

**Experiences as Prisoner of War in Officers Camps at Torgau and Burg, and camps at Altengrabow, Göttingen and Ohrdorf.**

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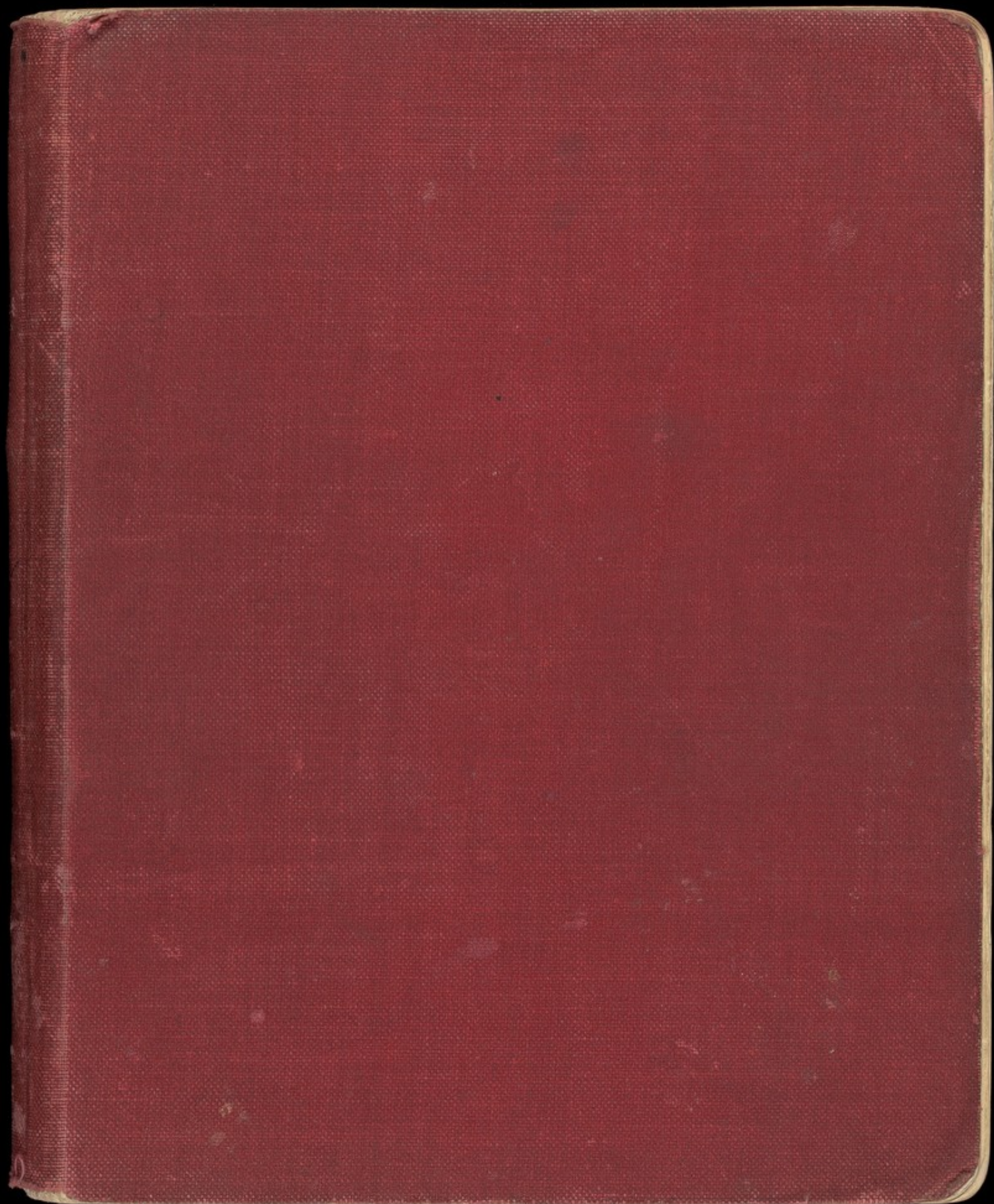
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**D.C.M. FOR PRISONERS OF WAR.**

It is announced in the Supplement to the *London Gazette* dated the 3rd inst. that the King has been pleased to award the Distinguished Conduct Medal to No. 84's Sergeant J. Spencer, Royal Welch Fusiliers; No. 6094 Corporal A. Bramwell, of the same regiment; and No. 6539 Private J. Gray, of the Cameron Highlanders, in recognition of valuable services rendered by them when prisoners of war during the epidemics of cholera and typhus fever at the prisoners' camp at Göttingen, Germany.

War Office,  
October 26, 1916.

His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to award the Distinguished Conduct Medal to the undermentioned Non-commissioned Officers and men of No. 22nd Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps, in recognition of great devotion to duty and eminent services rendered by them when prisoners of war during epidemics of cholera and typhus fever, at the Prisoners of War Camps in Göttingen and Ohrdruf, respectively.

No. 12402 Staff-Serjt. T. E. Rondell.  
No. 170 Acting-Cpl. D. M. Newall.  
No. 4586 Pte. A. Hazell.  
No. 8392 Pte. H. Blackman.  
No. 8653 Pte. J. Canty.  
No. 8892 Pte. J. I. Robertson.

War Office.

RAMC 453/2

*Experiences of a Prisoner of War  
In Germany.*

*The Capture  
The Journey to Litzmann  
Life in Litzmann } Officers Camps.  
Burg  
Sufferings of British Prisoners at Litzmann  
The Treatment of Prisoners at Göttingen  
Ohrdruf.*

Nearly all <sup>the personnel of</sup> No 4 Field Ambulance <sup>were</sup> captured at Landreies on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 1914, this was the day after the night attack on the 4<sup>th</sup> Guards Brigade by the 45<sup>th</sup> Regt of German infantry, & some artillery. The enemy had been successfully beaten off during the night, but not without the loss of 160 killed, & wounded including 4 officers, 3 of whom were killed and one wounded.

No 4 Field Ambulance was ordered to evacuate the wounded, & bury the dead, (30 men had been killed) and while searching the scene of the battle for wounded and treating urgent cases in our dressing station we fell into the hands of the advancing Germans.

Quite early in the day our search parties were driven in by the German infantry, the latter were not rough or violent towards <sup>us</sup>, we had to put up our hands, and they searched us for weapons, &c, they did not take our money or valuables, but they took maps, & pocket knives.

Major Colbignwood, and I were captured by a patrol of the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry which was under the command of a Major, who spoke English very well he was quite polite about our capture, and he did not make a great fuss about it, but he had the



hospital searched for weapons immediately, and luckily for us he found none in the building, during the search he suggested to me that our wounded had fired on his troops from the windows of the hospital, and it was evident that he intended to punish all of us for it, I convinced him that no shots had come from the hospital, and so when no rifles were found in the building, he gave no orders for a firing party.

I shall never forget the calm, & callous manner in which this Major told me how his troops had killed all the men, women, & children in the Belgian, & French villages, where civilians had fired on them, and then how they burned down the villages, when I expressed surprise at this he said "C'est la guerre," and that seemed to be sufficient justification for him.

Our captor finally enquired about General Sir Douglas Haig, he wanted to know all about the General, he asked me a great many questions about him, and when he did not get the information he wanted from me, he made a few suggestions, the following is as

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Just as I can remember his enquiring.

Q. Was Sir Douglas Haig here last night?

A. I do not know.

Q. Has he come over to the war?

A. I do not know.

Q. What division is he commanding?

A. He is not commanding a division.

Suggestions— He is a personal friend of mine and I would like to know where he is, and what he is doing. I used to shoot with him in Scotland nearly every year. He carried on in that strain for quite a long time but it was no use, so he finally smiled in a cute kind of way and gave it up.

We were very busy on the day of our capture, as we had a large number of wounded in the school which <sup>had been</sup> ~~was~~ turned into a temporary hospital, and we helped a section of No 19 F.A. with some of their cases. The officers of No 19 F.A. who were there were exhausted from hard work during the night, and they were very glad to have our assistance.



During the day our hospital was very frequently visited by German officers both combatant, & medical, and at each visit the building was searched for arms, it was strange to see how the Germans loved their automatic pistols, they kept them ready in their hands all the time they were in the hospital.

It was an exciting and tiresome day, we had started at day break, and marched about nine miles, <sup>searching for wounded in contact with the enemy when</sup> then there was the search for wounded in contact <sup>we were captured. after being captured we had to go to the surgeon with the enemy,</sup> when we got captured, and then came surgical work in the hospital. <sup>as we were very fatigued with no extra work</sup> He had had no food all day, so by the evening fatigue was severe. I remember giving chloroform to a case for Dwyer, and nearly becoming anaesthetized myself, the patient would not go under, & I could not keep awake, but I managed the chloroform all right by pinching myself to prevent sleep.

About mid. day a guard of 4 German soldiers of the 45<sup>th</sup> Regt was placed at the gate of our hospital, these men were dirty looking, sunken, and they were hungry, they did not worry us, and soon our men were sharing their last remaining bits of

bully beef with them, our men did not know then, how badly they would want these tins of bully later.

Towards evening German officers suggested that we should be ordered to follow their army, as they thought that there would be plenty of work for us to do. None of them seemed to know what should be done with us, and we remained in Landrecies for the night.

All day on the 26<sup>th</sup> Aug 14 we heard heavy firing a little to the west of Landrecies where the battle of Le Cateau was going on, while the firing lasted we had hopes of a speedy re-capture, but late in the evening the the guns seemed to be farther away from us, & we ~~more~~ felt that the chances of re-capture were becoming rapidly more remote, and we realized how hopeless our position was.

German troops of all arms passed past Landrecies all the forenoon, they marched in 2 columns abreast on the road, and everything had to give way for them, but that did not cause any inconvenience as there was no other traffic on these roads that day these German troops were much fresher than ours.



who were not very far in front of them, and there were so many of them, & such a large number of guns that I felt that it was all up with us unless a miracle happened.

A German officer said to me ~~that I should~~  
"You will meet all your friends in Germany in a short time, as in a few days, we are taking the British army."

I replied. "You will have to fight the British army first, & you will not take it easily."

This German officer seemed to think that taking the British army would be a very easy matter for the Germans, and when I saw them marching through Landrecies in such numbers I thought that he might easily be right, and for a while I lost hope to a great extent, but not entirely, even if they do take the British army all will not then be lost. My thoughts for the next few days were depressing, & pessimistic, but at my worst moments I always retained a little hope, this hope was very indefinite, but I never lost it, and so I never felt the absolute desolation of despair.

On Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August 14; the day after our capture, we heard that we were to be under orders of the German authorities, and that they intended to send us back to our army as soon as it would be convenient for them to do so. That cheered us all up tremendously, but we did not then know as we know now, what a long time <sup>might</sup> ~~may~~ elapse before they could "conveniently" do so.

We had no food for our men on the 27<sup>th</sup> Aug. but we noticed that the troops had left some little things behind in the billets they had so hurriedly evacuated, so I went out in charge of a small party to look for food in the French barracks, we hunted through all the bits that were left behind, and found a number of emergency rations, &c and we found a quantity of good white French bread lying about also, we put all the food on stretchers and carried it to the hospital, where it was badly needed. During this search I found Sinclair's kit in a cellar; he had asked me to look after it for him so I took charge of it, and brought it along, hoping to return it to him in

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a short time. I did not think for a moment that I should keep this hat for nearly a Year before I could give it back to its owner.

We remained at Landsees until the 29<sup>th</sup> Aug when we marched to Barai, our time in Landsees was spent mostly in idleness, there were such a lot of us, and so few wounded, that we had practically nothing to do, but to listen to the sounds of war getting farther, & farther away from us.

There was some rifle fire in Landsees on the 26<sup>th</sup> Aug. when a patrol of the Gey's came in the afternoon, & fired and fired on some Germans in the town, it only lasted a few minutes, but there were some men killed and wounded while all the Gey's got away.

On August 28<sup>th</sup> 14 at about 3 P.M. there was a heavy burst of rifle fire a little to the west of the town, which only lasted a minute, or two, it did not sound like the work of a firing party as it continued too long a time, and there were no opposing troops about we did not know what was the cause of this firing, but soon smoke curled upwards from a burning farm

house near the town, & then we knew that they had been shooting civilians, & burning their houses.

Our march to Bawai on the 29<sup>th</sup> Aug was uneventful, the country was lonely, there were no French people to be seen anywhere, we met some German artillery on the march, and when we were nearing Bawai we had to pass a supply column. If the drives of all German supply columns are like those we met near Bawai I hope that they will be exterminated in the war, because these men were brutes, the only word which describes them adequately is one of their own language, and that is *Schweinhundt*.

These men cursed at us and lashed at us with their long whips, one of them paid particular attention to me, he tried hard to get me with his whip, & he fairly cursed me in English, & in German, it was the first time I heard that word which means so much in Germany. "*Schweinhundt*."



On our arrival at Tavarai we put our wounded into the hospital there, with other wounded who were being treated by a French doctor, & nursed by French Sisters of Charity.

It was a great improvement on the hospital at Lambreuil, the nurses made such a difference.

We were quartered for the night in the girls school, not very good quarters. People at home ought to go and look at the schools of France before sending their children to them.

We found a little restaurant in Tavarai where the good old French woman specialised in omelettes.

She did us very well, & even now I remember how hungrily we ate those omelettes in her little back room in Tavarai. It is sad to think that that poor woman is still in the hands of the enemy. 6-4-46

We halted at Tavarai all Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup> Aug. we refused to go on owing to the condition of our wounded who were not fit to be moved. The Germans were anxious to get us away, as they feared a sortie from Mauthausen, but we waited, and took things easy, and hoped for the sortie.

That afternoon a German officer a Lieut

of the reserve came & took over command of our Guard, apparently, the Sgt Major who had been in command up to this, had not sufficient authority over us, so this reserve lieutenant came to enforce Prussian discipline.

The action that we had hoped for, and the Germans feared so much did not take place.

I spent the Sunday in Tzarai looking for a boot shop, and although I found several, I was not able to get a pair of boots, there were none to suit me so I stuck to my old Gums, all that remained of my kit.

