

ONLY THREE YEARS IN WAR—SPECIAL CABLES FROM THE WAR ZONES

NO TIME FOR PEACE TALK London, May 24.—A proposal put forward by the pacifist section at the annual meeting of the Northumberland Miners' Council urging the Government to initiate peace by negotiation was withdrawn. The movers indicated they considered the present time inopportune to press the measure.

HOSPITAL RAIDS PROVOKE HATRED

Doctors Hit Low Mark of Barbarism by Ignoring Red Cross

LARGE-SCALE MURDER

By PHILIP GIBBS

Special Cable to Evening Public Ledger

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War Correspondents' Headquarters in the Western Front, May 24.

It seems as though there might be a break in the spell of wonderful weather which we have had during these weeks of May. The days have been rich in sun, which poured its gold over the fields of France so that legions of flowers in the grass have not been less wonderful, these nights of white moonlight and pale sky in which the stars shine coolly.

After the heat of the day officers and men sit outside billets or tents looking up at the stars or watching how the moon fills the fields or garden about them with a white gleam below the deep blackness of the trees and the inky shadows on the walls.

"The moon has Pierrot's face," said an officer last night. "It seems to smile down on this poor world with an ironical sadness."

"And no wonder," said his friend. "It looks down on some damned queer things tonight. Listen. The Gothic bird is out again on his diet work."

Gothas Fly Overhead

There were soft little sounds in the enchanted garden of an old French chateau, with moonlight full across its long facade. A bat skimmed to and fro. Some little beetle or locust chirped in the grass. There was the deep breathing of cows lying beside a stream, and in a thicket close to the house a nightingale thrilled its love song with passionate experiments in changing notes and rhythm. Then through the air came another sound at first no louder than the hum from the wing of a bee, but very quickly rising in volume to a great drone. It was a drone with a kind of pulsing beat, as though taking breath, and it was the unmistakable menace of a German engine.

Every night of late this noise has been heard over the British lines and at the beginning of the week the moonlight night was loud with it, and for a long time engine after engine sped through the sky as if to say, "I am here, once or twice, a German airplane crossed the light of a star as if it were a black blot on a flying London board," said an officer sitting near me. And then because he had a home in London like others, he said, "I don't know how you see them!" But some of those who had been in the front lines, and who had seen the German airplanes in the sky, said that they were flying trouble in France. It was a noisy night, and a very dreadful one. A remarkable thing was done by these German airplanes who took advantage of the moon. They flew over to a place which they had seen to day many times, so that they might know it. It is one of the British hospital camps. All the huts there are marked out with the sign of the Red Cross. The Red Cross flag waves from those trees for any living man to see.

Ignored Red Cross Flag

The enemy should be perfectly familiar with look and purpose of this collection of buildings and the lay of the ground in which they are placed, but in order, so they say, to destroy military works their bombing squadrons followed the line of the railway and hung their biggest bombs over this area with wanton carelessness of what might happen to men already wounded, and sheltered from bullets by the huts in the only sanctuary which this war can give them—under the Red Cross flag.

It was a tragedy of the most frightful kind and by the words of those who know, whatever their excuse, the German people stored up for themselves more cause of hate which, after the war, will close their eyes to a high wall against which the spirit of their race will beat in vain unless there is great mercy in the world.

To many of those who were in, or nearly all of them, were badly wounded men—men with open wounds fluted by running water, men with broken limbs stammered in sobs and pitiful cries, men so hurt that any touch or jar makes them quiver with pain.

That night the hospital camp was a scene of horror. Men who had been tending them by day were mostly in their own sleeping quarters. Only the night nurses and attendants were in the wards, many of them quietly about, keeping watchful eyes on the patients, listening to that sound of breathing which tells them how much about the state of each. For fear, and bending over a bed here or there to shift a man's pillow or to say a word of comfort to one who could not sleep. Then suddenly there was the noise of those German engines, as I heard them once in a hospital, like those before the crashes which followed and broke the windows.

Murder on Large Scale

The German flying men dropped a very great number of bombs, and each one burst in the midst of these huts. A kind of the bombs were of the largest size, which made enormous craters in the earth. Others were smaller shrapnel bombs, which swept the wards with bullets. They did murder on a big scale.

They killed many men who had escaped death on the battlefield and they were beds looked forward to again. They killed many hospital nurses who had devoted themselves to the service of their fellow-men, and many, after each battle, there were German soldiers getting the same

treatment as the British and the same kindness.

They killed and maimed women whose uniforms should make them sacred in this war. The total of killed and wounded runs into some hundreds.

I am told, and I do not need to be told because I have seen the courage of these women in air raids, that the nurses were brave and beautiful in their devotion to the wounded. Nearly by were bomproof shelters, but not one of them left her post to take cover.

Throughout the raid, which lasted in two phases for two hours, they moved up and down the wards, comforting the patients by their words, attending to the gravest cases, lingering by the bedside of men whose nerves were shattered by this sort of massacre of death, and not showing any faintness of heart, however great their secret terror of this dreadful thing done to them. There were brave hearts here in those hospitals, but no courage can cure the cruelty of this scene of blood and agony which is a part of the devil's dark drama of war.

Puts Blame on British

One German airplane was brought down with its crew alive—three of them. Two had been wounded by our anti-aircraft fire. The captain, who had been hit in the arm, spoke perfect English and claimed to have been in the German diplomatic service before the war. When he was asked why he bombed hospitals he disclaimed all knowledge of having done so, and with a shrug of the shoulders said:

"If you will insist on putting your hospitals near railways you will get them bombed."

He had followed the railway, being late and anxious to get to bed. He was dropping his bombs for destruction on a big scale.

This German officer's defense can hardly be considered. In all might it implies the British as well as the Germans, there can be no certainty of hitting the target. But at least the British living there take some care to avoid hospitals of which they know the whereabouts, and these German bombs do not seem to have taken any care whatever.

A night raid on hospitals is one of those tragedies with which all the history of four years is blackened.

FRENCH MAY BOMB

FOE'S OPEN TOWNS

Will Follow British Example, Newspaper Hints—News From U. S. Unpleasant

Special Cable to Evening Public Ledger

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Paris, May 24.

Detailed reports show investigation by a group of New York papers concerning the question of whether the United States Senate and Department of Justice might be inclined to Americans in France. They do not refrain from commencing this Washington news with the recent records of French and British airmen. The latter destroyed a thousand German planes in two months. The latest report shows that the French and British airmen destroyed 274 German planes in an expedition May 23.

There is no reference to Americans in this report.

The comparison with the Washington newspaper is particularly interesting because of French realization of the value of French aerial protection of the land. This night in succession enemy planes have made three efforts to bomb Paris, causing three deaths and one wounded in the city.

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BIG GERMAN BOMB FAILS TO EXPLODE



Photo from London and Liverpool. By some freak of fortune this aero bomb dropped into the city of Nancy by a German airplane failed to explode. The rudder-shaped arrangement at the tip of the big bomb keeps it falling straight downward.

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