

German Soldiers Move Freely Among British

Tommies Astonished at Meeting Gray Uniforms in Border Towns—Many Strange Scenes in Liberated Belgium

By PHILIP GIBBS

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Verviers, Nov. 30 (delayed).

Last night British cavalry patrols reached the German frontier beyond Spa and tomorrow morning troops of the Second Army will begin their advance through German territory to Cologne and the Rhine. Coming from Liege I went through Spa today, and as far as the advance cavalry outposts along the Malmedy road to the frontier line between Belgium and Germany.

The scenery had become German already. It is hill country, with roads winding through fir forests above deep ravines, where the red undergrowth glowed like fire through the rich green fir trees and where on hillside and in valleys there were wooden chalets and villas with pointed turrets like those in the Black Forest.

The road to Malmedy dips to the edge of Belgium, and it was there, a few yards beyond the Belgian custom house, that we halted on this side of the little stone bridge over the stream which divides the two countries. A picket of Royal Dragons was holding the bridge with double sentries and with orders to let no man cross.

Over there, a few yards away, was Germany, a fringe of what was until these few weeks ago the mighty German Empire. Not a human being appeared on this side of the stone bridge. There was no German sentry facing ours. The gate into Germany was open and unguarded. There was deep silence over there by the pine woods where the undergrowth was red. I wonder what will happen when we ride through that silence and that loneliness into the first German town, and afterward through many German towns and villages, on the way to Cologne.

There were German soldiers on our side of the frontier. In the town of Spa, where the German armies had their general headquarters, until the armistice and where the Kaiser and Hindenburg discussed their plans on the western front.

For the first time since the war began I saw them walking about freely, and not as prisoners, among British officers and men. There were 250 of them in Spa, working under the white flag with British missions to arrange the details of handing over the material of war, according to the conditions of the armistice. It is an astonishing thing to find them there and it is impossible to get over one's sense of surprise at meeting them face to face in the streets and seeing them go into shops and restaurants filled with British soldiers, and moving about freely without a guard. Time was, not so long ago, when one became excited if, from a slit in the earth, one saw through a pair of field glasses the gray arms moving stealthily behind the white line of the trenches and some voice by one's side said, "Germans, by love!"

Germans Act Like Humans

But in Spa a German is not shot at night. He takes the pavement as though it belongs to him, goes between English officers to buy a bun at a counter of a pastry shop or salutes formally as he passes in the roadway.

Today I saw a group of German officers in front of a garden of a chalet preparing to get out in a motorcar. It is true there was a white flag in front of the car, but otherwise they seemed to be starting out on a joy ride, as free as the wind. To me was one of the most sensational things I have seen since the entry into Lille. But I suppose we shall get used to it. The Germans themselves seem to take it all as a matter of course, and hide their feelings under an impassive mask. But yesterday they showed some obvious interest when the first squadron of British cavalry passed through on the way to the frontier and they leaned out of the windows to catch the lancers as they passed. I think they must have been surprised at

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the sight of all these well-groomed horses, so sleek and so fine, for their own horse flesh was worn to skin and bones. "You never saw anything like it," said some English prisoners whom I met to-day in Verviers. "They could hardly stagger along, and we used to have to teach the poor beasts how to walk before we could get the transport out."

These boys of the Twentieth and Forty-fourth divisions told me also that the sight of a German transport in retreat was like the sight of a German transport in retreat. Their carts were tied up with strings and loaded up with household furniture stolen from the Belgians: chickens, pigs, sheep, mattresses and pots and pans, while they led cows along the road and pushed carts and wheelbarrows loaded with what had a habit of falling to pieces in the ditches. Their machine guns were taken back in handcars made up of biscuit boxes.

During the last week I have passed through many strange scenes and seen new aspects of human nature as they are revealed in this drama of liberated peoples—some of them good to see and some not good. It has been a great stirring of human emotions—joy for the passing of the hostile rule, with its daily nagging tyrannies and black remembrances of brutal and cruel things; the spirit of patriotism exalted to intoxication by flags and banners and the passing of the soldiers who fought for this victory; the comradeship of the Allied soldiers, linked together by what their nations have suffered and achieved, so that strangers are friends received into the family because they wear khaki or blue or a prisoner's badge; and underneath all this tenderness and generous uplifting of hearts unforgettable hatred and thirst for vengeance against them and a passionate desire to burn or break the places where they lived and the things they used and the property of those who were too familiar with them on this side of their frontier.

Crowds Take Revenge

In Namur and Liege and Verviers the crowds have been unable to restrain themselves from laying hands upon certain houses where people of their race were too kind to their own enemies and made traffic with them. Smash! go the window-panes, and out of the windows came chairs and tables for a bonfire in the streets to throw a sudden glare upon the laughing faces of the mob. There are always crowds in the streets and squares, collecting densely when columns of troops pass through, when the prisoners tell their tales, when the portrait of King Albert is painted in colors of light on the wall of a public building, or when the ring is clear for the dance, as I saw one late night in Liege—a glorious game of kiss-in-the-ring before the whistle blew for the troops to go.

For the most part they are laughing crowds with the gaiety of a big family party gathered together after a long separation; but now and then out of one of these dense groups of men and women there comes wailing and shrieks and a new note in the laughter, a note which does not cease, but becomes derisive now. It is another woman having her hair cut off as a public infamy because of her known friendship with German officers.

I was in a restaurant the other night, and a handsome girl came in and hung her furs up on a peg. A waiter went

up to her, and in a loud voice denounced her with frightful names.