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August 1914. :- We were up early in the morning, and busy getting ready for the road, but it took some time to load up our waggons, so we did not start until after 8 am. The Lieut of reserve rode at the head of the column mounted on a dark grey charger, he would not go by the main road to Mons, as it was under fire from the French Guns at Maubeuge, so we went by bye roads, and thus made the march longer than it should have been.

We arrived at Mons at 3.30 P.M. and on our arrival there Her Lieutenant showed us his true Prussian colours; he had been polite up to this but now he changed into the conquering hero, and he marched us through the town on show, we marched up to the gates of the barracks and halted there for a short time, and then we marched down to the railway station, and finally back again to the barracks through different streets, so that all the people of Mons might see us and be impressed by the victorious Germans with their British prisoners. Our wounded were groaning in the ambulance waggons, they were tired and sore, & it was cruel to have them jolted backwards, forwards over the paved streets of Mons.

The people of Mons were very good to us, when we were being marched round on show, numbers of them both young & old rushed out and gave chocolate, & smokes to our men, much to the annoyance of the German Guard to whom of course they gave nothing. I remember how faintly an old lady handed me a packet of cigarettes



as I passed along, and I had barely time to say "merci Madame", as the Guard was close at hand, & very ready to express his disapproval in a forcible manner.

At 5.30 P.M. we marched into the barrack square, and our journey came to an end for the time being, here the Guard who had marched us from Tavarai left us, and we were placed under a Guard of line of communication troops (Landwehr.)

The men of the new Guard were *Schwindehaken* of the first order, I cannot find a word in the English language which describes them as well as this German word therefore I must use it; it is the most useful word in the German language.

On looking up at the top floor of the barracks on our right, we saw English faces at the windows and those faces belonged to other prisoners who had got there before us, they looked very sorry for themselves, and we soon learnt that they were considerably overcrowded in their rooms, but as it was strictly forbidden for us to talk to them we did not learn much about them then.

We waited on the barrack square for a long time and while we were there I saw, <sup>for the first time and</sup> the first, unwounded British officer prisoner of war, he was Lieut Ivan Hay of the 5<sup>th</sup> Lancers; he looked as though he was only just recovering from a severe fright, he was unshaven with a dirty looking beard coming on, but there was that something in his eyes which led me to conclude that he had been through something terrible, and later I heard that when he was being marched along with some French prisoners, that owing to an indiscreet action on the part of one of the French men, he was put up against a wall and fired ~~at~~ on at very close range, all the French were killed, or wounded, & he alone escaped.

I heard here that a German officer had stated that we had made improper use of the white flag, and that our circus march in Mons was a reprisal; how soon they began reprisals.

When we had waited until night fall on the barrack square at Mons we were ordered to move our wounded into barracks.

He began to unload the waggon and to move the patients up forthwith, and now we ~~found~~ had our first experience of German harshness; all around the doorway leading into the barracks were pools of liquid filth through which we had to wade ankle deep, and there were two sentries at the foot of the stairs, we were all allowed to enter, & to go up the stairs, but no one was allowed down again when I attempted to go down the sentries presented their rifles at me, & looked ugly, so I stayed up; gradually all of us assembled up stairs on the landing, and there was not a chance of getting down again, although we badly wanted our Great Coats we had to get on without them, & so we shivered for the night. There was a little straw on the beds for the wounded, but there were no bed clothes, or coverings of any description.

Neither the wounded nor ourselves got any food that evening at Mons, and it was so chilly after the sunbath from Tervin that we could not sleep. I found a few sheets of brown paper, and covered myself with them, but even that did not keep me warm.



We were called at 3.30. Am on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, and warned to be ready as soon as possible to march with our wounded to the railway station, <sup>where we arrived at 6.30 am</sup> we arrived at the station at 6.30 am. but there was no train for us until 7.30 P.M.

I shall never forget that wait at the Station at Vieux, it was a day of many incidents. Major C. interviewed a senior German Officer, as to our position and destination, what the German Officer said was not fit for translation, and only Butler knew what it meant, Butler hath a hard time being cursed all day, and generally abused when he acted as interpreter at interviews.

We were separated from the wounded and not allowed to treat them. I tried to go and see them in the goods shed, but a Hun with a bayonet would not let me pass.

We got no food all day. The pork which we ~~had~~ had carried in the waggons from Tzarai, was bad, but not too bad for the hungry Huns, who seemed to like it.

Our Medical & Surgical stores were confiscated & were belonged to the Field ambulance.

I saw a German Officer beat a wounded man with the flat of his sword, and a German Soldier hit me on the back with a heavy stick, I don't know why he did it, as I gave him no provocation, nor had the wounded man provoked the officer in any way.

Captain S- and I had put our field glasses away in our packs at Tarni, as we thought that they would be safer in the packs, than <sup>on</sup> our belts, and when we got separated from our kit last evening we felt that there was a chance of losing the field glasses and anything else that would be of any value to our captors, but we were told that we need not worry about the things as there would be a guard over them, yet when we opened our packs at Mons railway station both pairs of binoculars were gone, and some instruments had been stolen out of my pocket case, which had been broken open. Poor old S- was very sorry at losing his glasses, as they had been given to him by his wife. Mine had no sentimental value, but they were good glasses which I had only bought about a week before coming over, at any rate we learnt not to trust the German and we could not complain to the authorities, who were far too angry for that.

After our long wait in Mons station all day we were marched on to the platform for our train at 7 P.M. Just as we were going to the train we were ordered to hand over all knives and ordinary razors, and we were warned that we should be searched for weapons later, when anyone found in possession of a knife or a razor would be shot, and that probably all the others would be shot as well, so we handed over our little penknives and our dinner knives, and smashed our razors on the stones.

We heard that this precaution was taken because two men of a cavalry regiment (9<sup>th</sup> Lancers?) had succeeded in killing their guards with knives, & had escaped.

Our train came in at 7 P.M. and the wounded were put on board first, we 14 M.O.s, & the padre was then put into a 2<sup>nd</sup> class carriage & in each compartment, and as the train steamed out of the station we saw our P.A.C. men standing on the platform, and we did not see them again.

The train which was loaded with wounded both German and our own, travelled slowly stopping at most of the stations, & so we did not arrive at Brussels until late at night, on arriving there we heard English voices on the platform, & soon a number of the P.A.C. S. came



to our carriage, and told us that we were on our way to Germany, & that we should be treated well. The wounded received some attention at Dinsselt, and after a long delay the train went on; we passed Louvain early in the morning of 9<sup>th</sup> Sept 14; it was a fearful thing to look at this fine town, or rather the remains of it, as there was nothing left but blackened walls, the skeleton of the town that had been there before the Huns came; the destruction was very complete, but there were one, or two houses intact at the outskirts of the town, it seemed strange that any could have been saved from the fire.

What a memorial to Germanic Kultur is Louvain, a burnt city does not last long time, and perhaps it will be forgotten sometime in the future, but the remembrance of this crime should be preserved for ever, so that a similar outrage should never be allowed to take place again.

In the station when our train stopped a Hun antroffizier said. This war is hell & - of nonsense.

It was got up by the newspapers chiefly the Times & Daily Mail. He asked us whether we had heard of what had happened near Heligoland.

As we had not heard, he told us that most of the British fleet had been sunk there, and that there had been trifling German losses.

Here at Louvain, we heard from German sources that Kitchener, Joffre, & Winston Churchill had hanged themselves, and that Mr Asquith and several other British statesmen had gone mad.

We passed through Liege later on in the morning, and from the train one could see no signs of the recent fighting that had taken place there, but away to the west I saw a Zeppelin heading south. We were all feeling hungry by this time, but nothing to eat, & we only had a little water in our bottles since the day before.

The train steamed on slowly, and we did not arrive at Aachen until 3 P.M. This was our first halt in Germany, and owing to the extraordinary demonstration which took place against us there, it nearly became our last resting place. The cause of the trouble was a wounded German soldier who was in a carriage near ours, he said that we had been gouging out the eyes of wounded Germans down in France, and as a proof of this, he produced one of the large pocket knives

which we had landed on arrival, and pointing to the long Martin Spike, he said we had used that on the wounded German's eyes, needless to say, he was soon surrounded by a most indignant audience of civilians, most of whom wore the red cross badge on their sleeves, and soldiers from a troop train which had just arrived in the station, and in a short time this crowd rushed at our carriage and threatened to kill us. They looked very ugly, and capable of doing dirty work; some of them carried knives in their hands, & they looked as though they meant to use them on us. I can picture the faces of several of them as I write, they were ugly faces, pale with rage, and almost foaming at the mouths, and they were going to kill us. If the abuse that they yelled at us was as bad as it appeared to be, it must have been awful, I could not understand many words of it, but there seemed to be a lot of the word "Schwein" in it. A German officer arrived on the scene, and caused a lull in the storm, but after a few words with the men he told them to carry on, or something to that effect, and he went away, and the uproar commenced.



again, and the men looked more murderous than before we began to feel that they would kill us; some of them began to pull at the door handles of our carriage, and our position was more hopeless than ever.

Suddenly a young officer appeared on the platform and he shouted a word of command to the men, and they instantly slunk away to their train, looking rather ashamed of themselves, and the murderous looking civilian red cross men disappeared. We were saved.

That experience at Racheu is the worst that I have had in my life, it was such a sudden affair, they were so murderous looking, their shouting & spitting were so disgusting, and we were in such a poor condition to meet with such an affair, we had been in the train for nearly 24 hours without food, & we did not have much the day we spent at Hovos Station. I can ~~not~~ see now why <sup>Criminals</sup> men have a good breakfast before being hanged in England, they could not face the rope on an empty stomach.

Our next stop was at Pium, and it was dark when we got there, that was well for us as it saved us from the people. We got some

food moved out 22

and black bread by mistake at Qüren, owing to the darkness, ~~and~~ this was the first, and only food that we had for 48 hours, and there was not much of it, but it helped us on, and I shall always think of Qüren as a good place.

We got our guard at Qüren up to this we were without a guard, but after our affair at Rachen it was evident that a guard was considered necessary for our protection from the people, rather than to prevent us from escaping. The guard consisted of an N.C.O. & 6 men, they were Hanoverians.

We bumped about in the train all night, most of the time was spent stopped in stations, and in the morning we stopped at Dortmund, so we had not got very far during the night.

The C.O. - Butler interviewed the station commandant at Dortmund at 9 AM on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept. and the result of this interview was that we got orders for Paderborn and we all left the train, and got a plate of soup and some more brown bread in the corridor near the Commandant's office, this was the first attempt at a meal that the Germans gave us. It was not

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much, but it kept us going. While at the Commandant's room the Padre asked a German lady if she could speak English, and she replied. "Yes, but I do not wish to." Poor Padre!!!

In due course our train arrived at Radoborn and then the Kommandantur sent us farther on, we heard that we were bound for Leipzig, but we did not go there; someone said Leipzig is the great legal centre of Germany and we ~~should~~ <sup>must</sup> go there to have our case decided. We went on in that train all day stopping at every station, and being fined at, at every one of them. On looking out of our carriage at the stations where the train stopped the rule was to see angry men drawing their hands across their throats, in a significant manner, while others did the rope dance, and all of them cursed us badly.

Our Guard was very good to us, ~~they~~ these men got us water to drink, by handing out their own water bottles for it, it was no use handing out ours as no one would give us water. The men of the Guard also pulled the curtains across the windows of our carriage, & so protected us from insult, but



not altogether, as some cultured men had written some offensive words on the outside of the carriage, and there was no getting away from the abuse of the station mob.

We were allowed to have supper at Kriem at 8.55 P.M. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> ~~August~~ <sup>Sept</sup> this was the first bit of home meal we had had since our departure from Tavarai on the 31<sup>st</sup> Aug. we were given only 10 minutes for the meal, & we made the most of it; the sausages, & ham were very good.

We travelled all through the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> ~~August~~ <sup>Sept</sup>, and arrived at Halle on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup>. Our train must have stopped at a great many places during the night, people shrieked at us at all of them, this part of the journey was a night mare, it was our first night in Prussia.

Our Guard was changed at Halle, we were sorry to lose our Hanoverians, and the Prussians who replaced them were not so good to us. The new commander of the Guard was a very angry man.

He was particularly irate with the Padre, who as usual addressed a few kind words to him.

We travelled from Halle to Zorge on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> August, the torments of abuse

became fiercer as we went along, but that did not worry us as much as at first, as we had been fed at Kulle, (Soup + bread) and we were getting used to it.

Our train stopped at Torgau at 12:15 P.M. 4.9.14 and we were ordered to get out of it, which we did and pretty quickly too. My kit (Ginclair's) was seized by a burly Prussian, & thrown out on to the platform with great violence, and there I left it as I could not carry it to the camp.

When we stepped out on the platform at Torgau we were immediately surrounded by a fierce guard of Prussians, who made a great noise in loading the magazines of their rifles, & in fixing their bayonets; they looked like men who had already made up their minds to do something nasty to us. After a short halt at the station we marched off under this guard <sup>on</sup>, leaving the station there was a good deal of excitement amongst the crowd of civilians, who had assembled outside, and loud words of command sounded all around.

The people were distinctly hostile, and we were

face to face with a German mob for the second time, but this time we had our guard, and this made all the difference, even so things looked nasty for us as we marched along to Briichenhoff. It was well for us that the German mob is a disciplined mob, and the people obeyed the orders of the Commander of the Guard, the people were not allowed to follow us on to the bridge, and we got safely across the Elbe to the fortress of Briichenhoff, where we were interned.

It was well for us that we had had a sufficient guard as without it we should probably have fallen victims to the violence of the Gorgau mob. We learnt soon afterwards that those people had severely handled both wounded, and unwounded British prisoners on their march from the station to the fortress.

As the gates closed behind us at Briichenhoff we felt that our journey was ended, and personally I felt very much relieved that it was so. We spent 3 1/2 months in Briichenhoff, and all the time we were glad that those gates were strong, as they protected us from the people.

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Jorgan.

On looking round the fortress yard on our arrival we saw a few French, & British officers who had arrived there some little time previously, they all looked sorry for themselves, and sympathetic towards us, they were our friends in misfortune. He wanted food after our trying journey, but there was none for us, and I shall never forget how those British officers shared their meagre prison fare with us that day; they had only very little to give us, and the food was coarse, they gave us what they had, & it was very good of them.

