians out of bed. I was sleeping in an upper berth, but the first shout awakened me, and when I looked down I could see the soldiers flourishing their bayonets and threatening everybody. The Russians were scurrying out like scared rabbits, but the British, not so easily intimidated, were asking, "What's the row?"

One of the British, Walter Hurcum, was struck by a bayonet in the face, cutting a deep gash across his cheek and the lower part of his ear. Tom Morgan dodged a bayonet thrust by jumping behind the stove, and escaped without injury.

When I looked down, I caught the eyes of one of our guards, a decent old chap, of much the same type as Sank, and his eyes were full of misery and humiliation, but he was powerless to prevent the outbreak of frightfulness.

I dressed myself in my berth—the space below was too full already, and I thought I could face it better with my clothes on. When I got down, the hut was nearly empty, but a Gordon Highlander who went out of the door a few feet ahead of me was slashed at by one of the N.C.O.'s and jumped out of the way just in time.

All this was preliminary to roll-call, when we were all lined up to answer to our names. That morning the soup had lost what small resemblance it had had to soup—it had no more nourishment in it than dishwater. We began then to see that they were going to starve every one into a desire to work.

We had not been taking soup in the morning, for it was, even at its best, a horrible dish to begin the day with. We had made tea or coffee of our own, and eaten something from our parcels. But this morning we were lined up with the Russians and given soup—whether we wanted it or not.

After the soup, the working parties were despatched, and then the three unhappy Russians were started on their endless journey again, racing up and down, up and down, with an N.C.O. standing in the middle to keep them going. They looked pale and worn from their hard experience of the night before, but no Bengal tiger ever had less mercy than the N.C.O., who kept them running.

The distance across the end of the yard was about seventy-five feet, and up and down the Russians ran. Their pace was a fast trot, but before long they were showing signs of great fatigue. They looked pitifully at us as they passed us, wondering what it was all about, and so did we. We expected every minute it would be over; surely they had been punished enough. But the cruel race went on.

In an hour they were begging for mercy, whimpering pitifully, as they gasped out the only German word they knew—"Kamerad—Kamerad"—to the N.C.O., who drove them on. They begged and prayed in their own language; a thrust of the bayonet was all the answer they got.

Their heads rolled, their tongues protruded, their lips frothed, their eyes were red and scalded—and one fell prostrate at the feet of the N.C.O., who, stooping over, rolled back his eyelid to see if he were really unconscious or was feigning it. His examination proved the latter to be the case, and I saw the Commandant motion to him to kick the Russian to his feet. This he did with right good will, and the weary race went on.

But the Russian's race was nearly ended, for in another half-dozen rounds he fell, shuddering and moaning, to the ground—and no kick or bayonet thrust could rouse him...

Another one rolled over and over in a fit, purple in the face, and twitching horribly. He rolled over and over until he fell into the drain, and lay there, unattended.

The last one, a very wiry fellow, kept going long after the other two, his strength a curse to him now, for it prolonged his agony, but he fell out at last, and escaped their cruelty, at least for the time, through the black door of unconsciousness.

Then they were gathered up by some of the prisoners, and carried into the *Revier*.

Just as the three unconscious ones were carried away, three other Russians, not knowing what was in store for them, came in. We did not see them until they walked in at the gate. They also had been on farms, and were now refusing to work longer. They came into the hut, where their frightened countrymen were huddled together, some praying and some in tears. The newcomers did not know what had happened. But they were not left long in doubt. An N.C.O. called to them to "heraus," and when they came into the yard, he started them to run. The men were tired and hungry. They had already spent months on the farms, working long hours: that did not save them. They had dared to rebel, so their spirits must be broken.

Our hearts were torn with rage and pity. We stormed in and out of the huts like crazy men, but there was nothing we could do. There were so few of us, and of course we were unarmed. There was no protest or entreaty we could make that would have made any appeal. Orders were orders! It was for the good of Germany—to make her a greater nation—that these men should work—the longer hours the better—to help to reclaim the bad land, to cultivate the fields, to raise more crops to feed more soldiers to take more prisoners to cultivate more land to raise more crops.

It was perfectly clear to the Teutonic mind. No link in the chain must be broken. Deutschland über Alles!

At noon the Russians were still running—it is astonishing what the human machine can stand! The N.C.O. impatiently snapped his watch and slashed at the one who was passing him, to speed them up, and so hasten the process. He was getting hungry and wanted his dinner. Then an order came from the Commandant that it was to be stopped—and we hoped again, as we had the night before, that this was the end.

We brought the three poor fellows, pale and trembling, to our end of the hut, and gave them as good a meal as our parcels would afford. One of them had a bayonet wound in his neck, which the N.C.O. had given him. He had jabbed him with the point of his bayonet, to quicken his speed. In spite of their exhaustion, they ate ravenously, and fell asleep at once, worn out with the long hours of working as well as by the brutal treatment they had received.

But there was no sleep for the poor victims—until the long, black sleep of unconsciousness rolled over them and in mercy blotted out their misery—for the N.C.O.'s came for them and dragged them away from us, and the sickening spectacle began again.

There were just eleven of us, British and Canadians, in the camp at this time, twelve of the British having been sent away; and it happened that this was the day, July 4th, that we wrote our cards. We remembered that when the men had written cards about the lice it had brought results: we had no other way of communication with the world, and although this was a very poor one, still it was all we had. We knew our cards would never get out of Germany; indeed, we were afraid they would never leave the camp, but we would try.

We went to the place where the cards were kept, which was in charge of a Polish Jew, who also acted as interpreter. He had been in the Russian Army, and had been taken prisoner in the early days of the war. There was a young Russian with him who did clerical work in the camp. They were both in tears. The Jew walked up and down, wringing his hands and calling upon the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob! Sometimes he put his hands over his ears... for the cries of his countrymen came through the window.

When we got our cards, we wrote about what had happened. Some of the cards were written to John Bull; some to the British War-Office; some to the newspapers; some to friends in England, imploring them to appeal to the United States Government at Washington, to interfere for humanity's sake. We eased our minds by saying, as far as we could say it on a card, what we thought of the Germans. Every card was full of it, but the subject was hardly touched. I never knew before the full meaning of that phrase, "Words are inadequate."

Words were no relief!—we wanted to kill—kill—kill.

The running of the Russians went on for days. Every one of them who came in from the farm got it—without mercy.... Different N.C.O.'s performed the gruesome rites...

We had only one hope of quick results. The Commandant of the camp at Celle—that is the main Cellelager—had an English wife, and had, perhaps for that reason, been deprived of his command as an Admiral of the fleet. We hoped he would hear of our cards—or, better still, that his wife might hear.

The first indication we had that our cards had taken effect was the change in the soup. Since the first day of the trouble, it had been absolutely worthless. Suddenly it went back to normal—or a little better.

Suddenly, too, the running of the Russians stopped, although others of them had come in. A tremendous house-cleaning began—they had us scrubbing everything. The bunks were aired; the blankets hung on the fence; the windows cleaned; the yard was polished by much sweeping. Evidently some one was coming, and we hoped it was "the Admiral." At the same time, the N.C.O.'s grew very polite to us, and one of them, who had been particularly vicious with the Russians, actually bade me "good-morning"—something entirely without precedent.

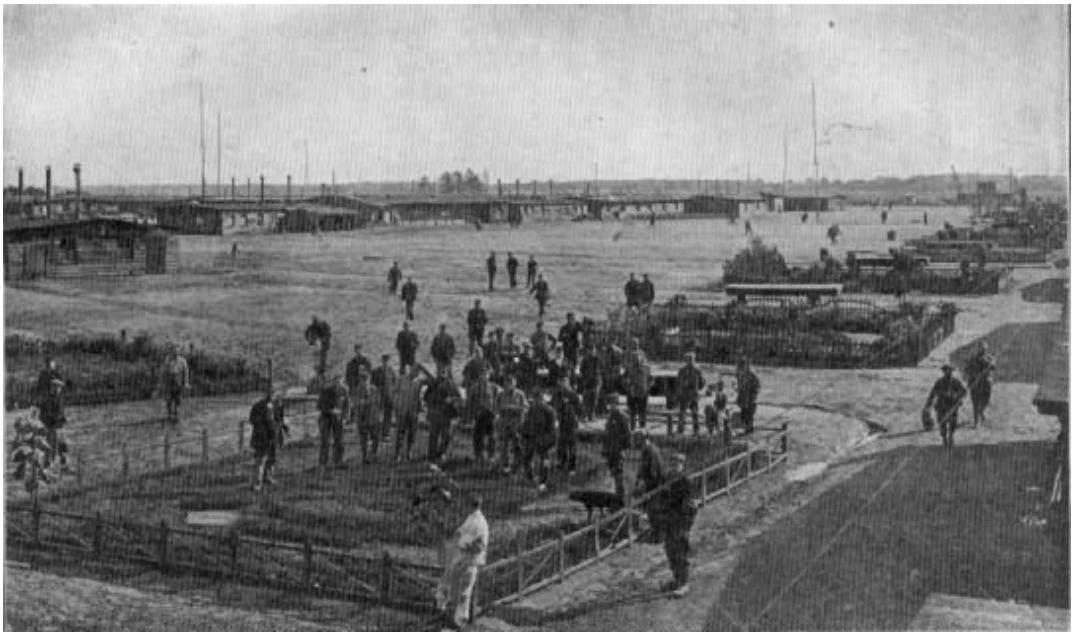
Every day, I think, they expected the Admiral, but it was two weeks before he came. His visit was a relief to the Germans, but a distinct disappointment to us. Apparently, the having of an English wife does not change the heart of a German. It takes more than that. He did not forbid the running of the Russians; only the bayonet must not be used.

