

GROUND BENEATH HEELS OF IRON

Civilian Life in Germany and Its Genuine Grievances.

THE SWAGGER OF THE MILITARY

The Policy of Cut-and-Run as Imposed by the Lieutenants on Germans in Civil Life--Cases in Which Officers Stormed and Civilians Apologized and Fled--Other Cases in Which an American Neither Apologized nor Fled, but Still Was Vanquished--The Civilian as a Stage Clown.

From the Sun.

The Bruswitz affair has come to be regarded as the one of the crowning atrocities of German militarism. The spectacle of an armed officer assassinating on the spot an unarmed civilian whose original offence was to bump chairs with him accidentally in a restaurant has been held up to view by the press of all civilized lands as an illustration of what the German people must suffer at the hands of their own standing army. The man who knows Germany and the Germans would be quite likely to think, after reading of this assassination, that the brutality of officer toward civilian could go no further, no more striking example of military oppression in times of peace could be given by a highly civilized people.

Yet anybody who has lived in Germany in recent years knows that it is not the Prussians who do most in that empire to oppress and torment the civilian subjects of the Hohenzollerns. It is not the officers stamping about with drawn swords and furious threats in the saloons nor yet those ever ready with their swords to demand meetings with swords or pistols, who make the self-respecting civilian long for other lands and less tempestuous seas. Such men of action are rare in the German army, or, if not rare, take pains to hide their swords. It is not the military bully's challenge that harasses the ordinary civilian in Germany. It is rather the lead of class contempt which the officers' corps puts upon the back of the rest of the nation. That is the burden that kills. You may resent the insult of any one man in Germany. If you are a German, you at least can fight a duel and save your self-respect at the expense of a doctor's bill. If you are an American, you can thrash your antagonist to your own satisfaction, even though your style of revenge does not suit anybody else. But who can face and demolish the front of a whole army corps? Who can stand up against the thousands of commissioned officers, entrenched in the vested privileges of active service and gone into by tens of thousands who have gone into the reserves with the same ideas of position and prerogative? It is like trying to upset centuries of Prussian military tradition and aristocratization with one man's strength the whole political and social fabric of the German empire. From the present point of view the effort is hopeless.

Most German civilians, outside of the titled class, make compromise to self-respect and take things as they come. Most foreigners much choose between a similar course and helping themselves from difficulty to difficulty, until the neighborhood becomes too hot for them and they move on to France or England to lead a pharisee life, far even from the civilian's smile. The aim of the writer of this article is to give a few instances of what civilians in Germany bear, how some bear it and others do not, and why a man who intends to become a citizen anywhere between the Vosges and the Vistula must prepare for occasional crises in his continental career, especially if he be an American with the temperament and temper that an American usually has.

A SPECIFIC INSTANCE

Early in this month the Berlin newspapers published a brief narrative, which, on account of its familiar incidents, is well calculated to define the principal features of an encounter between a German reserve lieutenant and a German civilian. The two sat at a table for the first time during the dinner hour on the fast express between Dresden and Berlin. The civilian was a Chemnitz merchant of considerable property--one who, in New York, would pass as an influential lawyer, and would sit on platforms to lead dignity to political demonstrations. He finished his meal in the dining car before the lieutenant reached the desert. He threw back his coat front, lighted his cigar, and leaned back to puff it at peace with his soul. The lieutenant laid down knife and fork and looked at him. The merchant blew out smoky rings, all unconscious of the brewing storm, and apparently did not know there was an officer in the car. Several of his fellow travelers became uneasy. They saw that the lieutenant had "fixed" (fixirt) the merchant; that is, had fastened his eyes upon him so intently as to give cause for the fatal question, "Why do you stare at me, and to the fighting point. They tried to warn the merchant of his danger, to motion to him that he was offending the lieutenant and would do well to cease smoking for the time being, but in vain. The merchant smoked on in serene oblivion, and the lieutenant stared on with growing wrath. After five minutes' suspense, the lieutenant broke the painful silence with the sharp, rising, nasal tone which is used by lieutenants to betoken anger. He brought the matter to his side with a call that roused even the merchant

from Chemnitz. Pointing to the merchant, he demanded:

"What kind of a creature is that with a cigar?"

