

Elaborate German Underground Works

The German front in the west is like one huge straggling village, built of wood, and strung out along a road 300 miles long. Of course, the houses are all underground. Still, they are houses, of one or two floors, built to certain official designs, drawn out in section and plan. The main entrance from the trench level is, sometimes at any rate, through a steel door of a pattern apparently standardized, so that hundreds may come from the factory on one order and missing parts be easily replaced. The profusely timbered doorway is made to their measure. Outside this front door you may find a perforated sheet of metal, to serve as a doormat or scraper.

Inside, a flight of from twelve to thirty-six stairs leads down at an easy angle. The treads of the stairs and the descending roof of the staircase are formed of mining

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frames of stout timber, with double top sills; the walls are of thick planks notched at the top and bottom to fit the frames, and strengthened with iron tie-rods running from top to bottom of the stairs and with thick wooden struts at right angles to these. At the foot of the stairs a tunnelled corridor runs straight forward, perhaps up to fifty yards, and out of this open rooms and minor passages on each side. In many dugouts a second staircase or two staircases lead to a lower floor, which may be thirty or forty feet below the trench level.

All these staircases, passages and rooms are, in the best specimens, completely lined with wood and as fully strengthened with it as the entrance staircase already described. In one typical dugout each section of a platoon had its allotted places for messing and sleeping, its own place for parade in a passage, and its own emergency exit to the trench. In another, used as a dressing station, there were beds for thirty-two patients and a fair-sized operating room. A third, near Mametz, was designed to house a whole company of 300 men, with the needful kitchens, provision, and munition store rooms, a well, a forge riveted with sheets of cast iron, an engine room and a motor room.

Many of the captured dugouts were thus lighted by electricity. In the officers' quarters there have been found full-length mirrors, comfortable bedsteads, cushioned armchairs, and some pictures. One room is lined with glazed "sanitary"

wallpaper, and the present English occupant is convinced by circumstantial evidence that his predecessor lived there with his wife and child. Clearly there was no expectation of an early removal.

Nobody who reads this should leap to the conclusion that, simply because German trench work is more elaborate than ours, it is a better means to its end—the winning of the war. No doubt the size and the overhead strength of German dugouts keep down casualties under bombardment, and sometimes enable the Germans to bring up unsuspected forces to harass our troops in the rear with machine gun and rifle fire when a charge has carried our men past an uncleared dugout of the kind. On the other hand, if our advance is made good, every German left in such a dugout will be either a dead man or a prisoner.

No doubt, again, the German dugouts give more protection from very bad weather than ours. But they also remove men more from the open air, and there is nothing to show that the half-buried German army gains more by relative immunity from rheumatism and bronchitis than it loses in the way of general health and vitality. In England troops have better health in tents than in huts, and better health in huts than in billets. For a man of sound constitution, "exposure" often means something unpleasant rather than unhealthful, and it would not be surprising if the close, underground villages of the Germans yielded higher figures of general sickness than our own simpler, shallower, and more airy trench shelters.

Germany's Difficulties

(St. John Globe)

Although military leaders and military correspondents no longer talk of German food shortage serious enough to prove an important factor in bringing the war to an early end, there is a growing belief that the food situation is one of Germany's most serious problems. This year's crop, somewhat better than that of last year, has provided grains and vegetables sufficient under careful administration methods to carry the country through another season. The real food problem is more one of the future than of the present, for Germany to-day is exhausting her capital stock of cattle, hogs, etc., at a rate which is worrying her statesmen and is making its influence felt even on the war policy of the country. Well informed neutral correspondents who have been in touch with neutral correspondents resident in Germany ever since the war started, correspondents who are really German