The other prisoners were not allowed to speak to us until our names had been taken, & handed in by the professor, and then we were marched off to our rooms by a tall hairy looking Prussian, who had a fearful voice, which he used with great effect.

He was afterwards familiarly known as Thorsy Face.

I was allotted a bed in Room No 42. There were already 8 French officers in the room, and they had installed themselves on the best beds, so for the most part we had to be content with the top beds of the double deckers.

Our first meal at Loran consisted of half the ration of the prisoners who so kindly shared their food with us, ~~and~~ it was just sufficient to make us feel hungry, we had been so famished before it that we did not feel the pangs of hunger, but by 6 P.M. I must say that I had an appetite for the evening meal (Abundant Food) but when this meal arrived on the table it was so bad that I for one could not eat it, I shall never forget the "soup au lard" flavoured with cinnamon, it was disgusting.

I remember going to bed for the first time in Room 1142, just as I had climbed up into my bed a French officer pointed out a troop of bed bugs on the wall above my bed, he said these bugs were always ready, & that they reminded him of Cavallerie. I got out of bed at once, & killed off as many of the bugs as I could with my knife and most of the others did the same.

At 9.30 P.M. the bugle sounded lights out, the bugle was a bad one, but he succeeded in spluttering through the call after a fashion, and it struck me that there was something aggressive

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in the discordant sounds which he produced, the lights were not put out as quickly as the Commandant had ordered, and then we heard the angry guttural tones of the Sergeant of the Guard who shouted "light out".

The bugs attacked most of us, freely during the night, so that several officers spent the night walking about the room, when those who had slept during the night in the common beds, their faces were swollen up with bug bites, and several had their eyes closed by the swelling.

All the available insect powder was brought up in the lantern early on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sept A.M. and a fresh supply of it was ordered from the town, this was freely sprinkled on the beds, and some officers who were specially singled out by the bugs took their mattresses and placed them on the floor, and then surrounded them by a rampart of "insecten Pulver", this was the only way in which they could escape from these insects.

We soon settled down to life in Gorgan, the time was very monotonous there especially at first when we had only a very small space for exercise, but we always had something to do, as we had to do nearly everything for ourselves.



At first German orderlies did our rooms and made the beds, but these men were soon called to their regiment (Yu 72<sup>nd</sup>) and we were left without servants for a while. So we were occupied in cleaning out the rooms, washing the beds, cleaning our boots, and we had to wash up our cooking after each meal, in doing this we learnt how hard it is to wash greasy plates in cold water.

We had to wash our own underclothes (shirts, vests, pants) etc., how well I can remember the groups of officers at the benches around the yard of the fortress, all hard at work washing their things in the smelly water which they obtained from the pump. A cold in the head became suddenly a much more serious illness when one had to do the washing of the pocket handkerchiefs.

I was astonished to see how the boys ~~came~~ <sup>scrambled</sup> out of khaki shirts, & handkerchiefs.

The French officers were great washers of clothes they looked so picturesque in their "pantalons rouges" scrubbing away as hard as they could at the benches, and usually using hard brushes on everything.

The food of the prisoners at Lorgeau varied from bad to worse, it was never good. At first

it used to be cooked by the German Maritime Staff, but soon this arrangement came to an end, and the cooking was taken over by the French, who improved the coffee, but the very best cooking could not alter the other food which was always of poor quality.

The average day's meals were as follows.

Breakfast: Black coffee which tasted mostly of the  
Soup of the day before.

Kriegsbrot or black bread

\* Butter.

\* Lard Hurst }

\* Jam }

\* Purchased by ourselves to supplement the meal which  
really consisted of the first 2 items only.

Mid-day meal or Mittag Essen.

Vegetable Soup { Peas

Small portion of meat { Beans. Fat pork.

\* Sugar but. } Real

Potatoes. } Mutton

\* Kriegsbrot }

\* Jam. }

Extras purchased by ourselves.

Though the meat varied from day to day it always looked much the same, sometimes the ration was less than usual, and it was frequently worse than usual.

We always got a chunk of meat floating in the thick soup, and it always looked nasty.

The Caramel or Sugar beer was not a nice drink, it was mawkish, & always flat, we drank it because there was nothing else to drink, the water from the pump was so foul smelling that no one could drink it.

Supper, or Head Essen.

This consisted of soup & cheese, which we supplemented with 1/2 bread and jam, the soup was usually what had been left over from dinner, the cheese was good, but this meal was the worst of the day, and we often went to bed feeling hungry.

On Sundays we used to have Bismarck herrings for supper, these were simply raw herrings soaked in vinegar, and we could not eat them.

The following was the system of issuing the food to us at Loozani: Two orderly officers were appointed by each mess for the day, and these officers were responsible for drawing the food, & buying the extras.



And last but not least it was their duty to wash up the plates, knives, & forks. They had a fair amount to do, and they had to be very careful not to be late for the issue of food, & caramel beer, this in itself was no easy matter, because the hour of issue used to be changed frequently.

The orderly officers drew the breakfast food at 7.45 Am. The drawing consisted of handing in a two handled pail for the coffee, picking up the bread, & butter at the little door in the corner of the corridor, & buying the Sausage in the canteen, finally bringing all the supplies over to the corridor outside our room where we had breakfast.

After breakfast we washed up the crockery of the mess, this was usually done on a bench near the pump, the same bench on which we used to wash our clothes.

The beer for the mid-day meal was drawn by one of the orderly officers who waited his turn in a long queue which led up to the beer house. It was strange to see this queue of French, & British officers each with an earthenware jug in his hand waiting his turn for the caramel beer.

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The other meals were drawn in the same way, and there was the same amount of washing up after each of them. The orderly officers were always glad when the day's work was done.

I was at Lorgan from the 4<sup>th</sup> September to the 26<sup>th</sup> November, and twice during that time we were able to buy eggs for breakfast, those eggs had been boiled but not hard boiled, they had to be eaten cold, without egg cups, and with a table spoon, this is about the most disgusting way in which it is possible to eat an egg.

I have described the food, &c above in order to show how the Germans tried to humiliate us even in this.

The number of prisoners at Lorgan on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1914 was

French Officers. 69

British 73

There were artillery, cavalry, & infantry officers, the British were all young officers of the regular army, but the French were all elderly gentlemen who were on the reserve, there was but one who belonged to the active army.

Our first days in Lorgau were not dull, we had such a lot to talk about, each one told every other how it had happened, and the battle of Mons was fought over again many times, officers could be seen at any time tracing positions on the sandy court yard, while others looked on and discussed the situation that had been, in a short time this lost interest for us, and the drawing of positions in the court yard were avoided by the others.

We missed news more than anything else, there was a notice board in the court yard and we got the German version on that, needless to say this was not very satisfying.

At first various rumours circulated as to the ultimate destination of the P.O.W. officers, on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1914 we had a rumour to effect that the Germans considered the red cross prisoners a great nuisance, and that they did not quite know what to do with them, it was also said that we were to go home, or to Magdeburg, or perhaps that we should be sent to look after British prisoners in various camps, however nothing happened, and we

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stayed on at Lorgan, though judging by later events it is now evident that these rumours had some foundation on fact.

The arrival of fresh prisoners was always an exciting event for us, we used to wait about until we were allowed to speak to them, and then we used to ask them for the latest news, as most of the prisoners who arrived at Lorgan, ~~from~~ up to the end of October had ~~all~~ been captured as early in the retreat as we had, we did not get much fresh news from them.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 1914 I wrote my first T.C. home, it was generally understood that we were allowed to write on that date, but on the 14<sup>th</sup> Sept I got my P.C. back, and we were forbidden to write home, this was a great worry to all of us who had anxious relatives at home.

Our first Kommandantur at Lorgan, was a German Gentleman, and he did not trouble us much, for instance there were no roll calls or parades from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. He did not think that they were necessary, but on the 9<sup>th</sup> Sept we had a surprise parade at 5.30 P.M. and at this parade it was rumoured that if any

prisoners were absent, the remainder would be severely punished; we were all present, and nothing happened.

The court yard of the fortress was much too small for an exercise ground for the prisoners, it was a dusty place, and there was always a foul smell in it as the sanitary arrangements were not sufficient, but on the 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. 14 the large open space behind the fortress buildings, was opened up for us and we had plenty of space for exercise, the ground circle was 800 paces I often counted them as I had nothing else to do.

As soon as we got the ground, games were started, international soccer matches were frequent, and good sport. The elderly French officers used to play a game of bowls, tennis courts were marked out at one end of the ground, and though the courts were bad, we had many good sets on them; the game of rounders was also a great stand by, and general favourite, all these games helped to keep us fit and to pass the time. I played rounders nearly every day, it was good fun, and the French officers were very much interested in it especially when any of the Londoners were playing.

Our first Kommandantur at Yozan was evidently considered too lenient towards us, ~~and~~<sup>so</sup> he was relieved of his charge about the 13<sup>th</sup> Oct, and replaced by a martinet named Braun, who was a Lieut of the Reserve, and in civil life was postmaster in some obscure Prussian village.

Herr Braun was a cad, in all probability it was because of his cadish nature that he was made Kommandantur of Yozan, he used to strut about the fortress in the most approved militarisch manner, with his sword clanking along, & making noise like a travelling timber on the march. He was full of a sense of his own greatness, & importance, and his one object in his lapses about Brichenkopf was to impress us with his mightiness. He had an eagle eye for salutes, and he knew all about the position of attention, he made a great fuss if by chance a prisoner had not saluted correctly or had failed to stand properly at attention when he passed by, he was the Prussian Lieutenant, yet the senior officers who were prisoners had to salute him, it was about the limit to see him saluted by a full Colonel.

Herr Braun sent a good many letters to the



Senior British Officer, and the language he used in most of his communications was more forcible than polite. On 18<sup>th</sup> Sept 14 a notice was posted up by the Commandant, in which he referred to the presumption of British officers, and in it he threatened to mix us with Russian R.C.O. if we were not less presumptuous in the future.

When we were allowed to write post cards home on the 6<sup>th</sup> Oct 14 (first time) Frau Braun did the censoring, and as the Frau was not very good at English we were asked to write but little & clearly, we heard that the good Frau used to stay up nearly all night trying to read our correspondence, with the aid of a dictionary.

Life in Torgau was very dull and the time passed very slowly, but it passed and though the days were very long the weeks were just as short as ever, and now that I have been out of it for 17 months I have forgotten the little incidents that filled up the hours, but I will never forget Herr Braun, and his Frau who censored our letters.

Most of us took up languages at Torgau, I brushed my French there, and I had a few lessons in German it was a great opportunity to learn French, the French officers were very willing and able to teach us in exchange for English lessons. We did not have any facilities for learning German, and it was generally hoped by all of us that that language would soon cease to exist.

In spite of the games, & the space for exercise, we were all very bored with life in Buchenlopf. There were constant sources of irritation, Herr Braun was always there, there were the potatoe peeling parades in the morning 6.30 A.M. when parties of officers had to peel potatoes, carrots, & apples for their meals of the day, there were the poor meals taken along that dark and dismal corridor, letters were few, and far between and we were not allowed to look over the rampart, it is very bad to be confined, but it makes it much worse not to be allowed to look out of the prison, on one occasion an officer looked out through a certain window which gave him a view of the land near the Elbe, and very soon a bullet came through the window; a sentry saw him from outside

and fired on sight. The only thing that we could look at was the Schloss Hartenfels across the river, this could be seen from several windows of the fortress.

The reign of Herr Törrum at Jorgau, was short. He soon got himself into hot water with the higher authorities, and he suddenly disappeared, and was replaced by a promoted unteroffizier, who had a face of the Jewish type.

The new Kommandantur did not do any good, or any harm as far as we were concerned. There was an improvement in the postal service, but not a great improvement, the new Kommandant chiefly interested himself in the prices of things at the Cantens, and it was said that he made a good thing out of this, it was also said that this Kommandant had served in a similar capacity on Lord Kitchen's Staff in Egypt.

On the night 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 1914 Major Gate H.O. & Co. attempted to escape from Brückenhof. He got away from the fortress, but it was reported that he had been shot by the Guard on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Sept, and later it was denied officially that he had been shot, and the official report was then that he had managed

H.P.



to get ten miles away from the fortress during the night, and on his being questioned by a farmer in the morning, he suddenly pulled out a razor from his pocket and cut his throat. It was also stated that he had applied for work at a factory, and that the farmer who stopped him was suspicious of him from the first because the Major was not wearing a hat. He had doubts as to the veracity of the German official report, there was no reason why he should have killed himself, and when the request of certain British officers to be permitted to see his body, was refused, we all believed that there had been foul play, in other words Major Gate had not committed suicide, but he had been killed, and the circumstances under which he met his death require examination, & explanation.

On the day before he attempted to escape Major Gate was interviewed by two German staff officers, on the use of Bouncing ammunition by the British troops. Both Capt Roche & he gave evidence about this matter.

Our days in Gorgan were either optimistic, or pessimistic, sometimes the sweet cheerful optimists of the morning used to be the bluest pessimists

by the afternoon, there were some whose optimism never altered, and others who were confirmed pessimists, all of us were at all times longing for news, and it was rare that we ever got any except the German version, & that only from the local paper, all the leading German papers were forbidden, yet they used to get into the camp, and we were often amused by the "Berliner Tageblatt" and the "Leipziger Volkszeitung".

The "Lott Strafe England" campaign started while we were in Lagan, and I will ~~never~~ remember how we smiled when the professor read to us about it from the local paper, the announcement was to the effect that the Germans should give up saying "Lutter Worger" to one another, but they should say "Lott Strafe England" instead.

On 20<sup>th</sup> Sept 1914 it was stated by the Kommandantur that F.A.M.C. officers who were detained at Lagan are not prisoners of war, but free men, & that we could not be sent home to England, or back to our army, as the resources of the German Government at that time were not sufficient for them to guarantee our safety during the journey. This was the worst

extraordinary admission that the Kommandantur could make, as one could not wish for better evidence of the brutal temper of the German people.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> October 1914 the Kommandant stated that he wished to employ us in the hospitals in the town, but he could not do so, as he feared that we might be mobbed by the people. This was additional evidence as to the peculiar nature of German Kultur.