The waiter shook his head in dumb trepidation. Then the lieutenant shouldered the words and quoted literally: "Anyhow, you go and tell that fellow ahead there that he must take that stinker (stanker) out of his mouth."

If an unaccustomed American had been present he might have prepared to move out of the way, was troubled, probably would have heaved his hand luggage into a remote corner; he doubtless would have remarked that the merchant, though a little heavy, ought to carry all the money and win the contest in style. A Frenchman would have expected a blow and an exchange of cards. A Russian would have expected anything from coffee cups to pistols on the spot or later, and a German--well, a German would have expected just what happened. The Chemnitz merchant looked like a bear from his mouth, and he remarked courteously that he had not intended to violate any rule against smoking "stinkers," and that he regarded it as rather discourteous to call him a "fellow." Up jumped the lieutenant with both arms raised, and roared:

"If you don't get out of here instantly, I will put a leg on you that will help you run. You would not be the first person of your kind that I have put legs on."

That was the last word in the scene; the Chemnitz merchant turned and fled to the next compartment, as he said afterward, for fear that he might be sacrificed on the spot as was Bruswitz's victim. The eight civilians who had witnessed the prosecution, apology, menace and flight jumped with a burst of indignation, but like the proper German civilians they were, they did not let an indignation spill over in the lieutenant's presence; that might have consequences. So instead, they reserved their peace until they were alone with the Chemnitz merchant, when they advised him to make it warm for the lieutenant in one way or another that would not involve personal violence.

THE SEQUEL

So far this little narrative of the merchant and the lieutenant has moved along in conventional lines, but the rest of it is a little out of the routine. When the train reached the Anhalt station in Berlin the Chemnitz merchant, encouraged and supported by the eight other civilians, took steps to learn who the reserve lieutenant was, and to complain of him to the military authorities. What unexpectedly this brought the young man to terms, and he made a grumbling excuse for his conduct, and requested the merchant to let the matter drop. This exceptional outcome of the scene on the train is given merely for the record; it has no significance as regards the essential features of rumpuses of this class. These features are that the German officers open hostilities by grossly insulting the civilian, and continues them by refusing to accept any apology that the civilian may offer for being present on being alive, by threatening to thrash or stab the civilian, and finally by putting the civilian to flight. That a civilian should run to save his skin from an army officer's attack is a tradition that seems to bring no shame with it in Germany. Most civilians, however, find it more military bully as frankly as they might tell of running from a supernatural monster whom it assaeth the power of man to resist.

THE YANKEE WAY.

A few days after Hansen's skirmish at Haaberlein's the Cincinnati young man, who, for convenience, may be called Newhill, was present at the restaurant of Lühr's hotel, in the Hauptstrasse. Every time a man in uniform entered Newhill eyed him as if he had a special grievance against him. Four young officers came in together and sat down at two tables front of him. Newhill eyed them for a moment, and then he eyed the four had a single eyeglass, through which he mustered the room with ostentatious satisfaction. When the glass was levelled at the Americans Newhill pushed back his chair, folded his arms, leaned back, and stared at them. An gentleman nudged Newhill and told him not to pick a quarrel, but Newhill remained rigid and stared on. The lieutenant rose slowly, evidently intending to descend upon Newhill and demand an explanation. Newhill, too, rose slowly, but in a way that was gradually losing color. When two men face each other thus in Germany a panorama of cards, seconds, doctors, duels, and hospital visits whirl past the mind's eye of every spectator, an avalanche of events is supposed to be gathering in the direction of the field of honor and its course is regarded as irresistible. So at Lühr's hotel on that evening everybody ceased eating and gazed as if hypnotized on the two men who stood and faced each other. The lieutenant, however, was not so much affected to pass a few derisive comments on Newhill's behavior. Newhill did not move. His eyes were fastened on the advancing lieutenant, and his hands were clenched. At length the Americans understood, even if the Germans did not. Just before the lieutenant was within arm's reach, he opened his mouth to address Newhill, but something must have told him that he had reached the danger line, for he suddenly turned to the left, and, with a polite ask for a match, lighted a cigarette and returned to his party. It was a clear case of funk. To be sure, the lieutenant's companions tried to cover his retreat by casting scornful looks at Newhill, but they could not "cut" (cut) in audible tones, but Newhill looked back with as much scorn and more defiance, and remarked "Ridiculous" still more loudly. Newhill's purpose was to meet the lieutenant at every point, and he would have done so, without further remarks, left the restaurant a few minutes later. This little success gave Newhill the idea that he had solved the lieutenant problem. He told his friends that if a man would only show the needful amount of "chutzpah" he could see through fellows and beat them at their own game.