"A week ago," he said "you were here with a German officer."

All the people in the restaurant were silent, and into their eyes came a look which was not pleasant to see. One or two men rose from their chairs, but the girl, who had come in white, like the tips had fumbled for her furs and went through the swinging door like a shadow.

Women Protest Innocence

On the walls of Liege are appeals from women protesting their innocence of friendship with the enemy, and naming witnesses to guarantee their respectability. Innocence is in jeopardy when attacked by rumor. For the guilty, they have no pity among their own people. It is all a big, strange, turbulent drama in towns like Liege and Namur and Verviers.

Hundreds of British prisoners have also found their way here and have been lucky in their halting place, for a group of citizens, with two English women, Miss O'Brien and Miss Warren, were waiting for them and had already, with fine rapidity, organized a plan to help them in every possible way. These people early in the war founded a society called the Private Club, the object of which was to learn English, so that they might be ready to welcome the British soldiers on the day of liberation. The two "English misses," as they call them, were their professors, and the members of the club studied English grammar, held debates and lectures in broken English and learned so well that when I met them two days ago they could all speak English fluently and correctly.

"It is a queer thing," said one of the British prisoners, "but everybody seems to speak English in this town. Have we come into England or part of Belgium?" But they had come into the city of Liege, where the people learned English with love and made rapid progress.

The Private Club altered its title to

"Anglo-American Club" as soon as the Germans departed from Liege and established temporary offices in the Hotel Continental, which became a receiving house for British prisoners. Posters were put up all over the city inviting British prisoners to register themselves there, and the members of the club, including Miss O'Brien, a great little Irish girl, standing five feet high under her red-gold hair, with an as gallant a spirit as ever were, went around Liege with other members of the club with arms raised to act as guides.

All Liege Illuminated

Last night in Liege, where the war began, the people were out until midnight under canopies of banners and triumphant arches, watching the illumination of the city, and truly I have seen nothing so brilliant since one of the jubilees when London was blazing with illuminations. All public buildings and hundreds of private houses and thousands of shops were lit up by electric bulbs and by devices in colored lights, so that after five winters of darkness and closed blinds one's eyes were dazzled by all this brightness, and it seemed as though something had lifted from the world some dark horror of night, as indeed, it has.

I left Liege when the King of the Belgians with General Leman, hero of its first resistance, was about to enter. But further along the roads, on the other side of Spa, these were triumphal arches through which British cavalry rode and infantry marched and lorries went swinging; and for them there was a royal progress amid miles of cheers.

Quintconck Turned Over to U. S.

The first ship completed at Hog Island has been turned over to the Government. It is the Quintconck, a 750-ton carrier. It is at League Island. It is the first fabricated ship in actual operation.

ROMA SI PREPARA AD ACCOGLIERE WILSON

Il Capo degli S. U. Sara Ospite dei Sovrani d'Italia

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Grandi preparativi si stanno facendo in Roma per la prossima visita del Presidente Wilson e della sua signora, che saranno ospiti dei Sovrani d'Italia ed opereranno al Quirinale gli stessi appartamenti che ospitarono l'Imperatore e l'Imperatrice di Germania quando visitarono la città eterna. Gli appartamenti sono stati rimodernati ed abbelliti. Il Presidente Wilson decise di iniziare la demolizione del Palazzo Caffarelli che fu già sede del l'Ambasciata tedesca, ed ove il Kaiser aveva fatto erigere un trono per se stesso. Il palazzo Caffarelli fu costruito

nell'anno 1880 a trovarsi sul Colle Capolino. Come simbolo della nuova civilizzazione proclamata dal Presidente Wilson, questi è stato designato ad avere il privilegio di dare il primo colpo di piccone per la distruzione dell'edificio, divenuto per gli Italiani simbolo dell'aggressione tedesca e dell'ambiguità per la dominazione del mondo. Durante il soggiorno degli ospiti illustri saranno organizzate delle visite al Foro, al Colosseo, al Palatino e ad altri importanti ed antichi monumenti della città. Tali visite saranno effettuate sotto la guida del Prof. Giacomo Boni, direttore degli scavi nel Foro. Pranzi in onore del Presidente Wilson verranno dati dal Re, dal Principe Colonna, sindaco di Roma, e dall'Ambasciatore Americano, Thomas Nelson Page.

È stato ufficialmente annunciato che Re Vittorio Emanuele visiterà la Francia entro il corrente mese. Il Re sarà accompagnato dalla sua famiglia. Al ritorno in Roma il Principe Umberto intraprenderà un corso militare nell'Accademia Navale di Livorno.

Nell'altro il Ministro delle Finanze e l'Imperatore di Germania, il Principe Nitti, parlando alla Camera dei Deputati, sostennero e difesero il monopolio di stato dei vari articoli. L'on. Nitti annunciò che un decreto è già pronto per provvedere a questi monopoli, compreso anche quello dell'alcool. Infante una mozione, firmata da parecchi deputati che rappresentano

praticamente le diverse frazioni politiche della Camera, e' stata presentata alla Presidenza, domandando la sospensione del decreto che estende il monopolio di stato.

Il localo commercianti di carbone sono fortemente opposti al monopolio di stato del loro prodotto, dichiarando che esso ledge gli interessi commerciali del Paese. Sono giunti in Roma parecchi ufficiali aviatori giapponesi i quali cominciarono un corso di perfezionamento presso un Campo di Aviazione Italiano.

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