All British prisoners were vaccinated on 17<sup>th</sup> Sept 14 at Goggin; the technique of this simple operation was very crude, there was no attempt at antisepsis, and the Hun doctor drew too much blood with his lancet, about 99% of these vaccinations were failures, but when the Hun inspected us on the 28<sup>th</sup> Sept, he reported 100% success so that is how vaccination was done at Goggin.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept 1914 we were asked to subscribe to the German Red Cross Society, and it was added that we had better give something in the interest of our own & French wounded. Most of us who had any experience of the methods of this society, knew how they had treated our wounded, on the journey into Germany, when those red cross people refused even

H.S.



water to our wounded who were thirsty, and we did not see our way to subscribe, but a further inducement was held out to us as we were informed that cheques would be accepted, and as we had not been allowed to write home up to this, many officers gave cheques so that their relatives would in this way receive news of their whereabouts. This was a most pernicious form of blackmail, and I felt so strongly on the subject that I did not subscribe even by cheque.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1914 the long expected red + post cross arrived in the fortress, and we were allowed to write home, there was a great rush on those P.C.s but there was one for each of us, and we all felt better when we had sent off our first post card, beginning with 'I am a prisoner & I am in good health.' Soon after this letters arrived for prisoners at Lorgau, and we all lived in the hope of getting something sometime, in time we all heard from home, and then we waited for parcels, which came in a short time. At first the German Govt. charged duty on parcels to prisoners though this is contrary to international law.

F.L.

Due to the absence of reliable news at Vorgan, rumours were many and various, the French prisoners used to hear something from the British prisoners and the British always got something good from the French, but the strangest of all used to come from German sources, many officers used to try to trace rumours to their sources, but they never succeeded in running down a first class one. The best rumours used to have some foundation on fact, and we were often able to confirm them a few days later in the German papers, it was remarkable how often the French were able to anticipate the news by a few days.

I was able to go to mass every Sunday while in Vorgan, the French priest had arranged a nice little chapel in a loft over one of the barracks, we had an altar and a harmonium there, and it was a great thing for us to be able to go there.

The Church of England party also had a chapel in a loft where they used to have service, which was conducted by the Rev. B. G. O'Rourke.

There were two canteens at Gorgau, one outside the building in the large recreation ground, and the other inside the building. The outside one was the best canteen we were able to buy, a great many things there, which were strictly forbidden, or "strong verboten". It was extraordinary what a long list of things were "strong verboten" yet Herr Braun, & his Frau used to bring them in for us, or rather for our money, and even when old Braun used to hold up his hands, and say "Alles verboten" (all forbidden) there was nothing that money could not buy, and after a word in English, French, and German he used to say "Alman maitin"; this was his reply always, and at an uncertain hour the following day one got the prohibited articles at the outside canteen, and old Braun was generally nicknamed "Alman maitin".

The inside canteen was the beer canteen, at first we were able to get good beer there but after some little time this was forbidden, and we could only get the caramel beer there, yet Wilhelm the bar man used to bring in many a crate of the verboten beer, and occasionally there was a trace of alcohol in the factotal caramel beer such is the power of money.



One of the most extraordinary creatures at Tarschenhoff was Frederic Kasse the Lavach master, this man was known as Mussy Face to the British prisoners because he wore pines more like red beard, and because he presided over the shower bath, he was known to the French as Baden Baden.

Mussy was supposed to make a good thing out of the prisoners in one way, or another, it was said that he used to bring in whiskey, & brandy, and other things which were 'strong verboten'; and that he was a very wicked man. He used to make a lot of money out of the shower bath as he got 2 a week from each prisoner for wash for latins, and as there were 100 prisoners in the fort this alone came to £1000 per week.

Mussy was the genius of the lamps, but it was hard to get any extra oil out of him. He will be remembered chiefly because of his noise which was like the sound of an insane electric saw mill, how he used to roar in our rooms, and in the corridors, at first we were under the <sup>impression</sup> that he was in a constant state of anger, but after some time we found that all the sound which he produced, was only noise, and it

H. 2

meant nothing, and he was not as fine as he looked.

Morey had a son who was a prisoner of war in England, and this son wrote to his father saying that he had never been so happy in his life as he was then in England, and he hoped that the war would go on for a long time, so as early as 5<sup>th</sup> Oct 1914 we had this evidence as to how the Germans were being treated in England.

There was not one of us who did not want above all things to get away from Torgau, yet before long most of us found that there were far worse places in Germany.

The rumours which circulated amongst the prisoners at Torgau were extraordinary, they varied from day to day, the rumours of German origin usually to the effect that the Allies were beaten in one, or other of the theatres of war, the number of Russian prisoners which they were supposed to have taken was so great, that one often wondered if there were any Russians left, then we had Indian mutinies galore, the Transvaal had been painted red by the Boers, the Amir of Afghanistan was marching against us with a large

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army, there was any amount of trouble in Egypt where the Senussi, & the Berberies were having a walk over, Holland had declared war on us, we had had many defeats on sea, and our Navy had for all practical purposes ceased to exist, and finally all our leaders both Naval Military & Civil had committed suicide.

Our counter rumours consisted of German defeats on land and sea; the army of the Crown Prince was badly mauled many a time, Von Goetz was a prisoner, the Russians were advancing, the Austrian army need not be reckoned as a fighting force any longer, the most pessimistic German proclamations had been seen in Gorgan, in which the people of the town were asked to remain tranquil as notwithstanding their heavy losses, the position was not so bad as it seemed for the Germans.

We did not believe the German rumours and though many of them had some foundation, they were all gross exaggerations. As a rule we believed in our own rumours until we found that they also had nothing in them, or were exaggerations like those of the Germans.

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On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 1914, Trenchenhopf was visited by the American Consul General from Berlin, and also by Count Munster. They drove up in a big car at 11 AM and soon they were engaged in conversation with the 1<sup>st</sup> Senior British Officer and others. They did a tour of inspection round the fortifications, some enquiries were made by the American Consul General, after missing officers, he had my name on his list, and he heard that I was there and well, but he did not see me.

Count Munster made a speech out in the big exercise ground, his audience consisted mainly of junior British officers, and he made a fierce attack on England, he said that as we prisoners had taken up arms against Germany, that we must be punished, and that he could never go back to England again as there would be no place for Germans there after the war. We were all glad to hear this.

When Count Munster saw the large number of R.A.M.C. & Red Cross officers who were prisoners at Torgau he said that the Authorities in Berlin had no idea that there were so many of us, and he promised to let them know about us as soon as possible. This gave us fresh hope.

Life in Logau became more, & more monotonous as time went on, there was monotony in everything, the meals were always much the same, and gradually the things obtainable at the canteens became less, until in the end old Herr Taranus used to say "alles verrotten" all the time.

We scrubbed the floors of our rooms, did our own washing, and continued to peel potatoes in the evenings, the German higher authorities did not approve of the peeling of potatoes by officer prisoners, but the local authorities at Logau ruled that we could peel them, or have them in their jackets so the peeling went on. Towards the end of our time in Logau it was done by orderlies, & we escaped this degrading parade. "Pas d'apluchage de pommes de terre."

We were glad when it was rumoured that we were to leave Logau for Ulm early in November, and this rumour continued to circulate up to the end of our time in Logau, so like a good many Lager stories there was something in it.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> November the first party of British officers left Pirschkehoff for Burg bei Magdeburg, and the remainder on the following day on the 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 1914.

### Thurg bei Magdeburg.

We were all prepared for a demonstration of Russian hate on the journey from Lützen to Thurg. I travelled with the ~~left~~ party and we marched quietly down to the station, under a heavy guard, we were warned not to speak in the ranks on the way down, as if we did the people might have become excited, so we marched in silence followed by a moderate small crowd of the townspeople. They did not molest us in any way until we halted outside the railway station, and then there was some spitting, & that term of abuse we knew as well as freely heard on all sides Schweinhunden! Schweinhunden!!

The train journey was uneventful; in some of the stations when our train stopped there were shouts of Gott strafe England; but nothing more serious than this happened until we arrived at Thurg.

The railway station ~~was~~ at Thurg was full of young German soldiers, who had evidently come out of a troop train which was halted there, they were rather excited at seeing us, and they received us by singing Die Hacht am Rhein and Deutschland über Alles.

These German soldiers looked very fit and healthy and they appeared to be very keen on the war, but they



they were then in the middle of Germany, & they had not been to the war.

Our party formed up in files on the platform, each officer carrying his kit in his hands. We were heavily guarded by a guard from the camp and in a short time we marched off to the Sepangsen Lager which was about two kilometres distant; I will remember this march; the night was dark, and the road was frozen, many of the officers were hampered by their kits, and soon there were some stragglers, these stragglers were beaten by the guards who used the butt of their rifles on them, the distance to the camp appeared to be much longer than two kilometres, but at last we got to the camp and felt the gates close behind us again, and we were glad to be off the road.

Our party halted at in the yard at Tang at 10.30 P.M. on the 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 1944, the Lager was not well lighted at the time, there being only a few high power electric at long intervals, but there was sufficient light for us to see that we had come to a bad place. It looked all so dirty, and dismal, it was well that the ground was frozen, otherwise we should have been ankle deep in mud.

From time to time while we were halted there, men with pale anxious looking faces came to look at us out of the windows above, these were Russian officers prisoners of war, they were also our friends in misfortune. A short time after we had halted an order came from the German officer who was there that all Irish Roman Catholics were to fall out, and I was one of those who fell out and were marched to the Irish Room, or Room No. 33 at Torgau.

We found most of the officers of Irish regiments who had been at Torgau already installed in this room, and soon they let us know the latest Germanic ideas.

On the arrival of the 1st Battalion from Torgau, the Commandant of Torgau held a court of inquiry, before which several officers of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, were called, and these officers were asked if on a certain date somewhere in France, the Munsters had not attacked and annihilated the K.O.S.B. because the latter regiment had fired on the mob in Dublin.

Needless to say this was denied by the officers who were examined, but the Germans would take no denial, they were so certain about it, and they could not believe that the Munsters had never seen the K.O.S.B.

in France, it was too good a story from the German point of view, the K.O.B. had been so easily wiped out by the Wunstlers, who in their turn were smashed up by the irresistible German army, this had been published in the German news papers, and therefore it was true.

The above story lived for about a week after our arrival at Terg, & then after repeated denials by all the officers concerned, it died a natural death.

I was warned not to sign any blank forms if I were called to give evidence before the Court of Enquiry, some officers had done so, and they did not know what use the Germans were going to make of their signatures.

We turned in for the night without having had supper of any description, and on waking up in the morning our first impressions of Terg, were fully confirmed.

The buildings in which we were housed were converted stables, & gun sheds, and not much converted at that, they were ~~not~~ <sup>scarcely</sup> fit for human habitation.

The only exercise ground was the yard where we had halted the night before, and this was a bad place, as it had been cut up by heavy traffic before our arrival, everywhere off the foot paths the ground was



very deep and the paths themselves were also inches deep in mud in most places. The whole yard was much too small for us, as it was only about 100 yards long by 40 yards broad, and we were not allowed to go round at the end nearest the gate, thus our <sup>available</sup> space was considerably curtailed.

There was one dry path between our quarters and the barbed wire topped wooden fence, and this was strictly forbidden to us, in fact the two sentries who were on guard over this pathway, had orders to fire on any prisoner of war without challenge, who should be seen on the pathway.

In a great many other ways Tary was a bad place, all the out door games which kept us fit at Torgau, were impossible at Tary, there was nothing to do there but to walk along slowly in the crowd on the muddy foot paths, so those of us who had had boots did nothing, and we became unfit for the want of exercise.

We also missed the morning shower bath which we used to have at Torgau, as at Tary there was not sufficient bathing accommodation for us, we were able to have a bath once per week, & this was not sufficient for personal cleanliness.

We were annoyed, & tormented considerably at Taurg, but not in the same way as we had been at Lorgan, there was no regular morning parade at Taurg but every day we used to have roll calls in our rooms at irregular hours, one never knew when there was to be a roll call, and as at any time a man of the guard might commence to sing a ball, and at the end of the singing performance, one stroke used to indicate meal time, two strokes a roll call inside our rooms, and three strokes a parade outside our quarters. Once when I was having a bath, the bell rang for roll call in our rooms, and the bath man was greatly perturbed by it, as I stayed on and finished my bath, during which a German officer came & took note of me, another example of Lenton's thoroughness.

Taurg was better than Lorgan in some things, for instance we were able to send our washing out to a laundry, and our food was better there, and it was drawn from the cookhouse by orderlies, we did not have to do any dirty work at Taurg, and for a time after our arrival we were actually able to buy brotchen (small rolls) in the canteen, finally the canteens at Taurg were better than those of Lorgan.

There were some 400 Russian Officer prisoners at Tverg on our arrival there, we got on very well with the Russians, who were very nice fellows, and it was always good to see the contempt they had for the Germans, and their frightfulness.

Most of the Russians spoke French, so we were able to speak to them in this language, but in a short time several of our officers were hard at Russian, and the Russians were very keen on learning English.

Before our arrival at Tverg the Germans issued two false reports about us; the people of Tverg were told that we were fresh prisoners just taken at Ypres, & the Russians were told that all British officers were criminals, who were capable of committing any crimes. The people of Tverg were deceived by NOT but the Russians knowing the Germans better than most other people do, and as some of them had met British officers before, they simply laughed at the story, and did not believe his stupid report.

I often wondered what was the use of trying to spread dissension amongst allied prisoners I was, as the Germans had evidently tried to do on this occasion and on many other occasions afterwards.



French, Russian, Belgian and British officers were all thoroughly mixed up, in the rooms at Bourg, and it was arranged that no officers of the same nationality ~~was~~ were permitted to sleep in adjacent beds, the Germans said that the reason for this arrangement was that we should get to know our allies better, and so we did and many sincere friendships were formed between allied officers at Bourg. The Irish room No 33 was the only one in which there were no French, Russian, or Belgian officers, but not all the officers in this room were Irish, many of them were English officers who were serving in Irish regiments.

Otherwise the treatment of officers in room 33 was exactly the same as that of other officers in other rooms, and personally I often thought it would have been better for us if we had officers of other nationality in the room with us, at any rate we should have had more opportunities for learning languages.

From the point of view of Sanitation Bourg was disgusting, the latrine was a disgrace to sanitation, there were only eight seats in it, and there were 750 officers prisoners in the lager. The entrance to it was very foul where we constantly had to wade through liquid filth.