It would be purposeless to trace Newhill's course through all the numerous little scenes, like the one at Lühr's, which were enacted by him at the City Park concert, on the Castle Terrace, and in Haaberlein's. Suffice it here to say that within a few weeks he regarded himself as competent to handle the whole question of militarism in peace, and was looked on as a Newhill among the young officers of the Heidelberg garrison. He was a "bad American" no doubt, in their opinion, and the best thing to be done with him was to make Heidelberg too hot for him.

HAENSEN'S FLIGHT.

A moment later, however, the door burst open, and in hurried Hansen--not, however, the sleek, affable, dignified Hansen of former evenings, but a dishevelled, white-faced, rumped and tattered Hansen, looking as if he might have slid in from the towering Gaisberg at our doors. His story was soon told. He had run foul of a lieutenant. He was playing his regular game of billiards at Haaberlein's when three young army officers entered. All three were well, excepting Hansen and his friend, however, the players were Saxo-Burseries, who, though only corps students, are rather pugnacious in their way, and, if put to it, will fight about anybody with about any weapons. Two of the lieutenants wished to play billiards, and they apparently decided to obtain a table by strategy. Naturally their plan did not involve a Saxo-Burseries table, for the students might make trouble; they therefore drifted on to the table at which Hansen and his friend were playing. First they started the two civilians out of the room, then they began criticizing the shots. Still Hansen and his friend stuck to their guns. Then one lieutenant laid his hands on the cushion just as Hansen drove the cue ball round the table. That ball struck the lieutenant's fingers. "Thunder and lightning, you block-head, didn't you ever have any bringing up?" shouted the lieutenant, advancing on Hansen, while his companions encouraged him to "teach the shaver some manners."

"But you put your fingers there after I shot," protested Hansen.

"Blockhead, hold your tongue before I give you a lesson!"

The lieutenant put his hand on his sword hilt and Hansen ran. There was a table in the way, and Hansen fell over it. There was a chair, too, and he stumbled on it. He grasped his hat and coat, fled with them to the street, put them on as he ran, and did not stop running until he turned into the Gaisberg strasse. He closed his narrative with the question:

"Did you ever hear of such rude behavior? Is it not a shame for an officer to attack a peaceable man in this way?"

The Cincinnati man eyed the stammering German angrily.

"What did you run for?" he asked.

"What did I run for?" reiterated the hauber-dasher. "What did I run for? Why the man might have killed me if I hadn't run. You don't know how crazy these fellows are when they are provoked. He would have run me through with his sword."

"Why didn't you hit him in the jaw? He wouldn't remember long about his sword if you landed once with that right of yours."

The suggestion seemed to daze Hansen. After a his meditation he replied, however, with a mixture of awe, pride and contempt:

"That would cause a great scandal. We do not do such things in Germany. You may in America, but here we don't punch like rowdies."

The reply was a whole thing in a nutshell. It was the proper thing, according to the customs of the country, for a civilian to run from an army officer: it was the improper thing to return a blow for an insult, or to knock down a lieutenant before he could draw his sword. Newhill eyed the man in the view did not appeal to the Cincinnati man's sense of propriety, however; in fact, Hansen's development of it roused his indignation. He had a sequence of tales which is calculated to teach a lesson to foreigners ambitious to denigrate the military traditions of Germany.

Little by little Newhill written from the story of his sorrow. While he was in the restaurant, a German lieutenant in uniform and a Bohemian reserve lieutenant had bent toward her and exclaimed:

"Ah, but she is a stunning creature!" The Bohemian reserve lieutenant had added:

"An English bird of paradise; perhaps she would go back to Prague with me." The officer had emphasized his remark with a leer and a bow.