The bayonet was bad form—it leaves marks. Perhaps the Admiral took this stand in order to reinstate himself again in favor with the military authorities, and anxious to show that his English wife had not weakened him. He had the real stuff in him still—blood and iron!

The running of the Russians began again—but behind the trees, where we could not see them... but we could hear...

There are some things it were well we could forget!

The running of the Russians ceased only when no more came in from the farms. Those who had been put out came out of the *Revier* in a day or so—some in a few hours—pale and spiritless, and were sent back to work again. They had the saddest-looking faces I ever saw—old and wistful, some of them; others, gaping and vacant; some, wild and staring. They would never resist again—they were surely broken! And while these men would not do much for the "Fatherland" in the way of heavy labor, they would do very well for exchanges!



Friedrichsfeld Prison-Camp in Summer

CHAPTER XX

ONCE AGAIN!

As the days began to shorten, Edwards and I began to plan our escape. We had the maps, the one he had bought at Vehnemoor and the one I had made. We had the compass, which we had kept hidden in a very small crack in the sloping roof of the hut, and the Red Cross suits had come, and were dark blue and quite unnoticeable except for the piece of brown cloth sewed on the sleeve. Mine had Russian buttons on it, which I had put on to have for souvenirs—and which I have since had made into brooches for my sisters.

On the map which Edwards had bought at Vehnemoor, the railways were marked according to their kind: the double-tracked, with rock ballast, were heavily lined; single-tracked with rock ballast, were indicated by lighter lines; single-tracked, with dirt ballast, by lighter lines still. I knew, from the study of maps, every stream and canal and all the towns between us and the border. On the map which I had drawn myself, from one I got from the Canadian artist at Giessen, I had put in all the railways and the short spur lines of which there are so many in northern Germany.

We knew that when a railway line ended without reaching another line, it was a good indication that the soil was valueless, and therefore there would be no settlement of any account. Through such districts we would direct our way.

We began to prepare for our flight by adopting a subdued manner, such as becomes discouraged men. We were dull, listless, sad, rarely speaking to each other—when a guard was present. We sat around the hut, morose and solemn, sighing often, as men who had lost hope.

But we were thinking, all the time, and getting ready.

I had a fine toffee tin, with a water-tight lid, which had come to me in a parcel from Mr. Robert McPherson, Aberdeen, Scotland, whose brother-in-law, Mr. Alec Smith, of Koch Siding, was a friend of mine. This can,

being oval in shape, fitted nicely into my pocket, and we decided to use it for matches.

Edwards had a sun-glass, which we thought we would use for lighting our pipes when the sun was shining, and thus conserve our supply of matches.

Our first plan was to cut our way through the wires, as we had done at Vehnemoor, but, unfortunately, three Russians, early in the spring, did this—and after that no cat ever watched a mouse-hole with greater intentness than the guards at Parnewinkel watched the wires. We saw this was hopeless!

We then thought we would volunteer for work on farms as we had done before at Rossbach, but although French and Russians were taken, "Engländers" were not wanted! The Englishmen in the camp not wanting to work had given themselves a bad name, hoping that the Russians and French would carry it on to the farmers for whom they were working, so that they would be afraid to employ such desperate characters. One of them had "et an ear off'n" the last man he worked for. Another one never took orders from any one—"the last man that tried it, woke up in the middle of a long fit of sickness!—and had since died." Another one admitted he had a terrible temper, but he had had it "from a child and couldn't help it—he turned blind when he was mad, and never knew where he was hittin'!"

This all worked well for them, but when Ted and I wanted to get out, we were refused. "Engländers" were not wanted!

The first working party that was made up to go out and work with a guard did not give either Ted or me a chance, although we wanted to go, but four other Englishmen volunteered. They were not anxious to have us go with them, for they knew we were thinking of escaping, and when there is an escape, those who were present at the time have embarrassing questions asked them and various privileges are likely to be curtailed afterwards.

On Saturday morning, at roll-call, a working party was asked for, and Ted and I volunteered, and with a Welshman and some Frenchmen, we walked out to a small village called Seedorf, about four miles away,

where we were turned loose in a field of turnips from which the weeds had not been taken out since the turnips were planted. There were about a dozen of us, and we were taken into the house at noon to be fed. The farmhouse was one of the best I had seen in this section of the country, for the pig-pen, chickens, and cow-stable were in a separate building.

The two daughters of the house were true daughters of Germany and did not eat the bread of idleness; the biggest one, bare-legged and with sleeves rolled up, was attending to the stock, without pausing for anything. She looked as strong as a man, and was absorbed in her work —not even stopping a second to look at us. The other one worked in the house at meal-times, but no doubt joined her sister afterwards.

The dinner consisted of soup, potatoes, bread, and coffee, and the soup was a real treat, entirely different from the kind we were used to. After dinner we went back to the field and put in a fine afternoon's work. We were anxious to establish a good record before we left there.

We had saved up a lot of things from our parcels, thinking that our manner of escape might be such that we could take them with us. A working party such as we were on made it impossible to carry anything, for we were in great danger of being searched. Whenever the Commandant thought of it, he ordered a search. Just as the Commandant at Giessen was keen on rings, so this one went in for searching. We were searched at unexpected times—going out to work or coming in—at meal-times or at bedtime.

The following day—Sunday—we sat around with our saddest, most dejected air, like two men in whose hearts all hope had died. We had everything ready—razor, tobacco, matches, toffee tin, toothbrush, comb, pocket-knife, watch, soap, strong safety-pins, and some strong string. Edwards had the sun-glass, shaving-soap and brush, and other things to correspond with mine.

It was quite a grief to us to have to leave behind us all the things we had been saving from our parcels. The people of Trail, British Columbia, had sent parcels to all their prisoners, and one of mine had followed me from Giessen to Vehnemoor and from Vehnemoor to Parnewinkel, and at last had found me. It contained, among other things, hard-tack

biscuits, just the thing for carrying in our pockets, and my aunts in Ontario had sent me some line dried beef and tins of jam. At this time, also, an exceptionally good box came from Miss Ray, of London, England, and home-made candy from Miss Dorothy Taylor, of New Westminster, British Columbia. We had a regular blow-out on Sunday, but were too much afraid of being searched to risk taking anything with us beyond the necessary things, and so had to leave our precious stores behind. Oh, well—they wouldn't go to waste!

Monday morning we dragged our tired feet along the four miles to the turnip-patch—with every appearance of complete submission. I had the compass in the middle of a package of tobacco; my maps were still in the pay-book case in my pocket.

We gave ourselves up to the joy of labor, and pulled weeds all day with great vigor. We wanted to behave so well that they wouldn't notice us. Of course we were not sure that any chance would come. We might have to carry our stuff for several days before we should get a chance.

That night we came into the kitchen again and sat down at the long table. Every one was hungry and fell to eating without a word. No wonder the guard thought he had a quiet, inoffensive gang whose only thought at that moment was fried potatoes. The potatoes were good, hot from the frying-pan, and we ate as many as we could, for we believed it might be a long time before we again sat at a table.

The guard, at last, satisfied that we were all right, strolled into the next room—a sort of dining- and living-room, where the family were eating. We could hear fragments of conversation and some laughter, and it seemed a good time to slip away! We crowded down a few more fried potatoes, and then leisurely left the table and looked out of the window.

A big black cloud had come up from the west, and although it was still early in the evening it was beginning to grow dusk. Outside there was no one stirring but the young lady feeding the pigs, and she was not taking any notice of any one. She was a fine example of the absorbed worker. We lit our pipes and strolled out to enjoy the cool of the evening.

The pigs were gathered about the trough, protesting the distribution of their evening meal, squealing "Graft" and calling for a commission to settle it. The lady took no notice of them. They could settle it among themselves. They did not need to eat at all if they didn't want to. She should worry. It was take it or leave it—for all she cared! She had gone as far as she was going to, in bringing it to them.

We looked back at the kitchen. Fried potatoes still held the attention of the prisoners, and the guard was not to be seen.