If we had found life in Yozan monotonous, we soon found existence in Tauru ten times more so. We were much more closely confined at Tauru, and we had nothing to do, a great many things were forbidden from time to time, the food became gradually worse, the white bread (brotchen) was soon forbidden, and the little cakes we used to buy in the canteen were no longer obtainable, the pork which we used to have for the mid day meal was frequently bad and unwholesome, and the raw fish supper became more frequent, needless to say we did not eat half rotten pork or raw fish, supper were no longer obtainable in the canteen, we began to get thin, and letters were sent home for food.

The weather was bad all the time I was at Tauru there was nearly always snow, frost, or sleet outside, and there was no comfort in the rooms.

The postal arrangements were better at Tauru we were allowed to write longer letters, and we received a great many more than we used to at Yozan, and no duty was charged on parcels.

Although we did not have much space for exercise at Tauru, we were able to look out at the surrounding country, which was a rather bleak stretch of land with an important railway line not far off. To

While we were at Burg there was a search for money, most of the British officers escaped this search which mainly affected the French, and Belgian officers. The search took place on 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 1914, it was very thorough, the victims were first stripped of all their clothes, which were carefully searched for concealed money, then their boxes or bags were opened up and their hats were ransacked, and finally all corners & crevices of the rooms were carefully looked into, it was said that the Germans found a good deal of money, which they confiscated, and that they gave no receipts to the owners of the money. This search was carried out under the supervision of a German officer named Lieut Weismann, and while it was going on inside the rooms, the commandant made some noise outside.

One French officer had some gold hidden away in a pot of plum jam which ought to have been rather a safe place, but even this did not escape from the search party.

Throughout the ten months which I spent in Germany, I was never searched, although I was frequently prepared for searches & escaped them, this was simply a matter of luck on my part. 12



I have frequently said that things were forbidden, from time to time in both Logan, & Taur, and the following is a list of the strictly forbidden at Taur.

Streng Verboten, Taur 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 1914.

- 1) All ordinary razors (Rasier messer)
- 2) Parkies.
- 3) Ink.
- 4) Tea
- 5) Chocolate
- 6) It was strictly forbidden to recline in deck chairs, though there was no objection to any officers who possessed such chairs, sitting bolt upright in them.
- 7) It was strictly forbidden to sleep during the day.
- 8) It was strictly forbidden to place anything on one's bed.
- 9) We were not allowed to open windows at night.
- 10) We were not allowed to walk outside in pairs after 5 P.M.
- 11) There was the forbidden foot path already mentioned.
- 12) The "Berliner Tageblatt" was "Streng verboten" from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1915.
- 13) The sale of <sup>beer</sup> bread and cakes in the Canteen was forbidden on the 6<sup>th</sup> December. (Kuchen und Brotchen streng verboten)
- 14) Sale of cigars, cigarettes, & tobacco in Canteens, was forbidden from the 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 1915. (14) Banned on 15-12-14.

### Russian Discipline at Torg.

The Kommandant of the Gefangenenlager at Torg was great on discipline, his name was von Madai.

von Madai was evidently a great believer in frightfulness. He used to practise many forms of this on everyone who had the misfortune to be under his command. He was a big man with an evil looking face, and in moments of excitement and rage his expression was absolutely diabolic. He looked like a man who was in the habit of eating too much, and not ~~not~~ very fond of exercise. It appeared to me that his waist measurement was considerably greater than that of his chest.

He was not of very exalted rank, as he was only a lieutenant of the reserve. He was very fond of "rattling the sabre." On his <sup>first</sup> arrival at Torg on the 9-12-14 the order was that all officers prisoners who happened to be in the yard when he came in, were to stand at attention whenever they happened to be, and remain at attention until von Madai went by, when they were to salute and dismiss. I will remember his first arrival, we did not have enough food that day, and we were all in our rooms, so the order was without effect. He looked at him through the windows, and

and saw him turn out the Guard, the wretched Landsturm men of the Guard were in a great state of terror when he roared his words of command at them, they were already acquainted with von Madai, and they knew how easy it was for anyone of them to get those days in cells on prison fare. They stood so rigidly at attention during his inspection, that they looked like old soldiers made of wood. The Guard were always on the look out for the arrival of von Madai, and when he was seen approaching the Lager they used to fall in ready for his inspection.

Von Madai also terrified the German women who lived in the canteen, he went into the little Canteen, and roared something at the women, which made them weep on one occasion.

The only persons in the Lager who were not terrified by him were the prisoners, with all his frightfulness he was a great source of amusement to us, on one occasion I saw a Landsturm man of the Guard laugh heartily at him when he was not looking, so perhaps the great awe with which he inspired ~~some~~ those men, was not very lasting.



On the 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 1914, there was an outside parade of all the prisoners at 10 AM. We paraded in small parties outside our rooms, and then we were formed up in larger parties according to nationality. The British party was first, we were in a column of files with the most senior officers in the front ranks.

Kon Madai then took up a position about 20 yards in front of us, and the order was given that we were to approach singly to within six paces of the Commandant, we were to halt then, come to attention, salute, and while at the salute we had to state our names, rank, and the branch of the service to which we belonged, then we marched past him still saluting, fell in on the other side, and waited to be dismissed.

Kon Madai returned the salutes of each of us, and he remained at the salute, and at attention as long as each of us did, and when I finished my statement to him I was surprised to hear him say *Arigato gozaimasu* (thank you very much). It was evident that he was not in his usual bullying form that day; I wonder whether it was the report of the naval action off the Falkland Islands which was published in the

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German papers, that morning, which had affected him, he might have been thinking of the Guisneau, and the Schanhorst, and Von Spee beneath the waves, his manner was so subdued, at any rate he must have had enough saluting by the time that 720 officers prisoners of war had marched past him.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> General von Madai inspected us in our rooms, we all put our money carefully away before he came, but he did not search us on this occasion, he found our room No 33 rather cold, and he ordered more coal for us, and more light, but we never got either.

At Tientsin all officers prisoners of war were considered junior to all German officers. It was ordered by von Madai, that when an officer prisoner of war had occasion to speak to any German officer, the prisoner of war was to stand at attention and at the salute all the time the conversation lasted.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan'y 1915 a senior French officer General — spoke to von Madai in the jail yard, the General remained at the salute during the conversation, but after some minutes von Madai noticed that he was not standing correctly at attention, thereupon he blazed forth in full

\* Lenton's fury, made a fearful noise and sentenced the General to three days solitary confinement in the military prison at Magdeburg, and in a few minutes the General was marched off to cells escorted by a corporal and two privates of the Guard, as von Madai was only a reserve lieutenant this was a fine example of Prussian discipline.

Another of von Madai's orders was that when any German officer entered any of the prisoners' rooms, all the prisoners who were in the room should spring to attention, and remain in this position and at the salute until the German officer went away again. This order was not enforced even by von Madai, ~~that~~ When German officers entered our rooms, we stood at attention saluted, and remained at attention, but not at the salute while they remained in the room.

\* 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1915. (Note from my diary) General V- returned from cells at 2.30 P.M. today. It is said that his release was ordered by the superior authorities in Magdeburg, and that V. Madai made a mistake.

There was a mild demonstration by the prisoners when the General arrived back again. We were all glad to see him, he is a gentleman of France.



### Other Incidents at Torg.

In the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 1914. A real German General inspected the prisoners camp at Torg, and we were surprised at the way in which all the local, and very much less slighted from the Commandant downwards, took the line, never have I seen men standing at such rigid attention as on this occasion, and all the Sautern attendants both male and female were speechless with terror while the General was in the lager. It seemed as though he had power of life & death over all his subordinates, and they felt very insecure on that account.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1914. - Several of the prisoners here, are beginning to show signs of commencing melancholia.

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 1914. - Dogs on guard in the lager. There were strong fierce looking dogs, mostly of a non descript breed, and one Airdale terrier, they did not worry us, but they looked nasty.

In this date also 124 British, & 100 Russian Officers departed from the camp, for Magdeburg, & Halle.  
Tues Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> 1914. Large party of French prisoners (Prisoners) arrived from Lorraine last night. Their arrival made the dogs bark. Some of my old friends came in this party.

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec 1914 - Visit of an American from the American Embassy. When he had been shown round the Lager he said "He should not keep rangers in such a place." I often wondered what he would have said if he had seen Thor a few days before, because the place had been well prepared for his inspection.

We were told to hope for an exchange of doctors as the affair was being discussed.

Christmas Day<sup>1914</sup> - We did not wish one another a Happy Christmas today, we had to endure it the same as other days, but we felt it more today. We were allowed to buy cakes (kuchen) in the canteen at a most exalted price, and the meat for dinner was better than usual, but our food came mainly from parcels, there several plum puddings in our room.

Christmas Eve. - The V.C. priest was refused permission to celebrate midnight mass.

The German Guard stole the little harmonium from the ~~church~~<sup>choir</sup> during the afternoon, and used it for a sing song in their quarters, while it was out of the chapel we wanted it for benediction. It was replaced later and no complaint was made about it.

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 1914. — The Germans said that a wire had just been received from Hindenburg, announcing the surrender of 400,000 Russians. This is a record rumor even for Germany, and needless to say there was no truth in it.

Towards the end of December 14 and early in January 15, we had many snow ball fights, the Irish were opposed to all others, those fights were the best form of exercise we had at Burg.

On 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 15. — We heard about the 1<sup>st</sup> international foot ball match between England & Germany which had been played on Christmas Day somewhere in France between the lines. We did not like it.

A German army order forbids all such friendships in future, and German soldiers making any such friendly advances towards their enemies will in future be shot.

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 15. — All officers were inspected for venereal & skin diseases today, apparently the German authorities think that life in the lager is such that an inspection is necessary. I was inspected, but I did not inspect others, as I considered the inspection, an insult to British officers.

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### Hoping for an Exchange

During the time we spent in Logau, all the <sup>4</sup> Pruss. officers who were prisoners always hoped for an exchange, or that we should be sent back to our army in accordance with the terms of the Geneva Convention; at first we sent letters to the German authorities asking for our release, but as these letters never got beyond the local Commandant we gave up petitioning after a short time, and simply waited, and hoped. As a rule we set our hopes on some particular date, about a month in advance, and when the hoped for day had come, & gone like all the others, we were not down hearted, another day was fixed and we continued to hope. On the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> Jan'y 1915, we were more hopeful than usual, because the authorities in Berlin asked urgently for a list of all <sup>thought</sup> the names of medical prisoners of war, and we ~~expected~~ that this was the first step towards exchange, but in the course of a few hours, our hopes were rather shattered as the order came ~~that~~ for us to proceed to Altengrabow to treat sick prisoners there, and we thought that this would be our work until the end of the war, we were all rather pleased at the prospect of work, after such a long period of inaction.

and though we had vague ideas of the horrors of life in men's camps we were all glad to get orders to leave Fung for Altengrabow, where we heard there was an epidemic of some infectious disease there.

A few days before we got this order for Altengrabow the camp adjutant Herr Lieutenant Reimann had said that in all probability there will be an exchange of M.O.s in the course of a week, or two, and a notice had appeared on the black board in the yard, that all crippled prisoners were to be examined by the senior medical officers of their respective countries, and on the receipt of certificates to the effect that they are unfit for service, and that they will remain so during the remainder of the war they will be repatriated. Both the statement and the notice gave us fresh hopes for an exchange of M.O.s, and we all felt that this was it at last, but instead of home we went to Altengrabow, and our chances of exchange then seemed more remote than ever. I have often thought since that the Germans used to torture us with hope, frequently when we were most hopeful, we got orders which were calculated to make us despair.

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### The Journey to Altengrabow.

We were up at 4:30 AM on the 12<sup>th</sup> Jan'y 15. I remember well saying good bye to all the friends I had at Tsing, the day before, and the Irish officers were all awake for a final hand shake, & God's speed, in the cold, & dark morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> Jan'y, and little Tom the Russian from Petrograd was walking about the corridor waiting to see us off.

We got outside the Gate of the Lager at 5:30 AM and I for one felt glad to be out of that Lager, it was a bad place, and it looked its worst in the cold clear light of the arc lamps at 5 o'clock that morning, the air seemed better outside the gate, and we marched along the same old frozen road down to the narrow gauge railway.

On the way to the station we were passed by a great many men on bicycles, they were mostly munition workers going to work, they were cycling hard, and it appeared to me that they were all in a great hurry, it did not seem to me that these workers were going to limit the output of shell from their factories, and I think at present that if our workers could only see how how hard men work

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in Germany that they would wake up.

Our train left Turg at 6.15 A.M. and we arrived at Altengrabow at 8.30 A.M. The journey was uneventful, we were heavily guarded as usual.

The civil population did not pay the same amount of attention to us, on this occasion, as they had on our former journeys in Germany.

A man of our guard said something about the shooting of German prisoners on the Isle of Man, and pointed significantly at his rifle, this was the only threat which was directed at us on the journey.

The country between Turg, & Altengrabow looked rather uninteresting, we passed several villages in which the houses were mean, & badly kept, and as there had been a moderate fall of snow a few days before the whole looked cold, & desolate.

In nearing our destination we saw some French, & Belgian prisoners doing farm work, they appeared cheerful, and they were not over exerting themselves, and their guard did not seem to mind, how much, or how little they worked.

### Altengrabow.

We were marched from the railway station to the office of the Kommandantur, where we had quarters allotted to us in the Offiziers Baracken, so we found ourselves outside the barbed wire once more, and though we had guards on duty just outside the door, and the men on guard were armed with rifles which had long barbarous saw edged bayonets fixed on them, we felt safer than at Burg or Lorzau, because we were outside the wire.

Our quarters were a great improvement on those we had had at Lorzau, & Burg, at Altengrabow we were only two in each room, and the quarters had modern sanitary arrangements, living in them felt like going back to civilization once more, and it was certainly a great change for us from the primitive arrangements of Burg.

We got no food on the day of our arrival at Altengrabow, we had coffee at Burg at 5 AM. and more coffee in the evening at Altengrabow, but nothing to eat. I found it hard to do without food that day, after five months "Kriegsgefangenen" food it is hard to fast for a single day, the feeling of emptiness comes on so early, & persists throughout the day.