Newhill took the young woman in red to her door. There he listened to the City Park. An American friend there knew something of the trouble, for he had noticed the officers apparently flirting with the girl in red. He said that he could recognize the two men, but he did not know the Australian's reputation. Finally the Bohemian was found alone in the restaurant on the Castle Terrace. Newhill walked up to the table at which the officer was sitting, and said to him, "The Bohemian rose. Newhill related what had happened in the City Park, and demanded an apology. The officer, bursting with indignation, refused to give one. That was about all there was of it, except that Newhill suggested the officer with a blow on the forehead, bowled him over with another blow on the jaw, and, in response to a rush of persons, more or less unconcerned, scattered abroad gave signs of interest in passing events, and Newhill returned to his quarters in the Villa Berghelm, at the lower end of the town, to which he had moved recently. He recollected that he had told somebody he would be at home from 10 to 12 o'clock, and, punctually at 11:01 he received a call from a lieutenant of massive proportions. Evidently the largest man in the garrison had been selected to deal with the North American savage. "Swords with honor," said the message. The burden of the lieutenant's message, the gravestone of "raising" the weapons to pistols being left to Newhill. After some beating about the bush Newhill said he wouldn't fight; not that he was afraid of the outcome, but that he would not wish to demonstrate his qualifications by going at once with his challenger to the tennis court behind the house and pinning a half dollar on the first shot. However, he thought the reserve officer had been punished enough; he was satisfied with that, and he thought he would give an honorable exit to the fight, and, as an American, he felt able to take care of himself anywhere in the American fashion. The officer remonstrated, but in vain. Then he told Newhill that should the challenger come back, Newhill should accompany him to the door, throw it open, and pointed to it, in mute invitation to the lieutenant to go if he could not restrain his tongue. The lieutenant evidently thought that more violence was coming, for, with a scowl, he immediately following the encounter, although he did not confess them. Wherever he went he was frowned on. If he played billiards at Haaberlein's, corps students and officers scowled at him from the coffee saloon. If he went to the City Park, dark looks met his eyes whenever he raised them. If he lounged late along the street men stopped and whispered behind him. Other Americans came to him with tales of plots to overpower him and beat him late at night when he might be caught on his lonely way home. The Englishmen who he never had met before called upon him separately and told him he might count on their help whenever he needed it. They had heard he was to be waylaid and beaten or run through, and they were ready to see the fight through to the end. The lieutenant, however, had longed to serve him. He does not curse the old man once, and the old man retires to a corner of the stage and curses him for not cursing him. And, O crowning horror of horrors, the supposed lieutenant offers to shake hands with the German! On the whole, the young lawyer learns what is the trouble with the persons who are bowing down to him, and becomes so put up with the idea that it is possible for him to correct the mistake he has made.

Thereby hangs a tale of civilian sorrow which teaches the same moral as the fable of the ass in the lion's skin. The civilian is introduced to an old general, and becomes frightened at the grand military language of the warrior. Then he is introduced to a young officer and a young lawyer, who are gallant and dash of his eighth wonder of society. When the young officer snorts through his nose about war, the civilian cowers and stammers and edges away. When the young officer lays his hand on his sword hilt and an offering of his villain jumps and begins to apologize for an offence never committed. Surely something must be wrong, surmise the unappreciative coquette and her family and the veteran man servant. Surely it is as stupor and cowardly and clumsy and humbling as the old man's, and he never committed. Surely something must be wrong, surmise the unappreciative coquette and her family and the veteran man servant. Surely it is as stupor and cowardly and clumsy and humbling as the old man's, and he never committed. Surely something must be wrong, surmise the unappreciative coquette and her family and the veteran man servant.

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little by little Newhill written from the story of his sorrow. While he was in the restaurant, a German lieutenant in uniform and a Bohemian reserve lieutenant had bent toward her and exclaimed:

"Ah, but she is a stunning creature!" The Bohemian reserve lieutenant had added:

"An English bird of paradise; perhaps she would go back to Prague with me." The officer had emphasized his remark with a leer and a bow.

Newhill took the young woman in red to her door. There he listened to the City Park. An American friend there knew something of the trouble, for he had noticed the officers apparently flirting with the girl in red. He said that he could recognize the two men