We turned around the front of the house and found ourselves on the shaded street. There was a row of trees along each side of the street and the houses were built well back. It was not the main street of the village and had more the appearance of a lane. We had concluded that even if the alarm were given, we should only have the one guard to deal with, for the prisoners would not pursue us, neither would the farmer.

The big danger was in the fact that the guard had his gun, and if he saw us would shoot, but the shady lane was deserted and still, and we pushed on with an unconcerned stride that covered the ground, but would not attract the attention of the casual observer.

When we came to the edge of the village, we saw the wood which we had observed when coming in from work both days, and which seemed to promise shelter, although the trees were small. We passed through it quickly, and kept it between us and the village until we reached a ditch two and a half or three feet deep and overgrown with heather. By this time it was beginning to rain, for which we were glad, for it would discourage travelling and drive indoors those who had any place to go to. We crawled on our hands and knees along the ditch, whose bottom was fairly dry and grassy, until we found a place where the heather hung well over the edge and made a good protection. We could look through the heather at the village, which was about six hundred yards away!

We stayed here until it was quite dark. There did not seem to be any search made for us. The guard would be afraid to leave the other prisoners to come looking for us himself, and we knew none of the village people would be keen on coming out in the rain. But there was a telegraph station at Seedorf, and it gave us an uncomfortable feeling to

remember that the guard could wire to Selsingen and get some one there to telephone to the camp. But the rain, which was falling heavily, was our best hope that we were unpursued. It beat into my ear as I lay in the heather, until I put my cap over the side of my head.

At dark we stole out, after taking our direction with the compass while we were in the ditch. When we came out, we observed the direction of the wind, and started straight south. We would follow this course until we rounded Bremen, and then it was our purpose to go west to the Holland boundary. From our maps we knew that to strike straight across from where we were would bring us to a well-settled country, and the chief desire of our lives now was for solitude!

CHAPTER XXI

TRAVELLERS OF THE NIGHT

The country we travelled over in the first hours of the night was poor and evidently waste land, for we saw no cultivation until near morning, when we crossed through a heavy oat-field, soaking wet with the night's rain. When we came out we were as wet as if we had fallen into the ocean. We took some of the oats with us, to nibble at as we went along.

We came to a wide stream, with wooded banks, which looked deep and dangerous. So we made a pack of our clothes, and cautiously descended into it, expecting to have to swim over. However, we found we could easily wade it, for we had made our crossing at a ford.

On the other side we found ourselves stumbling over a turnip-field, and very gladly helped ourselves, and carried away two of them for provisions for the next day. When morning came we took cover in a thin wood.

On the other attempts we had been able to carry something to eat, and an extra pair of socks. This time we had nothing but what we had on. I had selected from the stockings I had a pair knit by Miss Edna McKay, of Vancouver, which were the first pair she had knit, but were very fine and well made. We removed our socks the first thing each morning, and rubbed our feet and put the socks in a tree to dry, being careful not to have them so high they would be seen. We were trying to take every precaution this time!

The first day we were near some farm-buildings, and as we lay in the woods, pretty chilly and wet, we could hear the hens scolding and cackling. Cackling hens always bring me back to the pleasant days of childhood, and I was just enjoying a real heartsome visit to the old home at Delmer... and was chasing Willie Fewster around a straw-stack... when the farmer's dog, an interfering, vicious-looking brute, came peering through the woods and gave us heart spasms, barking at us for a few minutes. But we did not move a muscle, and, seeing that he

couldn't start a row with us, he went away, muttering to himself about suspicious characters being around.

A woman passed through the wood, too, going over to one of the neighbors—I think to borrow something, for she carried a plate. But she did not see us, as we lay low in the scrub.

We certainly found plenty of unsettled country to travel through in the first days of our journey, for we seemed to go through one marsh after another, covered with coarse, long hay, which would have been cut, no doubt, but for the soft bottoms which make it impossible to use a mower. To drain this land would furnish more work for the Russian prisoners! In one place we suddenly stepped down a couple of feet into a bog filled with water, but with grass on the top. We discovered that it was a place from which the peat had been removed, and it was the only sign of human activity that we saw all night.

On the evening of August 23d, when we started out after a fairly good day in a spruce thicket, we could see the lights of Bremen reflected in the sky. The lights of a city, with its homes, its stores, its eating-places, its baths, should be a welcome sight to wayfaring men who have been living on oats and turnips, but not for us, to whom a city meant only capture. So when we noticed the rosy glow in the southern sky we steered our course farther west, but still taking care to avoid the city, which we intended to pass on the south and east side.

Our troubles were many that night. A good-sized river got in our way and had to be crossed. There was no bridge in sight, and we had determined to waste no time looking for one. So we undressed on the marshy bank and made bundles of our clothes, pinning our tunics about everything with the safety-pins which we carried. We also used the cord around the bundles. Ted was doubtful about swimming and carrying his clothes, so I said I would try it first, with mine. I went down through the coarse grass, which was harsh and prickly to my feet, and full of nettles or something which stung me at every step, and was glad to reach the

open water. The moon was in the last quarter, and clouded over, so the night was of the blackest. I made the shore without much trouble, and threw my bundle on a grassy bank.

I called over to Ted that the going was fine, and that I would come back for his clothes. At that, he started in to meet me, swimming on his back and holding his clothes with both hands, using only his feet, but when he got into the current, it turned him downstream. I swam toward him as fast as I could, but by the time I reached him he had lost the grip of his clothes, and when I got them they were wet through. As we were nearer to the bank from which he had started, we went back to it, for we were both pretty well blown. However, in a few minutes we were able to strike out again, and reached the other bank in safety. Poor Ted was very cold and miserable, but put on his soaking garments, without a word, and our journey continued.

This was another ditch country—ditches both wide and deep, and many of them treacherous things, for their sides were steep and hard to climb. The darkness made it doubly hard, and sometimes we were pretty well frightened as we let ourselves down a greasy clay bank into the muddy water. Later on we found some corduroy bridges that the hay-makers had put over the ditches.

All night we had not found anything to eat, and when we arrived at a wood near morning, we decided to stay, for we could see we were coming into a settlement, and the German farmers rise early in harvest-time. So, hungry, muddy, wet, and tired, we lay down in the wood, and spent a long, uncomfortable day!

My watch stopped that day, and never went again. Edwards's watch was a better one, and although it stopped when it got wet, it went again as soon as it had dried out.

That day we had not a mouthful of anything. But we comforted ourselves with the thought that in this settled country there would be cows, and unless these farmers sat up all night watching them, we promised ourselves a treat the next night.

At nightfall we stole out and began again to get over the distance that separated us from freedom. The country was drier and more settled, but

the cows, we saw, were all in farmyards, and we were afraid to risk going near them. About midnight we almost stumbled over a herd of them, and one fine old whiteface arose at our request and let us milk her. Ted stood at her head, and spoke kind words to her and rubbed her nose, while I filled our tin again and again. She was a Holstein, I think, though we could not see if she was black or red—it was so dark, we could only see the white markings. We were sorry to leave her. She was another of the bright spots in my memory of Germany.

We crossed a railroad, a double-tracked one with rock ballast, which my map showed to be a line which runs to Bremen, and a little later we came to the Weser. This river brought up pleasant recollections of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, who drowned the rats in the Weser by the magic of his pipe. But there was no romance in it as we came upon it in a gray and misty dawn. It was only another barrier to our freedom.

There were bunches of willows on the water's edge, and some fine beeches, whose leaves were slightly tinged with yellow, farther back. We selected a close bunch of willows for our hiding-place, and after spending a short time looking for a boat, we gave up the quest, and took cover.

We were feeling well, and were in a cheerful mood,—no doubt the result of our pleasant meeting with the Holstein,—and when we saw some straw in a field not far from the willows, we went over and got two armfuls of it, and made beds for ourselves. Fresh, clean straw, when dry, makes a good bed, and no Ostermoor mattress was ever more comfortable. We burrowed into it like moles, and although it rained we had a good day.

Waking up in the afternoon, we decided on a general clean-up, and, dipping water from the Weser in a rusty tin pail without a handle, we washed our faces, cleaned our teeth, shaved, and combed our hair.

My socks were in fine shape, but Ted's began to show signs of dissolution. The heels were gone, and the toe of one was broken and going. His feet were sore and blistered, and he sat long looking at the perfidious socks which had failed him so soon. Then he had a plan—he would make himself a pair out of the sleeves of his undershirt. To me

was given the delicate task of cutting off the sleeves with rather a dull knife, which I managed to do with some difficulty, and, with a thorn for a needle and wool from the socks for thread, a pair of socks were constructed. The thorn was too soft and doubled back, so Ted sharpened a piece of hard wood, and with it made the holes for the yarn.

From our shelter in the willows we could see a ferry-boat carrying people across the river, and sometimes people passed along the sandy shore quite near to us, but the willows were thick and we were not discovered. Two big freight steamers also passed by us.