I wonder whether it is the rule to give no food to prisoners in Germany when they are moved from camp to camp, up to this we always moved on empty stomachs.

At Altengrabow we could not see even the German papers, so we had no news from outside which was no great loss, as we could only see the German side of things in their papers.

A German soldier told me that he was tired of the war, as he had been to France, he said that it was a rotten business, and that he would like to be a prisoner so as to be finished with it.

The food we got at Altengrabow was a great improvement on that of Paris, and Logau, here we got three meals per diem, and these meals were satisfactory as a rule, and when we were given raw herring for supper we managed to cook them, we were also able to buy white bread, eggs, <sup>the</sup> at Altengrabow so that we did ourselves comparatively well there.

I often wondered how we could buy white bread at this time, when it had been forbidden to bake it in Germany, and it was said that the Kaiser himself had to be satisfied with Kriegsbrot.



~~There~~ <sup>about</sup> about 25 Medical officers prisoners of war at Altengrabow when we arrived there, the majority of them were French, there were only 2 Russian M.D.s and very few Belgians. We soon heard from them that there was no sickness in the camp, and that there would not be much for us to do there. They had had a small epidemic of typhoid, but it had died out, and at the time of our arrival the prisoners were only suffering from lack of food, the effects of climate, and they were infested with lice.

We waited at Altengrabow for five days, doing nothing, and we received no orders of any description until the 17<sup>th</sup> Jan'y when we met the Oberstabsarzt and he told us in French, though he could speak English, that we were to treat the Russian prisoners.

He said that our work would be, "une forme de médecine vétérinaire". This remark referred to the language difficulty, and it was not a Lutinic joke at the expense of the unfortunate Russian prisoners.

He said that it was not his fault that we were at Altengrabow, and this Oberstabsarzt appeared to have the instincts of a gentleman.

He met the Commandant at his office at mid-day on the 17<sup>th</sup> Jan'y, and he was certainly a great improvement on the Commandant we had left behind at Bourg, he spoke politely to us, and he gave us passes to the new, and old Gefangenen Lager. His name was Van Amer, his rank was Lieut or Colonel, he was a Gentleman.

It was a surprise for me to find two decent German officers in one day, I did not think that there were so many in Germany.

He did <sup>medical</sup> no work while I was at Altingen, the Russian M.D.s looked after the Russians, and there was nothing for us to do. The time we spent thus was dull, but we were used to it, and we kept ourselves busy at languages &c.

We had several conversations under difficulties with our Russian friends, who spoke neither English nor French, and we could not speak Russian, one of them could speak German, and none of us understood this language, but a Belgian doctor did, and he used to translate, the German of the Russian into French for us, and our French into German for the Russian, so it was rather complicated.

On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Jan'y 1915 we went to a prisoners concert in the camp, and met most of the British prisoners there.

The concert was got up in our honour, by the French prisoners, and it was a very good one, they had an orchestra of about 6 musicians who played violins made out of cigar boxes, and other bits of wood, but they produced music from them, and it was a good show. Some of our men sang very times, and one of them who looked sick, sang "Break the news to Mother", in a very feeble hoarse voice. I can hear him now, it was so pathetic.

He had a chance of speaking to the British prisoners who were at the concert, and they gave us an account of their treatment at Altengrabow.

There were only 52 British prisoners in the camp and all of them had been wounded, they had all recovered from their wounds, & were fit for work.

The men told us that when they first arrived at Altengrabow, they had been beaten by both soldiers, and civilians, and that they had very hard times indeed, they had all lost weight, as the food was bad, but now that parcels were coming from home they were much better off in this respect.



They had been made to work, and the work for the British was the most degrading, and disgusting that the Germans could find for them. At one time these 52 wounded British prisoners had to do all the scavenging of the camp, in which they said were 15000 prisoners mostly Russian, only about 5000 being French and Belgian. Some time before our arrival at Altengrabow, Russian prisoners were employed to do some of this work, but the British were not entirely relieved of it, they continued to do this degrading work in the most disgusting manner, and they were forced to do this because they were British, and the Germans wished to degrade them before the Russian, French, & Belgian prisoners who were there.

Our men looked healthy in spite of their treatment, they were cheerful, and had nothing but contempt for their enemies, they were afraid of starvation in the camp, but as parcels were beginning to come they had not much to fear on that score.

They were all old prisoners who had been taken in the early days of the war, and they are still waiting at Altengrabow, or somewhere else in Germany, for the end of the war.

On Tuesday evening 26<sup>th</sup> Jan'y 1915, an order was received for four of us to be ready to go to Magdeburg in exchange with 4 German doctors on the Thursday, or Friday following, it was decided by our senior that the four most senior of us should go, and I was the fourth of the party, so I packed up and got ready for the road.

Being exchanged with four German doctors sounded well, and we all hoped to see the last of Germany from across the Dutch frontier in a few days. I thought that we had a good chance of getting home and I refused an offer of £100 for an exchange to remain in Altona. I thought that our chances of return to England were small, but any chance would not be bought for money.

On Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> Jan'y 1915 (Kaiser's birthday) we were ordered to be ready to leave at mid-day, we packed up and were ready long before the time, which came round so slowly, but at last we marched off with 14 French doctors who were certain that they were going home, and our train left the Station at 1.15 P.M.

It was hard leaving the others behind, they

were more certain than we were, that we were going home  
we little knew what was in store for us when the train  
left Altenburg at 1.15 P.M. on the Kaiser's birthday, a few  
days later I would have given ~~more~~ something to be  
back there.

We arrived at Magdeburg at 3.30 P.M. 27.1.15 and  
waited in an underground waiting room, with a lot of  
people looking down at us from surrounding balconies,  
they took a great interest in us, this interest made me  
remember the animals at the Zoo and I felt sorry for  
them, it is trying to be constantly stared at for hours  
at a time.

While in this underground place we met 3 of our  
old friends who had left Torg on the 6<sup>th</sup> Dec 1914, and  
they told us of their experiences at Magdeburg since then,  
and we felt that we had been lucky not to have  
been with them.

They had been frequently searched.

All money had been taken from them, and counters  
given to them instead of it.

Only two hours daily allowed for exercise  
Magdeburg was evidently a bad place for officers.



At 4.30 P.M. the Station Kommandantur came and gave us our marching orders, but not for home, or even for the Dutch frontier, most of the French were sent to Cassel, their dismay, and dejection on receiving the order are indescribable; our hopes were shattered for the moment, but we had not been so sure as the French had of the return, it was cruel however to give us hope for a while, & then to suddenly make us almost despair.

I went with Maj. C- to Göttingen, and the other Trans. officers were sent to Wehlburg, Belverin, & Bracklin.

Our train left Magdeburg at 6.30 P.M. We travelled 3<sup>rd</sup> class under a guard consisting of 1 Lt & 1 Pte, both of whom were young soldiers.

The whole country was flagged for the Kaiser's Geburtstag, and bells were ringing in all the towns, but even in their holiday mood I soon found that the people hated us as much as ever, I was refused water at two big railway stations, though there were taps on the platform, they preferred that we should be thirsty.

We had several changes on the journey

and we had to carry our kits along many platforms, down subways, & up overhead ways, so that we had some work on the journey.

The corporal of our escort seemed to be taking a great interest in our conversation so we changed from English to French, and he still listened attentively to what we were saying, but not pretending to hear, we surprised him by a few words of Hindustani, and he looked so astonished at hearing this language that, he gave himself away. This was another example of Lenton's thoroughness, I suppose he had been ordered to make a report on our conversation.

Our escort gave us water from their water bottles when we had been refused a drink at the stations, so they were better than the people.

We arrived at Löttingen at 11 P.M. and there we reported to the Station Kommandant, he permitted us to hire an open four wheels, & drive to the camp in it, escorted by two of the fattest Kelt Rebels I have ever seen, they occupied the best seats in the phaeton, and we paid the fare. One of these unter Offiziers was very rude to Maj C so our first impression of Löttingen was not good.

The Prisoner Camp at Löttingen.

We arrived at the gates of the camp about midnight on the 27<sup>th</sup> Jan'y, I will remember how cold, and forbidding these gates looked in the snow, and the glare of the electric light.

As soon as we got out of the phreton, a dog made a show of attacking us but he was called off by his master, this dog was one of the same breed as we had on guard at Turg.

We marched from the gate of the camp to our new quarters in No 7 Barack. Our new abode was the N.E.O.O room of this barack, and it was a most unpleasant place to live in. We were not allowed any light in our room on our arrival, and we had to fix our things up as best we could in the semi dark, a little light came through the window from the <sup>arc</sup> lamps outside, we got to bed quickly, and soon slept the sleep of the hungry, & tired, we had been travelling all day, and we had had no food since 8 am at Altengrabow.

There were about 70 prisoners in our Barack they were French, Belgian, and Polish in about equal numbers, I saw some of them moving about their room that night, those I saw looked miserable and ghastly in the half light of the room.



We were awakened at Litzing at 6 A.M. on the morning after our arrival there, by the electric light being suddenly turned on, and immediately after this there was a great commotion amongst the prisoners who commenced to get up and to dress themselves, and after a little time something big, & heavy was dropped on the floor just outside the door of our room, then there were shouts of "Cafe;" from the French, and "Coffee" from the British, and we knew that the prisoners morning meal had arrived.

We stayed in bed until a German soldier came into our room, he indicated by signs and some German words that he wanted to help us; with the aid of an interpreter from the men's room I asked him to get us some food, he went away, and returned in a short time with a loaf of Kriegabrot, some butter, and a jug of Kriegespausene Kafe that was some coffee, I do not know what it was made of, it was bad, but it was drinkable, I suppose that it could be worse, it was certainly the worst I ever tasted.

The German soldier brought a British prisoner to our room to be our servant, this man was Pte R. Uphill of the Kiltshire Regt, he was a splendid servant.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> Jan'y 1915 we were interviewed by the German S.G.M. Dr. Kollmann for half a minute at 11.30 AM. He ordered us to wait at the hospital until he came back again, and we waited there for him until 5 PM. when he gave us our orders for work in the camp.

Major C- was to work in one of the medical inspection rooms, and I in the other, the French, Belgian, & British prisoners attended at Major C-'s room, and the Russians at mine, and we were to be at work at 8.30 every morning.

#### The Russian Medical Inspection Room.

I was employed in the medical inspection room for Russian prisoners at Hottingen from the 28<sup>th</sup> Jan'y 1915 to 10<sup>th</sup> March 1915.

I saw sick and wounded Russians in room similar to the one in which we lived, an R.C.O.'s room in the Russian lines, the language difficulty hindered medical and surgical work considerably at first; the language of signs is so apt to be misleading, after a very short time this difficulty was overcome by a young Russian soldier named Maxim Gorkin, who was wonderfully quick at learning languages, he worked hard at French English & German, and in a short time he acted

as interpreter and he did this difficult duty very well.

All the Russian wounded who attended for treatment were suffering from sepsis, and the amount of pus which flowed from their wounds was very great, they were all old cases, and to say the least of it, whatever treatment they had <sup>received had not been</sup> ~~was~~ successful, and to my mind they appeared to have been neglected.

On removing old dressings (2 or 3 days old) from cases it was usual to find lice crawling underneath them, on the skin which was soaked in pus, and often the dressings appeared to be alive with those parasites, this was the German idea for the treatment of Russian wounded.

The dressings available for treatment were very limited, there were not sufficient bandages, and the usual dressing consisted of a thick fluffy kind of blotting paper, this was not a good dressing, as it was practically non absorbent, cotton wool was very scarce, but I have seen it occasionally in the room, the prisoners believed that the Germans wanted all this cotton for making explosives.

The antiseptics consisted of Saponified cresol, a watery solution of iodine, boric water, and a solid



per oxide preparation, this was most useful.

I found that antiseptic baths of a weak creosol solution was the best treatment for septic wounds, and I used to have rows of wounded having baths every morning in the inspection room, many old cases cleared up under this treatment.

The Russian prisoners were all in a rather low condition of vitality, they had been suffering from chronic starvation, their clothing was insufficient, though all of them had great coats, the majority of them had been captured in their summer kit at the battle near the Masurian Lakes in August 1914, they had not sufficient underclothing, and it was a very cold winter at Litzgig.

There were stoves in the barrack rooms, but the amount of coal allowed was only sufficient for a few hours fire every day, so that the rooms were for the most part cold, & cheerless. The Russians felt the starvation & cold very much, they became anaemic, & generally debilitated, but they did not complain very much.

They had excellent boots, which many of them sold for a few pfennigs in order to buy food.

The medical cases which came to the inspection room were mostly chest cases, there were many cases of bronchitis, ~~very~~ <sup>but</sup> pneumonia, and tuberculosis was rare amongst the Russians, I saw only one Russian case of pulmonary tuberculosis, in two months, and at that time the tuberculosis ward in the prisoners' hospital was overcrowded with French, & Belgian cases.

The Russians who came from Russian Turkestan suffered from a chronic ulceration of the skin which affected exposed parts only, they called this condition "Penjinka", and they looked upon it as an extremely chronic condition, and almost incurable. I thought that this condition was "Oriental Sore", and I asked for bacteriological examination of the cases, but this was refused, so I could not confirm my diagnosis.

The drugs available in the inspection room were limited to the following tablets:—

Aspirin	3 gm	used for pains of all kinds
Solventis	"	used for all chest, & throat complaints
Lamolin	"	used for all cases of diarrhoea
Rhiz B	"	used for constipation
Calomel	"	"

An ointment called Unguent Anti Scabium completed the medical equipment. this ointment was evidently a strong tar, & Chrysophanic preparation and unfortunate men suffering from scabies, used to <sup>take</sup> the disease to the cure, they said that this ointment used to send them mad.

~~With the above mentioned~~ Castor oil was strong kerosene, it was said that of the available castor oil was required for lubrication of air engines.

The hospital equipment was not much better than that of the inspection room, but patients were able to rest there, and they got better food, and that was what they wanted most, so that some good was done in the hospital.

Our hopes of exchange came on the 27<sup>th</sup> Jan were destroyed by our internment in Göttingen, the conditions under which we had to live, & work were bad, after the comparative freedom of Altingabau, I felt our close confinement in Göttingen very much, we got no news at Göttingen except from scraps of English papers which came in parcels, the Göttingen paper was one of the worst in Germany, and we did not take it in, the time we spent in this lager was extremely monotonous, and depressing.