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in their sympathies, say that a recent census showed that Germany has 19,800,000 cattle. Of these 6,000,000 are calves, of no present value either for milk or breeding. The government has decreed that 8,000,000 must be conserved for breeding purposes. This leaves only 5,800,000 for food, and one-fifth of these are two-year olds. After another year of war Germany's reserves will be exhausted, and beef will be secured only by killing the milk and breeding stock and thereby curtailing the supply of a necessary article of diet and making still more difficult the problem of the future. How serious the cattle question has become is only fully realized by those who give thought to the future. With an early peace—that is, peace within a year—Germany would find it necessary to import upwards of 5,000,000 cattle and 4,000,000 hogs annually for four years to again put the country in a position to feed itself. This problem alone presents three almost insuperable difficulties: Where can the cattle and hogs be secured? How can they be transported? and, by no means the least important how can they be paid for? If able to transport and pay for such enormous quantities of stock, Germany would hardly be able to secure them in the world's markets. The nature of the transportation problem will be apparent to all who recall the statement that it will take upwards of two years to return to Canada the men of our fighting units overseas. Germany has a large mercantile marine, but what part of it will be German after the war is a question of the future. Quite as serious as the problem of supply and transportation is the financial question, for German credit after the war will not stand high before the world. Indeed men in close touch with the German rulers say the problem of finance is one of the really serious problems of the war. It is

realized that Germany will have to look to the world for assistance in re-establishing the trade lost through war. How will foreign bankers regard appeals for assistance? Will they be generous, or will they combine in enforcing exactions which will make still more difficult the rehabilitation of German industry? The possibilities and anxieties on this point are the subject of comment in an exceedingly interesting article by John R. Balderson, a well-informed American correspondent, who gives as his source of authority another American correspondent living in Germany, and with whom he had a long interview in Rotterdam.

According to this correspondent, German merchants and manufacturers, with the exception of toy and chemical makers, have no surplus stocks on hand and no available supplies for the manufacture of their products. Consequently, there can be no after-the-war dumping, as has been suggested. Instead, Germany must find ways and means of securing raw products and paying for them through credits. It was said by Mr. Balderson's informant that it is more because he realizes that American bankers and merchants must be looked to for assistance than because of any friendly feeling toward America that Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg and other German leaders resist the demands of those who call for resumption of the war of frightfulness. The situation with reference to the food supply of the future, and with reference to the trade credits of the future, not only dictates the present policy of Germany, but may prove a very important factor in moulding peace ideas. Germany is not starving to-day and will not starve to-morrow, but the national resource are being depleted with such rapidity that the future in defeat becomes a matter of the gravest concern. Although von Bethmann-Hollweg and others clearly see the difficulties ahead and realize in a measure the serious nature of the problems Germany will have to face in recovering from the war's losses, they are forced to go on with the war. They may even be forced out of office, giving place to those who, regardless of the future and the future's problems, will employ even more ruthless methods of warfare in the hope of snatching victory from defeat and of making the world realize more fully what

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Prussian militarism means. The day's news makes it clear that the agitation against von Bethmann-Hollweg makes progress with the progress of the Allied armies toward victory. Many German advocates of what they think will advance German interests take strong ground against consideration being given neutrals. A phase of this controversy is disclosed by the publication of a recent book by Prof. Eltzbacher, Dead and Living International Law, which argues that the deliberate destruction of civilian life is desirable and proper. He says: "Bombs may be dropped out of the air, even when no purely military purpose may be served thereby and no economic damage caused, the justification being that fear and disinclination to war are thereby, engendered among the enemy people and the psychic foundations of the conduct of the war thus destroyed." The author adds: "It is true that individuals will be killed and injured and private property will be damaged by bombs thus dropped, but this is only a means by which the nation as a whole can be reached". Elaborating his opinions, Prof. Eltzbacher says: "Seeing that war is now waged against a whole enemy people, the justified aim of war is to break the strength of the enemy people, this strength being the last foundation of military resistance." It is easy to understand that a nation which endorses and applauds this doctrine would have many advocates of the policy of frightfulness, many advocates of the doctrine that neutrals have no rights that need to be respected. What is surprising is that in the neutral world there should be any desirous of seeing the triumph of those principles over the principles for which the Entente Allies fight and die.

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