That night we went cautiously down the bank looking for a boat. We could swim the river, but a boat would suit us better, for the night was chilly and dark. Before we had gone far, we found one tied in the rushes. But the oars were locked to the bottom of the boat, and we had to cut them loose with our pen-knives, which took quite awhile, for the wood was hard!

When we got across the Weser we found plenty of cows. Some of them were fickle jades who would let us almost touch them, and would then sniff at us in disapproval and leave us. Others would not consider our case for a moment. They were not going to run any danger of giving aid and comfort to the enemy! But one good old one with a crooked horn took pity on us, and again we felt better.

The fields were divided by hedges, made of a closely-leaved green shrub, somewhat resembling—in the leaf—our buckthorn. It was very thick and very green, and we crawled into one of these on the morning of the fourth day, glad of such a good shelter. However, there was no room to move—or stand up. The hedge being low made it necessary to lie down all day. Still, we were well satisfied with the hot milk, and slept most of the day.

Waking up suddenly, I heard a whistle, and, without moving, could see a man's legs coming toward us. Then a dog, white with black markings, darted past him, and, to my horror, stood not six feet from me. We stopped breathing—we shut our eyes for fear we might wink—we effaced ourselves—we ceased to be—I mean we wished we could.

The dog came nearer—I could hear his soft footfalls—I knew the brute was stepping high—as they do when they see something. I knew his tail was going straight out behind—he was pointing!

The man walked by, whistling—but the dog stayed!

Then I heard the man call him—insisting that he come—making remarks about his lack of sense. It sounded like "Come here, you fool!" The dog, with a yelp of disapproval, did as he was told, but I could hear him barking as he ran along—in a hurt tone. His professional pride had been touched!

That afternoon as we lay in the hedge, we saw a company of school-children running toward us. I think it was the afternoon recess, and they came running and shouting straight for the hedge. I could only see their feet from where I lay, but it seemed to me that there were a large number. They stopped in the field on the right of where we lay, and played some game—I was too excited to notice what it was. Sometimes it brought them close to the hedge, and then they ran away again. It may have been a ball-game.

We were cold and hot by turns, watching the feet that advanced and receded, and were coming at us again, racing this time as if to see who would reach the hedge first, when a sudden downpour of rain came on—and they ran back! We heard the voices growing fainter in the distance, and registered a vow that if we got out of this place alive we would not trust in a hedge again. Dogs and children seemed to be our greatest dangers!

When we began our journey that night, we crossed a light railway, one of those which on the map was indicated with light lines, and which, sure enough, had only dirt ballast. Ahead of us was another railway track with lights, which we determined to leave alone. The lights of the two towns, Delmenhorst and Gunderksee, shone against the western sky, and we kept to the south to avoid them. The going was difficult on account of the settlement, and we had to be watching all the time for travellers. There were a lot of people out that night who might better have been at home—and in bed!

We were glad to take refuge before daylight in an extensive wood. We had a few turnips, which we ate. The day was spent as usual trying to dry our socks and get our feet in shape for the night, but the rain came down hard, and when we started out at dusk we were soaking wet.

We at once got into a forest, a great dark, quiet forest, where fugitives could hide as long as they liked, but which furnished no food of any kind. In the small clearings we came upon herds of cattle, but they were all young, with not a cow among them. This was one of the planted forests of Germany, where a sapling is put in when a big tree is taken out, to conserve the timber supply. No one would know that it had been touched by man, except for the roads which ran through it. There was no waste wood; there were no stumps, no hacked trees, no evidences of fire—such as I have often seen in our forests in British Columbia. The Germans know how to conserve their resources!

There was no wind or stars, and there were so many roads crossing and dividing, that it was hard for us to keep our direction. Toward morning it began to rain, and soon the wet bushes, as well as the falling rain, had us wet through.

We stopped at last to wait for daylight, for the forest was so dense we believed we could travel by day with safety. We lit our pipes in the usual way, to conserve our matches. One match would light both, when we followed this order. The lighted one was inverted over the unlighted one. Into the lighted one Ted blew, while I drew in my breath from the unlighted one. This morning, something went wrong. Either the tobacco was soggy or I swallowed nicotine, for in a few minutes I had all the symptoms of poisoning, I wanted to lie down, but the ground was too wet. So I leaned against a tree, and was very sorry for myself. Ted felt much the same as I did.

Then we tried to light a fire—we were so cold and wet, and, besides, we had a few potatoes, carried from a garden we passed the night before, which we thought we could roast. Hunger and discomfort were making us bold. Our matches would not light the damp wood, and we could find no other. We chewed a few oats, and were very down-hearted. It looked as if lack of food would defeat us this time!

We had so far come safely, but at great expense of energy and time. We had avoided travelled roads, bridges, houses, taking the smallest possible risk, but with a great expense of energy. Our journey had been hard, toilsome, and slow. We were failing from lack of food. Our clothes hung in folds on us, and we were beginning to feel weak. The thought of swimming the Ems made us shudder! One thing seemed clear—we must get food, even if to get it imposed a risk. There was no use in starving to death.... The recklessness of the slum-cat was coming to us.

The weather had no mercy that day, for a cold, gray, driving rain came down as we leaned against a tree, two battered hulks of men, with very little left to us now but the desire to be free.

If this were a book of fiction, it would be easy to lighten and vary the narrative here and there with tales of sudden attacks and hair's-breadth escapes. But it is not a fancy story—it is a plain tale of two men's struggle, with darkness, cold, and hunger, in a land of enemies. It may sound monotonous to the reader at times, but I assure you, we never, for one minute, got accustomed to the pangs of hunger, the beat of the rain, or the ache of our tired legs, and the gripping, choking fear that through some mishap we might be captured.

The country was so full of bogs and marshes that we had to stick to the road that night, but we met no person, and had the good fortune to run into a herd of cows, and drank all the milk we could hold. Unfortunately we had nothing in which to carry milk, so had to drink all we could, and go on, in the hope of meeting more cows.

While we were helping ourselves, the storm which had been threatening all night came on in great fury, and the lightning seemed to tear the sky apart. We took refuge in an old cow-shed, which saved us from the worst of it.

That morning we hid in a clump of evergreens, thick enough to make a good shelter, but too short for comfort, for we could not stand up! Ted was having a bad time with his feet, for his improvised socks did not work well. They twisted and knotted and gave him great discomfort. This day he removed his undershirt, which was of wool, and, cutting it into strips five or six inches wide, wound them round and round his feet, and then put his boots on. He had more comfort after that, but as the weather was cold the loss of his shirt was a serious one.

That night we came to a river, which we knew to be the Hunte, and looked about for a means of crossing it. We knew enough to keep away from bridges, but a boat would have looked good to us. However, there did not seem to be any boat, and we decided to swim it without loss of time, for this was a settled district, and therefore not a good place to hesitate.

On account of our last experience in crossing a river, we knew a raft to carry our clothes on would keep them dry and make it easier for us. So, failing to find any stuff with which to make a raft, we thought of a gate we had passed a short time back. It was a home-made affair, made of a big log on the top, whose heavy root balanced the gate on the post on which it swung. We went back, found it, and lifted it off, and although it was a heavy carry, we got it to the river, and, making two bundles of our clothes, floated them over on it. I swam ahead, pushing it with one hand, while Ted shoved from behind. Our clothes were kept dry, and we dragged the gate up on the bank. We hope the farmer found it, and also hope he thought it was an early Hallowe'en joke!

That day, August 31st, we took refuge in the broom, which was still showing its yellow blossom, and, as the, sun came out occasionally, we lit our pipes with Ted's sun-glass. The sun and wind dried our tobacco and our socks, and we started off that night feeling rather better.

It was a fine night for our purpose, for there was considerable wind, and we kept going all night, mostly on the roads. At daylight we took refuge in an open wood. The day was cloudy and chilly, and we found it long. At night, we had not gone far when we found three cows in a small field. We used all our blandishments on them, but the lanky one with straight horns was unapproachable and aloof in her manner, and would

not let us near her. One of the others was quiet enough, but was nearly dry. The third one was the best, and we filled and drank, and filled and drank, until her supply was exhausted too. On account of the field being near the house, we were careful not to let the stream of milk make a sound in the empty can, so left some milk in the can each time, to deaden the sound. However, the owners of the cows were safe in bed, and asleep. We wondered if they would think the cows were bewitched when they found they would give nothing next morning!

CHAPTER XXII

THE LONG ROAD TO FREEDOM

When we had taken all the milk we could extract from the cows, we moved off quietly to the corner of the field farthest from the buildings, to get back to the road. We were going over the fence as gently as possible, when we saw two men whom we knew from their uniforms to be French prisoners. They were evidently escaping, like ourselves, but had been more fortunate than we, for they had packs on their backs. We tried to get their attention by calling to them, but the French word for "friend" did not come to us, only the German "Kamerad," and when they heard that, they took us for Germans and ran with all speed. We dared not pursue them, or even call, for fear of being heard; so had to see the two big packs, which no doubt had chocolate, sardines, bread, and cheese in them, disappear in the darkness. However, it may have been just as well—two escaping prisoners are enough, for safety.