### The Prisoners at Löttingen

Living as we did in the prisoners camp at Löttingen we had every opportunity of observing how prisoners were treated there.

The treatment of prisoners at Löttingen during the Winter of 1914-1915, was absolutely shameful.

Prisoners of all nationalities were treated alike, as regards food, or perhaps more correctly lack of food; the food was standardized for the camp, so that each man got the same ration as every other, every day. Each man was allowed 200 grams of Kriegerbrot per diem, this is about 4 lb which is not much for a hungry man.

The meals consisted of the so called coffee in the mornings, Vegetable soup at mid day, and more vegetable or fish soup in the evenings. Men sometimes found very small pieces of meat in their soup, but these finds were rare; and I have seen men surprised and pleased at finding a few muscle fibres in their soup, the lucky man who found the tiniest piece of meat used to let all the others in the room know about it, and they used to come and look at it longingly.

The effect of all the vegetable soup was to cause abdominal distension, and men's waist measurements went up when all other measurements came down, as a result

of this blown out condition, disgusting noises were frequent in the rooms, and living as we did in the R.C.O. room, we had to hear all this.

Men who had money were able to buy certain extras in the Canteen, Milk was cheap at 25 pf per litre, Sugar was 30 pf per lb, the only other extras on sale were artificial honey, & ugly looking salted fish. In order to prevent overcrowding only eight men were allowed into the Canteen at a time, there was plenty room for more inside, but ~~some~~ all would be purchasers had to wait their turn outside in the cold blizz, so that by the time a man succeeded in getting into the Canteen he had well earned whatever he could purchase, most of our men gave up trying to buy things there on account of the long wait outside in the cold.

The food issued to the prisoners was not sufficient to prevent them wasting, scientifically it was sufficient to sustain life, and German scientists said that it contained 2700 calories for each man, and perhaps it did, but these calories were not available for the men as they could not eat the ration, and all of them suffered from indigestion on account of the coarseness of the food.

Our men were starving in Göttingen when I was there, the first time I saw men of the Guards Bde so hungry that they picked up potatoe peelings for food was soon after my arrival at Göttingen, and I could do nothing to help them, they were hungry, and they had only potatoe peelings <sup>scrap</sup> to eat, it was horrible to see them in such a condition, but there was famine in the camp, while there was plenty in the town of Göttingen.

Extract from my diary Date. Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 1915.  
"Shocked very much last evening to see British soldiers hunting for scraps of food in a stinking rubbish cart.  
Famine seems all around."

The German Camp Guard used to get much better food than the prisoners, ~~and~~ they always had some soup over in the evenings, and they handed this over to the prisoners, and prisoners both French, Russian, Belgian and British used to wait out in the cold & snow for a long time every evening hoping that some compassionate Germans would give them a little extra soup; this was the greatest act of kindness I saw in Germany, and the men who did it belonged to the Landsturm battalion of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Hanoverian Regiment.



### German Mortality at Löttingen

Most of our men had their money taken from them on the battle field when they first fell into the hands of the Huns, and many of them had been stripped of their clothing, so when they were permitted to write home from Löttingen, all of them asked their relatives to send them parcels of food and clothing, these letters home, were written in the month of October, and after a long and weary waiting, at last the parcels began to arrive late in November, and nominal rolls of men whose parcels had come, were posted on a notice board in the camp. Men who saw their names on this roll, were happy and full of hope of great things from the parcel, but on presenting themselves at the Camp Post Office to take delivery, they were informed by the Hun officials, that there was duty to be paid on the parcels. On hearing this one can imagine what were the feelings of the unfortunate men, none of them had money, they were hungry, and the winter was coming on, their parcels of food and clothing were in the post office, but they could not get them.

Their feelings must have been awful, a considerable quantity of food went bad in the parcels, and it looked rather hopeless for the men, than some Belgian prisoners

produced money, the Huns had not taken it from them.

The Belgians used to buy the parcels for the amount of duty which was payable on them, and they shared the contents with the owners, this was the only way out of the difficulty, and it was a rather risky one for the unarmed Belgians, as the Huns often charged rather heavy duty on articles of little value, and they did not know anything about the contents until they had paid the duty.

It is forbidden by international law to charge duty on parcels addressed to prisoners of war.

#### The Killing of Pte H. E. Ewen.

I have heard the details of this crime from many witnesses and I have no doubt whatsoever as to their veracity, the man who made the post mortem examination described the wound to me.

Pte H. E. Ewen had been wounded in one of his legs, his wounds had been treated at a German hospital, from which in due course, he was discharged to the prisoners camp at Löttingen, but although his wounds had healed, the injured leg was stiff, and he walked with a limp.

A short time after his arrival in the camp, he was warned for work, and at about 8.30 one morning early

in December 1914 (Either the first, or second Tuesday of that month) he fell in, outside his hut, with a fatigue party. The fatigue party was marched off, and after he had gone a short distance Mr. Ewen found that he could not keep up with the others, so he dropped back, on seeing this the German Soldier who was marching at the rear of the party, hit Mr. Ewen with the butt of his rifle, and forced him forward to his place in the party, after marching a short distance, he fell behind again, and evidently remembering his previous encounter with the Guard, he turned half round, and pointed to his leg and said wounded. Immediately on hearing this the German Guard fired at Mr. Ewen with his rifle, at a range of less than a yard. The bullet entered his chest from behind, passed through his left lung and heart, made an explosive exit wound in front.

"Wounded" in English = Verwundet in German, so the Guard must have known what he meant when he said "wounded".

The murderer was removed from the Camp, but none of the prisoners knew whether he had been punished or whether he had received the iron cross.

The other British prisoners who were in the



camp, were confined to their rooms all day, on the day of the  
crime, the men were in a very excited state, ~~but~~ and the  
Germans feared a disturbance, but nothing happened,  
if the men had become violent there would have been much  
blood shed, the Germans have artillery, and machine guns  
always ready should anything happen.

With an Englishman's Report

I was walking one day from the camp to the prisoner hospital,  
and when I was just outside the first wire fence, I was asked  
by an Unteroffizier to come, and see a sick Englishman.

I found the patient lying in the snow, where he had  
fallen at his work, from weakness due to splinting, and  
starvation, the man was very ill, his colour, and breathing  
were bad, his pulse was very feeble, almost imperceptible,  
and I considered that he was in immediate danger of death.

I ordered him into hospital, though I had no power  
to do so, the guard being new to the place did not know  
that, and he was dragged along to hospital by two other  
British prisoners who looked just as starved as the  
patient, and almost as ill.

The patient's feet were encased by a pair of  
enormous clogs, which dragged along in the snow, his

fell forwards on his chest, he was only semi conscious, his two comrades dragged him along by the arms, which was the best they could do for him.

When the party arrived at the entrance to the hospital, all the German ward attendants who were inside at the time, stood and shouted, & jeered at the sick man.

With an Englishman's habit, they said "immer noch da".  
Still another English man said "Always another".

That was how this case was received into hospital.

When I was at Löttingen, smoking was forbidden in the huts at all times, and outside, it was permitted only between the hours of 2 & 4 P.M. daily.

Smoking during prohibited hours, or in the huts, was a minor offence, and it was usually punished by keeping the offenders standing at attention out in the square, where the mud & slush were deepest, for two, or three hours.

I have seen numbers of French, Belgian, & British prisoners kept standing thus for hours while snow was falling, and they were kept at attention by blows with the butt end of the rifle (Cops de Crosse).

For more serious minor offences prisoners used to be tied up to a pole in a fixed position sometimes

for several hours daily for a week, the prisoners hated this tying up more than the other punishments, it was very hard for them to be tied up out in the cold and snow for hours, as their clothing was bad, and they were suffering from chronic starvation.

The Prison Hospital. (Lazarett für Kriegsgefangene)

From the 28<sup>th</sup> Jan'y to 10<sup>th</sup> March 1915 we worked in the medical inspection rooms in barracks, but we had our meals in the hospital, so during this period we did not see much of the hospital work though we heard a lot about it from some R.A.M.C. men who had been employed there for some months. ~~The~~ R.A.M.C. orderlies were still isolated in the ward where they had treated cholera, they had been there for months, and they were tired of it, they told us about the panic of the German doctors during the epidemic, how they had been afraid to examine or treat the cases, and how they fairly ran out of the ward, so great was their dread of infection. It appeared that the treatment of all the cholera cases had been carried out by four of our men, - two Russians, they had to do everything, they treated and nursed the cases night and day, they removed the dead to the mortuary



and they actually performed the post mortem examinations. They had very hard work to do during the epidemic they did it well, and they got no credit for it.

From 16<sup>th</sup> March to 26<sup>th</sup> March 1918, we were attached to the medical staff of the Kriegsfangenen Lazarett, we were not allowed to treat cases, but we were supposed to learn the German methods, and to be duly impressed by them. I was attached to a Dr. Wachsbender who was in charge of medical wards, he was a capable physician, and he was once kind to a poor old Belgian civilian aged 70 who was dying of cancer of the stomach, but his bedside manner was truly tontonic. He used to make a great noise in the ward by shouting "Horen!" when he was about to examine a patient, he took very little interest in cases who were not dangerously ill, but he was very careful of severe cases of pneumonia.

When Dr Wachsbender was going round the wards in the morning the usual procedure was as follows:- he used to stand at the foot end of the patients' beds, and shout "Atmen" which I used to translate for French & British prisoners into "Breathe" & "Breathe". When patients succeeded in breathing without wheezing sufficiently loud for Wachsbender to hear, at the foot of the bed, he used to discharge them from

hospital forthwith, so that one might say that he was a very careless physician, on one occasion, after the usual "Aten". I saw him discharge a British soldier who was suffering from severely chilled feet. "Aten Er kan omo."

Though the conditions which tend to cause an epidemic of typhus were constantly present in the camp at Göttingen, this disease did not visit the camp, but tuberculosis which is fostered by the same conditions, was increasing in frequency, and virulence, amongst the prisoners, and the tuberculosis ward in the lazarette was soon a hot bed of this disease. This ward was considerably overcrowded and patients in all stages of the disease were mixed together, so that men in the early, & curable stages were in the next beds to cases in the final stages, and constantly exposed to further infection from them. The windows of the tuberculosis ward were always closed, so that the air inside was not changed often, it was hot and foul with infection.

Men were dying in that ward every day, and none of them were getting better, all were progressing towards a fatal termination, some more rapidly than others.

That ward was a death trap for prisoners of

Tok

was, and it was a disgrace to the German Government, & Medical men responsible for it. It was very hard to find a suspect case in the inspection room, as one hardly knew what to do with the case, admission to the tuberculosis ward settled the question of diagnosis, and probably killed the patient, and if these early cases were allowed to remain outside they spread the disease to others, so that one had the choice of two evils, & even now I wonder which was the lesser.

The tuberculosis ward at Oranienburg was no better than that of Göttingen, two French doctors used to treat the cases in it, & one of them told me not to send suspect cases for observation, and treatment in the ward as it was certain death.

I am certain that the tuberculosis wards were the same in all the prisoner camps in Germany, because everything is standardized in that country, even brutality.

Once at Göttingen I sent a Russian prisoner who was suffering from advanced tuberculous disease of both lungs, to hospital, there was snow on the ground at the time, the Germans regarded all prisoners especially Russians, as lazy, so this wretched man was stripped out in the snow, and his clothes were at once put into the disinfectant, the wretched man was next put into a tepid bath and scrubbed, and finally



he was made to walk from that ward across the snow to another one, no boots being provided, after all this the man got into bed, and there he died almost at once, then there was fear amongst the Huns that this was a case of Cholera, and they did not go near the body of the man they had killed.

The only clothing provided for the above man after his bath was a vest which came down to the upper part of his thighs.

I ~~once~~ saw three patients given a bath one after the other in No 2 ward all in the same water, they were all in a very dirty condition, and by the time that No 3 had had his bath, the water was thick to say the least of it, it should then have been dispatched by the nearest drain to the sewage farm, but instead, to <sup>it was used</sup> wash out the floor of the ward, so that all the other patients had the full benefit of the dirt of the three fresh admissions. This practice appeared to be the rule in all the wards, it was much easier to turn out a bath of water on the floor than to empty it with buckets.

Dr Ringdahl once made an incision nearly a foot long in order to open a small abscess in the calf of a Russian, the incision commenced in the lower 1/3 of the thigh and extended downwards to the seat of the abscess.

It was an unnecessarily long incision, and the result of it was a flexion of the knee joint from contraction of scar tissue. I often wonder whether Reingolds did this through ignorance, or whether it was a case of callous malpractice on a wounded prisoner.

All the cases in the surgical wards at Löttingen were septic, appendicitis was very common amongst the prisoners, and all cases operated upon were septic, I never once saw a clean wound in the hospital for prisoners.

Contusions caused by the butt ends of the Guards' rifles were very common amongst the prisoners at Löttingen occasionally bayonet wounds occurred, and on one occasion a German Officer is said to have cut a British prisoner across the back with his sword. The French prisoners used to speak of all the above injuries as *Maladies de Sentinelle*.

There were some really good German doctors working in the prisoners' hospital at Löttingen. Dr. Hleemann who had been ship's surgeon for years on a Norddeutscher Lloyd boat always did his best for his patients, and he was not afraid of Cholera; Dr. Balowski also treated his cases well and he was kind towards them, good work was done by Dr.

Plaife, Jackson, and Kachender, but the last named did not always take sufficient interest in his cases.

I saw Kachender most in the hospital, and his manner with patients was certainly rough, he spoke at them in German with a very loud voice, not caring whether they understood him, or not. He often discharged bronchitis cases from the hospital without examining their chests. He used to stand at the foot of a patient's bed, shout "Atten" and if the patient could take a deep breath, he was promptly sent out to the Lager. <sup>See page 104</sup> I have since once discharge a man who had stilled feet after the word "Atten", the patients felt so fearful at the time that he could not have walked an inch.

I used to walk around the hospital buildings for exercise almost every day, and very often I used to have a number of German civilians looking at me from the hill side through the barbed wire, those civilians were never close to me, but the attention they paid to me made me feel very sorry for animals in captivity, and I made a declaration never to visit a Zoological Garden again; it is awfully boring to be stared at by a crowd.