September 2d was a fine day, with several hours of sunshine. From where we had taken refuge in a high spruce thicket, we could look out across a wide heather moor, all in bloom and a glorious blaze of color, amethyst, purple, mauve, with the bright September sun pouring down upon it. Our spirits always rose when the sun came out, and sank again when the day grew dark.

A Prison Post-Card from Friedrichsfeld bei Wesel. The group includes soldiers from Canada, Newfoundland, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Serbia, and Roumania.

Since these experiences of battling bare-handed with the elements I can understand why primeval man fell into sun-worship, for on the caprice of the sun with its power to give or withhold, the happiness and well-being of the roofless traveller depends.

We stayed closely in the dark shadows of the heavy evergreens that day, although just beyond was the golden sunlight with its warmth and comfort, for we were afraid to show ourselves in the open. That night we came upon a potato garden, and dug out some with our fingers, filling our pockets and our handkerchiefs with them. We had a good night, and shoved the miles behind us. We had promised ourselves a fire just at dawn, and the thought of it, and the potatoes we should bake, was wonderfully cheering.

Just at the beginning of the dawn, in that gray, misty light, a fire can scarcely be seen, for the air is something the color of smoke, and there is enough light to hide the fire. At night the fire shows, and in the daylight, the smoke, but in the gray dawn it is not easy to see either. So on the morning of September 3d, we gathered dry sticks and made our first fire. There was a blue veil of haze on the horizon, and a ragged gray mist hung over the low places. The air was sweet with the autumn

smell of fallen leaves and wood bark, and as we sat over our tiny fire, we almost forgot that we were in a world of enemies. The yellow beeches and the dark green spruces bent over us in friendliest fashion, and a small bird chased a hawk above the trees.

Still, we were not beguiled by the friendliness of our surroundings to take any chances, and, instead of waiting for ashes or coal to roast our potatoes, we put them right on the fire. What if they were burnt on the outside? We scraped off part of the charcoal and ate the rest. We knew about charcoal tablets being good for digestion, and we believed ours could stand a little assistance, for green apples and new milk are not a highly recommended combination.

We kept track of the number of potatoes we ate that morning. It was twenty-five! What we couldn't eat we put in our pockets, and held in our hands—for the warmth. That day, September 3d, was the brightest and warmest day we had.

Toward evening we crept out to the edge of the wood to see what sort of country we were in—and found there was a village quite near us. But as we had heard not a sound all day, and as there was not a flutter around it now,—not a soul stirring or a cow-bell tinkling,—we thought it must be a deserted hamlet. The old and now almost indistinct paths through the wood where we sat seemed to tell of a departed people.

We sat in one of these old paths, watching the shafts of sunlight which filtered through the woods as we waited for the dark. Then Ted began to fix the strips of cloth around his feet, and I lay down upon my back, across the path, looking up at the sky, which was shot over with mackerel-back clouds, giving promise of settled weather.

Suddenly, around a bend in the path, came a man and a dog. The man carried a gun across his shoulder, and evidently had been shooting birds. I swung myself off the path and motioned to him to go by—for he had stopped in surprise. Ted did the same. Our gestures were polite—but I think had something suggestive in them too—almost commanding.

He passed by, merely bidding us "good-evening," and remarking in German that Ted's feet were sore!

He walked on, as a peaceable old fellow who had no desire to get into trouble, and although he must have seen the yellow stripe down the seams of our trousers, and the prison numbers on our tunics, he kept on going.

We watched him through the trees, as far as we could see him, but only once did he turn and look back—and then only for a minute. He was not going toward the village, but we decided to keep away from it, anyway, and at nightfall we made a wide detour to avoid it. The night clouded up, too, and we pushed along with thankful hearts that the old man with the dog knew when to keep quiet.

A rare piece of good luck came to us that night. We came to a settlement, evidently a new one, for the houses were of modern design, and the farm-buildings, too, were fresh and newly built. There was evidently a creamery somewhere near, and beside the road we found a can full of milk set out, to be gathered up in the morning. The cream had risen to the top of it, and with our toffee tin we helped ourselves. Later on, we found others, and helped ourselves again. It was a very satisfactory arrangement for us to have the refreshment booths scattered like this along the way. Then we ate some of the burnt potatoes and an apple or two, had a few drinks of cream from another can, and the night passed pleasantly. From the apple-trees beside the road we replenished our pockets, and felt this had been a good night.

It was a good thing for us that the night had started so well, for along toward morning, probably two hours before daylight, we crossed a peat-bog. There was a road at first which helped us, but it ran into a pile of cut peat, drying for the winter. There were also other roads leading to peat-piles, but these were very misleading, and as the night was of inky blackness, with scarcely any breeze, it became harder and harder to keep our direction. Consulting the compass so often was depleting our match supply, and I tried to depend on the faint breath of a breeze which sometimes seemed to die away altogether. This bog, like all the others, had tufts of grass and knolls of varying size coming in the most unexpected places. Over these we stumbled, and fell, many times, and as we felt fairly safe from being heard, it was some relief to put into language what we thought of the country and all its people, past,

present, and future. I believe we were especially explicit about the future!

It was nearly morning when we got off the bog, and as the rain was falling we took refuge in a tumble-down hut which had probably been a cowherd's. We soon saw that it was a poor shelter, and when a woman came along and looked straight at us, we began to get gooseflesh! She actually smiled at us, and we tried to smile back reassuringly, but I am afraid there was a lack of mirth in our smiles which detracted from their charm.

She walked away—stopped—looked back at us—and smiled again, and went on, nodding her head as if she knew something. We were rather afraid she did, and hastily decided to push on. We were afraid of the lady's patriotism, and determined to be moving. There was a thick-looking wood just ahead, and to it we went with all speed, taking with us two large gunnysacks which we found in the hut. They were stamped "Utrecht" and had the name of a dealer there.

All that day we were afraid of the lady who smiled and nodded her head, but perhaps we wronged her in our thoughts, for the day passed without any disturbance. Probably she, too, like the old man with the dog, knew that silence does not often get one into trouble.

That day we shaved, but, there being no stream near, we had to empty the rain-drops off the leaves into the top of the box which held Ted's shaving-stick. It took time, of course, but what was time to us? We had more time than anything else.

Although we tried to reassure ourselves with the thought that there were probably no soldiers near, and that the civilians were not likely to do any searching, still we were too apprehensive to sleep, and started away at nightfall, with eyes that burned and ached from our long vigil.

The night was cloudy at first, with sprinkling rain, but cleared up about midnight into a clear, cold autumn night. The cold kept me from getting sleepy, but when I got warm from walking my sleepiness grew overpowering. Ted was more wakeful than I, and took the lead, while I stumbled along behind, aching in every joint with sleepiness. The night was clear and starry, and Ted steered our course by the stars.

No one who has gone through it needs to be told about the misery of sleepiness. I fought against it—I pulled open my eyes—I set my will with all the force I could command, but in spite of all I could do, my eyes would close and I would fall over, and in the fall would awaken and go on, only to fall again. At last we stopped and lay down, sorry to lose so much of the darkness, but the cold soon awakened us, and, chilled and shivering, with numb fingers, we struggled to our feet and went on. But when, with the walking, we were warmed again, with the warmth came the sleepiness.

At dawn we crept into a thick bush, but the ground was damp and cold, and our sleepiness had left us. We ate some of our cold roast potatoes, and tried to sleep, for we dreaded to spend another night like the last one. In the afternoon the sun came out and warmed the air, so we had a fairly good sleep and started away at nightfall.

The night was clear and starlight, so the peat-bog which we encountered did not bother us so much, for we could see the holes and ridges. After the bog, we came into a settlement, but the people were in villages and had their cows stabled, so there was no chance for thirsty and hungry travellers. To the north we could see the huge searchlights above Oldenburg, and we thought of the cells—and shuddered! But our hunger was making us cold again, and we determined to go into the next village we came to, to find some apples.

The first one we came to was a large one, and compactly built. The night was lit by the stars, and therefore not quite so good for our purpose, but we had to have something. We cautiously entered a garden gate which some one had obligingly left open, but when we got in, we found that the trees were high, and apparently well looked-after, for not an apple could be found! We were only a few yards from the house, behind whose darkened windows the family slept, not knowing that the alien enemy were so near.

We slipped out of the open gate—we could see now why it had been left open—and went into the next garden—with the same result. Every apple had been gathered. We started down the street again, walking cautiously on the grass, and slipping along as quickly as possible. We carried the sacks, which we had split open, over our shoulders, and as

they were of a neutral shade, they were not so easily seen as our dark-blue suits would have been.

Suddenly there was the sound of a door opening, ahead of us, on the other side of the street, and two soldiers came out! We lay flat on the street where we were, and "froze." The sacks which were wrapped about us helped to conceal us, or at least made us look less like men. The soldiers passed along the middle of the street, chatting and laughing; we could hear their spurs clanking! Coming out of the light had probably dulled their sight, and they did not see us. We lay there until their footsteps had died away. Then we got up, and got out!

We were not hungry any more—at least we were so much more frightened than hungry that we only knew we were frightened, and we pushed our way on as fast as we could. That night was the first on which we had seen the moon. The shelter we found was another group of Christmas trees, and as we still had a couple of roast potatoes we ate them, and got a little sleep.

The next night the villages kept getting in our way. When we tried to avoid one, we got into another, and in one we saw a light twinkling in an upstairs window, where some woman, probably, sat late at her work or watched by the bedside of a sick child. As usual, there were no street lamps, and I think the light inside was a coal-oil lamp! But not a dog barked, and we came safely out on a road which led in a westerly direction.

In the morning, when the east began to redden, we got shelter in a thin wood, and, having found some potatoes outside of one of the villages, we determined to run the risk of having a fire to roast them. We didn't roast many, though, for the dawn came on too swiftly, and we had to extinguish our fire, for there was a farmhouse not a hundred yards away, and the people were beginning to stir.

That day there were people working all around us, and one old chap, with a red shirt on, was so ambitious about getting his turnips lifted that I don't believe he even knocked off for noon. We thought he would never quit at night either. We called him the "work-hog!"

In the afternoon, as we lay in the woods, an old man, a shepherd, came with a flock of white sheep which followed close behind him. The old man wore a velvet cloak, knee breeches, and buckles on his shoes, and he had a sheep dog with him—a small-sized tricolored, rough-haired collie. It was exactly like a picture! We were not in any mood to enjoy the beauty of it, for some of the sheep wandered through the wood, almost stepping on us, and when the shepherd came after them, he must have seen us. But the old man belonged to the peaceful past, and knew nothing of wars and prisoners, so went out of the wood as quietly as he came. He was as innocent-looking as the sunshine, or the white clouds in the blue sky!

Still, we were two suspicious men who trusted no one, and we thought it best to move. I took the potatoes in my sack, and Ted, to be ready for emergencies, provided a stout, knotted club for himself, and we stole out of the wood, being careful to keep it between us and the "work-hog," who never lifted his eyes—but still we took no chances, even on him!

There was a better wood a short distance away, and to it we came. We saw nobody, and, coming into a dark cover, lit a fire, for we thought the smoke would not rise to the tops of the trees. On it we roasted our remaining potatoes, and we got a drink in a narrow, trickling stream.

We started again, at dark, and before long came to a railway, which, according to our map, was the line which runs parallel to the river Ems. We knew we were coming near the Ems, and at the thought of it, drew a long breath. It seemed a long time since we had stood on its bank before and heard the sounds from across the Holland border. We kept going all night, avoiding the roads, and about three o'clock reached the river. There it was!—a much smaller river than when we had last seen it, but plenty large enough yet to fill us with apprehension. We found a good hiding-place before daylight, and then went back to a potato-field we had passed, and put about a pailful in our sacks before settling down for the day in the wood.

Just before dawn we made our fire and roasted the potatoes. They tasted fine, and as the day was warm and bright, we began to feel more cheerful. That day we heard the deep-booming whistles of steamboats,

and the shriller notes of the canal-boats. Although we knew the river boats were passing up and down just below us, we restrained our curiosity and stayed closely hidden.

Just before it got dark we crept to the edge of the high ground overlooking the river. The other side of the river was flat, and seemed to be settled. I knew from a map I had seen that there was a canal a short distance beyond the river, and that it, too, would have to be crossed.

Looking down to the water's edge, we saw a fence enclosing some pasture land, and were glad to see another gate, for we wanted a raft for our clothes, and we thought this would do. It was a heavy brute of a gate. We could hardly launch it. Perhaps we were getting weaker—that may have been the reason it seemed so heavy. Anyway, when we got it to the water's edge, we had to rest before undertaking to swim the river. The current was not so strong as we had feared, and we reached the other side in safety.

We did not pull up the gate, but let it go drifting down the stream. Perhaps this also is accounted for by the fact that we were getting weaker: also, we considered that we were harder pressed for time than the German farmer—he could make another gate.

After we had dressed and had walked for about an hour, we came to the canal. Unfortunately for our purpose, the night was clear and the stars were out in thousands, and, to make matters worse, the young moon, just a crescent, but still capable of giving some light, came out. We had been longer than we expected on our journey, and now, at the most critical time of it, when there was the greatest need of caution, we had moonlight nights to face! Still, every night was getting worse than the last, so we must go forward with all speed.

The canal was about sixty feet wide, and I felt certain it would be guarded, for it was so near the border. We went to the edge, and looked across—and then up and down—to see if we could find any trace of a guard; everything was quiet.

We knew it was a time for great haste. We went back quickly and undressed. I grabbed my bundle and let myself cautiously into the water, taking care not to make the slightest splash. When I reached the

other side, I threw my clothes on the sand and came back far Ted—he was waiting for me. I took his clothes, and together we swam across!

We got quietly out of the water. I picked up my own bundle, and we started for the trees on the other side of the road. There was an excavation there where sand had been taken out. Seeing it, we slipped into it noiselessly. We were not a moment too soon, for when we stood still and listened, we heard the regular footsteps of a man, and in twenty seconds the patrol marched by! Then we dressed and got out of our fortunate hiding-place, and went on.

We still had a couple of hours before daylight, but the danger was growing greater every minute, for we knew we were approaching the border. At that thought our hearts beat wild with hope. The border would be guarded—there was nothing surer—any minute we might be challenged. We had talked it over, and were determined to make a dash for it if that happened. The patrol would shoot, but there was a chance he might not shoot straight; he would hardly get us both!

Soon we came to a marsh, with an edge of peat, and as we advanced we saw the peat was disappearing, and it did not look good ahead. The moonlight showed us a grassy mat, level as the top of a lake, and without a shrub or tree to indicate a solid bottom. It was evidently a quaking bog, a hidden lake, and only the fear behind us drove us on. It swayed beneath our feet, falling as we stepped on it fully a foot, and rising again behind us. There would be little danger of guards here, for the place would be considered impassable—and maybe it was—we should see!

Our feet were light—fear gave them wings—and we raced over the bending, swaying, springing surface! The moon was not bright enough for us to pick our steps—there was no picking, anyway—it was a matter of speed! At every step the grass mat went below the surface of the water, and we could feel it rising over our boot-tops—cold and horrible. If we had hesitated a second, I know we should have gone through; but we had every reason for haste. Behind us was the enemy—cruel, merciless, hateful—with their stolid faces and their black cells. Under us—was death. Before us—was freedom—home—and the ones we love!

At the other side there was more peat, some of it cut and piled. We were puffing hard from our exertions, but were afraid to rest a second. The border must be near!

In a few minutes after leaving the bog we came to a small canal, which surprised me—there had been no other canal indicated on any map I had seen. It puzzled me for a minute; then a great joy swept over me! The maps I had seen were maps of Germany. This canal must be in Holland!

But I did not say this to Ted, for I wasn't sure. We undressed again—the third time that night—and swam the canal, and, dressing again, went on. Soon we found a finely settled country, with roads which improved as we went on, all the time. There were no trees, but the darkness still held, and we kept going. Toward morning we took refuge in a thicket, and spent the day.

That day was September 9th, and although we thought we were in Holland, we were not sure enough to come out and show ourselves. So we lay low, and ate the green apples that we had found on a tree between the river and the canal the night before. We slept a little, though too excited to sleep much.

Beside the thicket where we were hidden, a boy worked in a field with a fine team of horses, ploughing stubble. We tried to listen to what he said to his team, to see if there was any change from the German "Burrrrrrsh," but he was a silent youth, and so far as we could make out, said never a word all day. So we could not prove it by him!

But the good horses gave us hope—horses were scarce in Germany!

At dusk we started out again, and kept going straight west, for one fear still tormented us. Our maps showed us that one part of Germany projects into Holland, and for this reason we kept straight west, to avoid all danger of running into it; for the uncomfortable thought would come that to escape from Germany and then walk into it again would make us feel foolish—not to mention other emotions.

It seemed to be a fine country that we were going through, and the walking was easy, although we were not on a road. I had been telling

Ted that the first railway we came to would be a single-tracked one, with dirt ballast, and then we should be sure we were in Holland. I had seen this railroad on the map, and knew it was a few miles from the border. To me, this would be sufficient proof that we were safely out of Germany.

Soon we saw a fringe of houses ahead, and we thought we were coming near a canal, for we were in the country of canals now, and the houses are built on their banks. There were lights in a few of the houses, for it was only about eleven o'clock, and some of the people were still up. The houses looked to be rather good ones, and they were built in a row. It was the backs of them we were approaching, which we did with extreme caution, for we had no desire to have some snarling dog discover us and give the alarm.

So intent were we, watching the houses for any sign of life, that we did not see what was just before us until we had walked up to it. Then we saw—

It was a railroad, single-tracked, with dirt ballast!

Without a word, Ted and I shook hands! We were in Holland!

CHAPTER XXIII

OUT

Immediately we set out to find a road. There would be no more skulking through fields for us. We were free again, entitled to all the privileges of road and bridge.

We soon found a good wagon-road leading to a bridge over the canal. Across the bridge we boldly went, caring nothing for the houses at our right and left, whose windows were lighted and whose dogs may have been awake for all we cared. It seemed wonderful to be able to walk right in the middle of the road again! Ted said he wanted to sing, but I advised him to curb the desire. We were a little hazy as to the treatment accorded prisoners by a neutral country.

We still kept west, thinking of the bulge in the German boundary to the south of us. The road was smooth and hard, and we felt so good that we seemed to be able to go as fast as we liked. Fatigue and hunger were forgotten. A man on a bicycle rode past us and shouted a greeting to us, to which we replied with a good, honest English "Good-night," instead of the sullen grunt we had hitherto been using to hide our nationality.

Cows were plentiful that night, and we got apples, too, from the orchards near the road. The only thing that troubled us was that our road had turned southwest, and we were afraid that it might lead us into the little strip of Germany. However, we went on a short distance.

Then we came to a place where there were many canals, some of them very large, and the straggling houses seemed to indicate a town. Afterwards we knew it was the town called Nieuwstadskanaal.

We took a poor road, leading west, and followed it over a heather moor, which changed after a mile or two into a peat-bog with piles of peat recently cut. We kept on going, until about five o'clock in the morning we came to a house. It looked desolate and unoccupied, and when we got close to it we found that it had been badly damaged by fire. But it made a good shelter for us, and we went into what had been the living-

room, and lay down and slept. The floor was even and dry; it was the best bed we had had for twenty nights, and, relieved as we were from the fear of detection, we slept for hours.

When we awakened, the sun was pouring in at the curtainless windows, and we were as hungry as bears. "Now for a potato-feed," Ted said, looking out of the window at a fine field of potatoes across the road. The field had been reclaimed from the peat-bog, and some of the potatoes had already been dug and put into pits.

In looking around for material to light a fire, I saw scraps of newspapers, which I examined closely and found they were Dutch papers, one bearing the name of "Odoorn" and the other "Nieuwstadskanaal." This supported us in our belief that we were in Holland.

We got potatoes from the field and roasted them in the fire which we built in the fireplace.

A young Hollander, fired with curiosity, came to the door and looked in at us. We hailed him with delight and asked him to come right in, and be one of us! He came in rather gingerly, looking at us wide-eyed, and we were sorry to find he could not speak English. There were certain things we wanted to know!

We were drying our matches by the fire, for they had become rather damp, and our supply was getting low. Also our tobacco was done. So we said, "Tabac," showing him our empty pipes, and from the pocket of his coat he brought out a pouch, and we filled our pipes. I don't know whether he knew we had been prisoners or not. He drifted out in a few minutes, but I think he told others about us, for after we had had our smoke, and had gone to the canal to fix up, we found some interested spectators.

At the canal we washed, shaved, cleaned our teeth, combed our hair, and went as far as we could in getting ready to see people. Ted had his

Canadian soldier's tunic, with the regular prisoner's dark-blue trousers such as the British Red Cross supplies. His tunic was torn in several places and his hair was unkempt and in need of cutting. He had cut the heels out of his boots, several days before, because they hurt him. I had the regular prisoner's suit, dark-blue cloth, and had cut off the yellow stripe which had been sewed down the legs of the trousers; I had also cut off my prison number. My boots had held well, and there was not even a hole in my socks. My hair was getting shaggy, and I suppose we were both looking fairly tough. Our clothes were wrinkled and crushed and dirty.

There was one older man who watched us, with many exclamations of friendliness, who, when we had concluded our efforts, made us understand that he wanted us to come with him to have something to eat. He could speak no English, but he made us understand. We went back to the deserted house, gathered up our things, and went with him. Two young fellows came along, too, and we were taken to a canal-boat near by.

The woman who waited on the breakfast table in the canal-boat, and served us with rye-bread, margarine, and coffee, gave us hard looks, which made us think her heart was still in the fatherland. Conversation was naturally difficult, because no one of them could speak English, but we began to ask about Rotterdam, for we knew that that would be the port from which we should sail, and we were anxious to know how to get there. One of the young men, a fine-looking fellow with a frank, pleasing countenance, said something and made gestures, which made us think he would take us there in his boat.

We started out with him and his companion, not sorry to leave the sour-faced lady who glared at us, and walked along the road beside the canal. We were on the outskirts of Odoorn, a town whose chief industry is the shipping of peat. It being Sunday, nobody was working, and the people, especially the children, came out to see us. The young man took us to one of the houses and introduced us to his father and mother, who

welcomed us kindly and wanted us to have something to eat. But we declined.

We were then taken by him along the road, and the crowd of children that followed us seemed to be growing bigger every minute. Our friend, anxious apparently to do the proper thing, took out his mouth-organ and played "It's a Long Way to Tipperary"—and it certainly hit the spot with us.

He conducted us to the home of the gendarme—and for a minute our old fear of being interned came back to us! The gendarme was plainly bored—he had been having a Sunday-afternoon sleep, and had not finished it. He yawned as he spoke.

The young man talked to him very earnestly, and at last he invited us in. Up to this time we had not heard a word of English. The gendarme's wife, a nice-looking, well-dressed woman, brought in a tray and gave us tea, and little cakes with seeds on them, and soon a young man who could speak English came in to act as interpreter.

He began to question us, but we soon turned the conversation by questioning him. We asked him if there was any danger of our being interned? He told us we could be interned if we liked, but we hastened to assure him we should not like it.

Then he said we could stay in Holland and work, but again we declined. We wanted to go to England, we said.

He tried to dissuade us. Why go to England? That would mean going back into the army. Holland was the best and safest place!

We insisted that we wanted to go to England, and he warned us that if we wanted to change our minds we must do it now; because we couldn't change after we had "signed the paper." We were still sure we wanted to go!

The gendarme then went upstairs and came down in his uniform and took us out with him. We didn't know where he was taking us, but supposed it was to some place to make arrangements for our passage to England. When we came out of the house we found some women

gathered there waiting for us, and a very poorly dressed woman, with a fine face, stepped up and gave us a small sum of money, which she had evidently collected for us. We thanked her warmly, and with sincere gratitude. Then we set out across country about four miles to Borger, where we were taken to the Burgomaster's house.

The Burgomaster's house was one of the best in the little town, and when we went in, we found there a young man, evidently calling on the daughter of the house, and he could speak English.

We were taken downtown to the Burgomaster's office, and official papers were made out, and we signed them. This was what the gendarme's interpreter had been telling us, about not being able to change our minds after we had signed the paper!

The Burgomaster evidently told the gendarme to take us to the hotel and have us fed, and by this time, after our walk, we were quite ready for something. When we offered them money for our meal—which was a good one—it was politely refused.

We were then taken to the home of one of the Borgen gendarmes where we stayed for the night. His name was H. Letema. We ate with the family and were treated with great kindness. The white bread and honey which we had for tea were a great treat to us. One of the other gendarmes gave Ted a pair of socks, and he was able to discard the strips of underwear. We had a bed made of straw, with good blankets, and it seemed like luxury to us.

The next morning Mr. Letema gave us each a postal-card addressed to himself, and asked us to write back telling him when we had safely reached England. Then another gendarme walked with us to Assen, which seemed to be a sort of police headquarters. We stayed there all day.

In the afternoon a Belgian girl came to see us, and although I tried hard to understand what she said, she talked so fast I could not follow her, although I knew a little French. She brought us some cigars, and we could see she wanted to show us her friendliness. When she went away, I deeply regretted my ignorance of the French language. But the

Belgian girl came back in a little while, accompanied by a Holland woman who could speak English, and then we found out about her.

She had fled from Antwerp at the time of the bombardment, and was supporting herself by needlework at Assen, where she was the only Belgian person, and I suppose she was tired of "neutrals" and wanted to see us because we were of the Allies. She urged us to tell her what she could do for us, and we asked her for some postal-cards, so we could tell our friends that we had escaped. She sent them to us by her friend the interpreter, who also gave us some English books and a box of cigars.

That night a young gendarme took us upstairs to his room, which was nicely decorated with flags and pennants, and he told us the Germans could never conquer Holland, for they would cut the dykes—as they had done before. He showed us the picture of his fiancée, and proudly exhibited the ring she had given him.

The next day we were taken by another gendarme to Rotterdam by train, passing through Utrecht and in sight of the Zuider Zee. Arriving there, we were taken to the alien officer, who questioned us and wrote down what we told him. Then the gendarme took us to the British Consul, and left us there. The Consul shook hands with us and congratulated us on our escape, and put us in charge of a Vice-Consul, who was a Hollander.

We stayed at the "Seaman's Rest," which was in the same building as the British Consulate. There we met two Americans, who were very friendly and greatly interested in our escape. They encouraged us to talk about the prison-camps, and of what we had seen in Germany, but it was not long until we became suspicious and careful in our answers. One of them had an American passport, which seemed to let him have the freedom of the city; the other one had no passport, and complained that he could not get one, and it was causing him no end of inconvenience, for he found it impossible to get a job at his trade, which was that of "trimmer" on a vessel. He went every day to the docks, looking for a job, and acquired considerable information about ships and their time of sailing. At night, he and his friend were together, and the knowledge was no doubt turned over.

Mr. Neilson, Superintendent of the Sailors' Institute, very kindly invited us to go with him to The Hague, to see the Peace Temple, and it was then that we made bold to ask for some spending money. The Vice-Consul, the Hollander, was a thrift-fiend so far as other people were concerned, and it was only after Mr. Neilson had presented our claim, and we had used all the arguments we could think of, that we got about two dollars each.

Our clothes—too—had not yet been replaced with new ones, and we felt very shabby in our soiled uniforms. We mentioned this to the Vice-Consul, and told him that we believed the Canadian Government would stand by us to the extent of a new suit of clothes. He murmured something about the expenses being very heavy at this time. We ventured to remind him that the money would be repaid—Canada was still doing business!

The next day our American friends invited us to go to a picture show with them. We went, but at the door a gorgeously uniformed gentleman, who looked like a cross between a butler and an admiral, turned us back—that is, Ted and me. We had no collars on! The public had to be protected—he was sorry, but these were his orders.

Then we sought the Vice-Consul and told him if he did not get us decent clothes, we should go to the Consul. The next morning we got the clothes!

On the sixth night we sailed from Rotterdam, and the next morning, in a hazy dawn, we sighted, with glad hearts, the misty shores of England.

As we sailed up the Tyne, we saw war shops being built, and women among the workmen, looking very neat and smart in their working uniforms. They seemed to know their business, too, and moved about with a speed and energy which indicated an earnest purpose. Here was another factor which Germany had not counted on—the women of the Empire! Germany knew exactly how many troops, how many guns,

how many ships, how much ammunition England had; but they did not know—never could know—the spirit of the English people!

They saw a country which seethed with discontent—Hyde Park agitators who railed at everything British, women who set fire to empty buildings, and destroyed mail-boxes as a protest against unfair social conditions—and they made the mistake of thinking that these discontented citizens were traitors who would be glad of the chance to stab their country to the heart. They knew that the average English found golf and cricket much more interesting than foreign affairs, so they were not quite prepared for that rush of men to the recruiting offices at the first call for volunteers! Englishmen may abuse their own country, but it is a different matter when the enemy is at the door. So they came,—the farmer, the clerk, the bank boy, the teacher, the student, the professional man, the writer, the crossing-sweeper, the cab-man,—high and low, rich and poor, old and young, they flocked to the offices, like the land-seekers in the West who form queues in front of the Homestead offices, to enter their land.

I thought of these first recruits—the "contemptible little army"—who went over in those first terrible days, and, insufficiently equipped as they were, went up against the overwhelming hosts of Germany with their superior numbers and equipment that had been in preparation for forty years.... and how they held back the invaders—though they had but one shell to the Germans' hundred—by sheer force of courage and individual bravery... and with such losses. I thought of these men as I stepped on the wharf at Newcastle, and it seemed to me that every country lane in England and every city street was hallowed by the unseen presence of the glorious and unforgotten dead!

CONCLUSION

I have been at home for more than a year now, and cannot return to the front. Apparently the British Government have given their word to the neutral countries that prisoners who escape from Germany, and are assisted by the neutral countries, will not be allowed to return to the fighting line. So even if my shoulder were well again, I could not go back to fight.

Ted and I parted in London, for I came back to Canada before he did. He has since rejoined his family in Toronto. I have heard from a number of the boys in Germany. Bromley tried to escape again, but was captured, and is now at a camp called Soltau. John Keith and Croak also tried, but failed. Little Joe, the Italian boy who enlisted with me at Trail, has been since exchanged—insane! Percy Weller, Sergeant Reid, and Hill, brother of the British Reservist who gave us our first training, have all been exchanged.

I am sorry that I cannot go back. Not that I like fighting—for I do not; but because I believe every man who is physically fit should have a hand in this great clean-up—every man is needed! From what I have seen of the German people, I believe they will resist stubbornly, and a war of exhaustion will be a long affair with a people so well trained and organized. The military class know well that if they are forced to make terms unfavorable to Germany, their power will be gone forever, and they would rather go down to defeat before the Allied nations than be overthrown by their own people. There is no doubt that the war was precipitated by the military class in Germany because the people were growing too powerful. So they might as well fight on, with a chance of victory, as to conclude an unsatisfactory peace and face a revolution.

The German people have to be taught one thing before their real education can begin. They have to be made to see—and the Allied

armies are making it plainer every day—that war is unprofitable; that their army, great though it is, may meet a greater; that heavy losses may come to their own country. They need to be reminded that he that liveth by the sword may die by the sword!

The average German thinks that only through superior military strength can any good thing come to a nation. All their lives they have been taught that, and their hatred of England has been largely a result of their fear of England's superior strength. They cannot understand that England and the other Allies have no desire to dominate German affairs. They do not believe that there is an ethical side to this war. The Germans are pitifully dense to ethical values. They are not idealists or sentimentalists, and their imagination is not easily kindled.

Added to this, they have separated themselves from religion. Less than two per cent of the men attend church, and if the extracts we read from the sermons preached in their churches is a fair sample of the teaching given there, the ninety-eight who stay at home are better off than the two who go!

Post-Card sent by Private Bromley from the Prison-Camp of Soltau, Germany, in July, 1918. The crosses mark the graves of prisoners who have died at this camp

All these things have helped to produce a type of mind that is not moved by argument or entreaty, a national character that has shown itself capable of deeds of grave dishonesty and of revolting cruelty; which cannot be forgotten—or allowed to go unpunished!

But if their faith in the power of force can be broken—and it may be broken very soon—the end of the war will come suddenly.

The people at home are interested and speculative as to the returned soldiers' point of view. Personally, I believe that as the soldiers went away with diversity of opinions, so will they come home, though in a less degree. There will be a tendency to fusion in some respects. One will be in the matter of coöperation; the civilian's ideas are generally those of the individual—he brags about his rights and resents any restriction of them. He is strong on grand old traditions, and rejoices in any special privileges which have come to him.

The soldier learns to share his comforts with the man next him; in the army each man depends on the other—and cannot do without him: there is no competition there, but only coöperation. If loss comes to one man, or misfortune, it affects the others. If one man is poorly trained, or uncontrolled, or foolish, all suffer. If a badly trained bomber loses his head, pulls the pin of his bomb, and lets it drop instead of throwing it, the whole platoon is endangered. In this way the soldier unconsciously absorbs some of the principles of, and can understand the reason for, discipline, and acquires a wholesome respect for the man who knows his job.

He sees the reason for stringent orders in regard to health and sanitation. He does not like to get into a dirty bath himself, and so he leaves it clean for the next man. In other words, the soldier, consciously or unconsciously, has learned that he is a part of a great mass of people, and that his own safety, both commercially and socially, depends on the proper disciplining of the whole people.

The returned soldier will take kindly to projects which tend to a better equalization of duties, responsibilities, and pleasures. He will be a great stickler for this; if he has to work, every one else must work too. He will be hard against special privileges. He will be strong in his insistence that our natural resources be nationalized. He will go after all lines of industry now in the hands of large corporations, and insist on national supervision if not actual ownership.

In religion, he will not care anything about form. Denominationalism will bore him, but the vital element of religion, brotherly love and helping the other fellow, will attract him, wherever he finds it. He knows that religion—he believes in it.

The political parties will never be able to catch him with their worn-out phrases. Politicians had better begin to remodel their speeches. The iniquities of the other party will not do. There must be a breaking-out of new roads—old things have passed away!

The returned man will claim, above all things, honest dealing, and for this reason the tricky politicians who "put it over" in the pre-war days will not have so easy a time. "Guff" will not be well received. The leaders on the battle-field have been men who could look death in the face without flinching, so the political leaders at home must be men of heroism, who will travel the path of righteousness even though they see it leads by the way of the Cross!

There is a hard road ahead of us, a hard, steep road of sacrifice, and in it we must as a nation travel, although our feet are heavy and our eyes are dim. The war must be won; human liberty is worth the price—whatever the price may be!

We do not travel as those who have no hope, for we know, though we cannot see it, that at the top of the mountain the sun is shining on a cleaner, fairer, better world.

THE END

[The end of Three Times and Out by McClung, Nellie Letitia]