### The Journey to Oshdorf.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1918 we received orders for Oshdorf in Thuringia. We were informed that we were wanted there, to treat an epidemic of typhus fever (Fleck typhus), so we were to be employed at last, and they had produced something sufficiently nasty for us.

We left the Camp at Göttingen at 6 a.m. on the 26<sup>th</sup> March and caught our train at 6.40 a.m. Only one military officer accompanied us as guard, and he was a good fellow, who was just about to be promoted, he allowed us to have coffee at Eichenburg, and breakfast at Gotha, and so this was a great improvement on our previous journeys in Germany.

Our kits were looked through to Oshdorf and we did not have to carry them as on former journeys, it was like travelling in a civilized country again.

The people at the stations on the way did not pay the usual attention to us, there was no rudeness, or insult.

The country through which we travelled was most picturesque, the sun was shining on it, and I felt for the first time for months, that it was good to be alive. All the land was tilled or being tilled, and everywhere, there was evidence of hard work, and it was evident that the Germans do not mean to be starved out.

### Shoduf.

Our journey was almost a pleasant one, and on our arrival at Shoduf we were agreeably surprised to find that officers quarters had been allotted to us in the German barracks.

There were 13 French doctors in the same building, and <sup>each</sup> we had a neat little room comfortably furnished, this was absolute luxury after the other camps we had been in.

We were allowed to have our meals in ~~the~~ a back room in the German officers Casino, we got three meals daily, and the food was always of good quality, and sufficient, and we were able to buy various extras.

The cost of messing was only Mk 2 per diem, and this was certainly very cheap.

The typhus epidemic was almost at an end, & there was nothing for us to do, so we waited for orders, which did not come, we signed our names on the book, at the hospital every morning, and did nothing more all day.

On April 4<sup>th</sup> 1915 we got passes for the hospitals, & the prisoners camp, and from this date we were allowed to walk all through the German barracks & the prisoners camps, without escort, our passes were examined by sentries at all the gates, it was ~~unwonderful~~ we had to produce our passes very frequently, but there was no difficulty in

getting about, from place to place, but always inside the barbed wire fences.

The prisoners at Osdorf, looked remarkably well compared with those of Gottingen, the French, & British were not so much better than those we had left at Gottingen. They had a good healthy colour, and they were much more cheerful, this was mainly due to the parcels of food which came from France to them, and the French were very good in sharing their food with our prisoners, who used not get parcels so regularly at that time, so that many British prisoners owed their health to their French comrades in 1914-1916.

The Osdorf prisoners had better clothes than those of Gottingen, though some of them were rather out at the elbows, the majority had jackets, & trousers.

One prisoner who was very badly off for uniform wrote to the depot of his regiment for a suit of khaki and after an interval of about six weeks he received a reply to the effect that his application should have been sent through the proper channel, that being through the Commandant of his prison Company, through the Camp Commandant, through the German Govt.



to our War Office, and on to the depot of his regiment.

This reply hurt the wretched man a great deal, he had been a cheerful optimist up to this, though he had lost ~~his~~ leg at Mons, now he became a black pessimist, & all his friends were doubly sorry for him, none of them thought that the war would last long enough for the Saint of Khambi to come by the "proper channel."

The wooden huts in which the prisoners were housed at Izbef were the best huts that I saw in any of the camps in Germany, they were large airy, and each had a central clear space between the bunks, and they were not overcrowded. They were heated by means of stoves, fuel being insufficient on most days, the lighting was electric, the furniture consisted of stools and tables, they were much better than those of Gottingen.

The sanitary arrangements were satisfactory, the British prisoners were given the degrading task of scavenging at first, but latterly both French & Russian did this also, the bathing arrangement for the prisoners was splendid, men could have hot shower baths every day, in the large bath house, and there was a compulsory bathing parade, & medical inspection every

fortnight, this was so that one company paraded every day, the parade was very well arranged, the following was the procedure

- 1 Men handed in their boots for disinfection.
- 2 They undressed in the undressing room
- 3 Medical inspection
- 4 They were issued with soap & entered bath room.
- 5 Shower bath for 50 at a time
- 6 They entered the dressing room.

While the men were in the bath their clothing was taken and disinfected in a steam disinfecter, and after a short wait in the dressing room they got the clothing back from disinfection

- 7 They dressed, & left the room.

While the men were being personally looked after in the bath room, their rooms received attention from a disinfecting squad, who scrubbed all the inside wood work, and disinfected the empty bunks with the formalin spray.

I never saw a louse at Oklong, though there had been the usual number before the disinfection was adopted as a routine measure.

The prisoners at Ordrup were as badly fed as all the other prisoners in Germany, they were given twenty one meals per week, and out of the 21 eleven were absolutely unfit for consumption by human beings, the men used to eat a little of the disgusting food which was given to them, only when there was a shortage of parcels from home. The mid-day meal on Sundays was the only one which used to be eaten regularly, and with relish. One of the prisoners told me that on the other six days of the week, it was very easy for anyone to get a second helping, but on Sundays there used not be enough to go round.

Except in the matter of food, the prisoners were well treated at Ordrup, their work was usually a go as you please affair, and they did not do much, but they received no pay for whatever they did, they were unwilling workers and they did as little as possible, the French especially were experts at doing nothing when they were supposed to work.

I have seen them resting when they were supposed to be planting potatoes, and I have heard that when they returned from this work there were plenty potatoes in the bags.

I had left before the crop was dug up, but even in Lorraine stones sown cannot produce potatoes.



The guards at Dindorf did not beat the prisoners much. I never saw any cases of "Maladie de Sentinelli" in the camp, though occasionally I heard that someone had received "un coup de crosse". (Blow with butt of rifle)

#### The Hospitals at Dindorf.

There were three hospitals at Dindorf for prisoners of war and all of them were much better than the hospital at Ertingen. All the wounded prisoners were dressed by French doctors and students in the hospitals, and these gentlemen were always extremely careful in their technique, and kind to their patients, all the operations were performed by a German surgeon, I never saw him operate, but I have seen the results of some of his operations and they were good.

The patients in the surgical wards complained to me that unnecessary amputations had been performed on some of them, and that some cases had died after operation when they should have lived, I was not able to come to any conclusion regarding these complaints, as I had no evidence about them except the patients' statements, and these were of no particular value as evidence in such a highly technical offense as Surgical Malpractice.

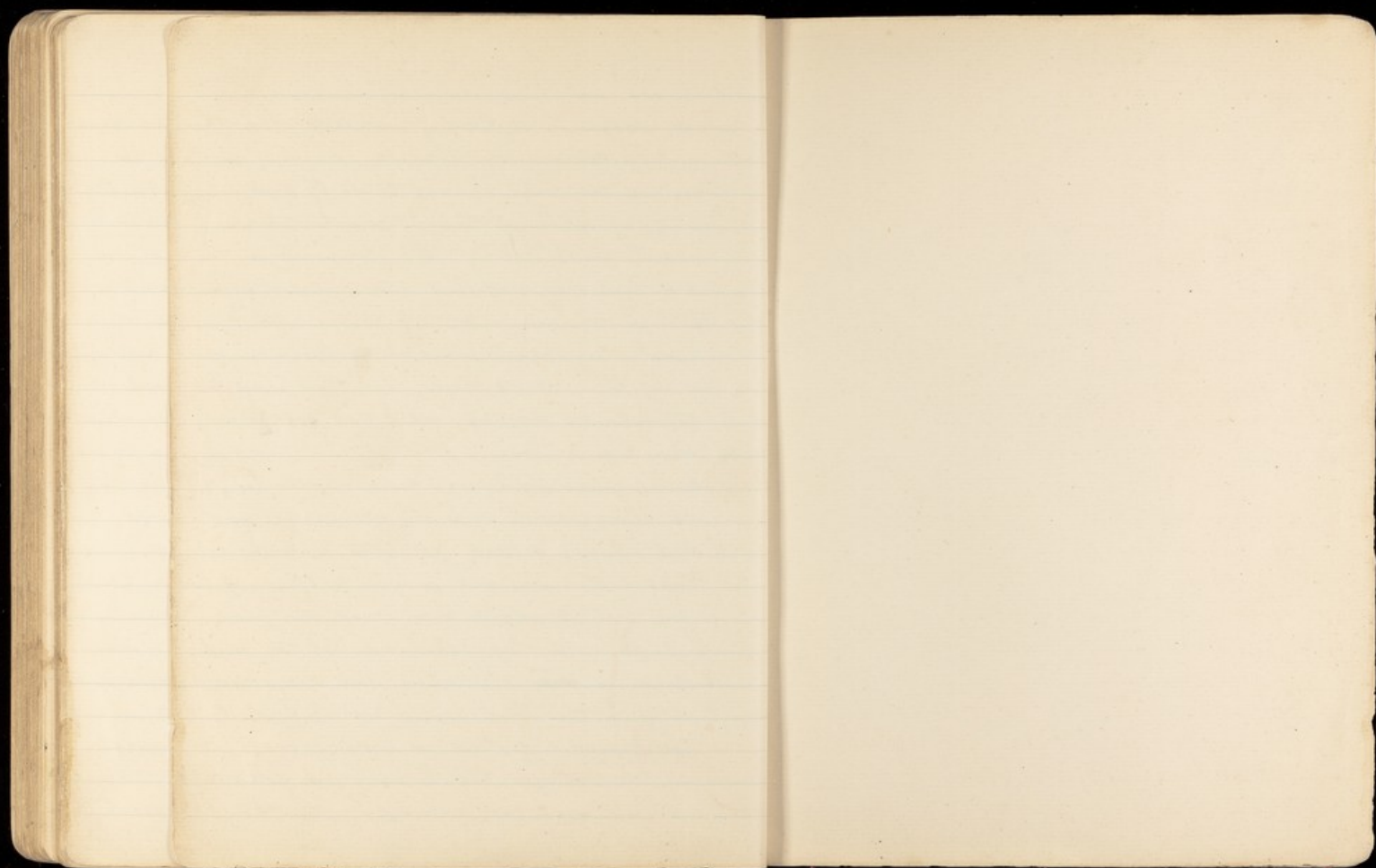
The French opinion of the surgeon was: "Il est bon homme, mais mauvais Chirurgien." (He is a good fellow, but a bad surgeon.)

The medical arrangements at Orléans were better than those of Göttingen, more medicines were available, all being in tablet form, and the drugs appeared to be of good quality.

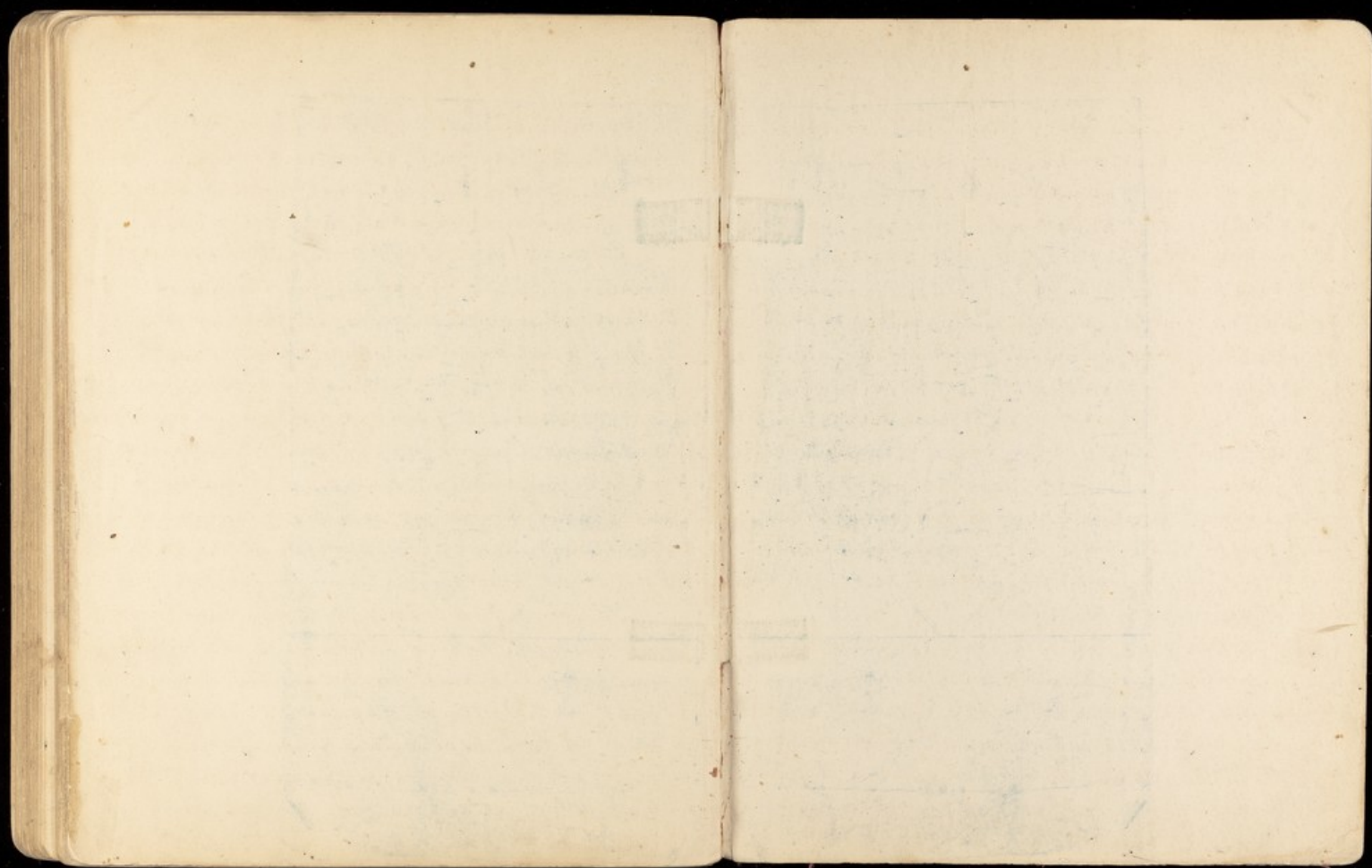
During my internment there I used to see the morning sick of the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, & 14<sup>th</sup> Companies in the camp, and I had only very few serious cases from a strength of 3000 prisoners, most of whom were French.

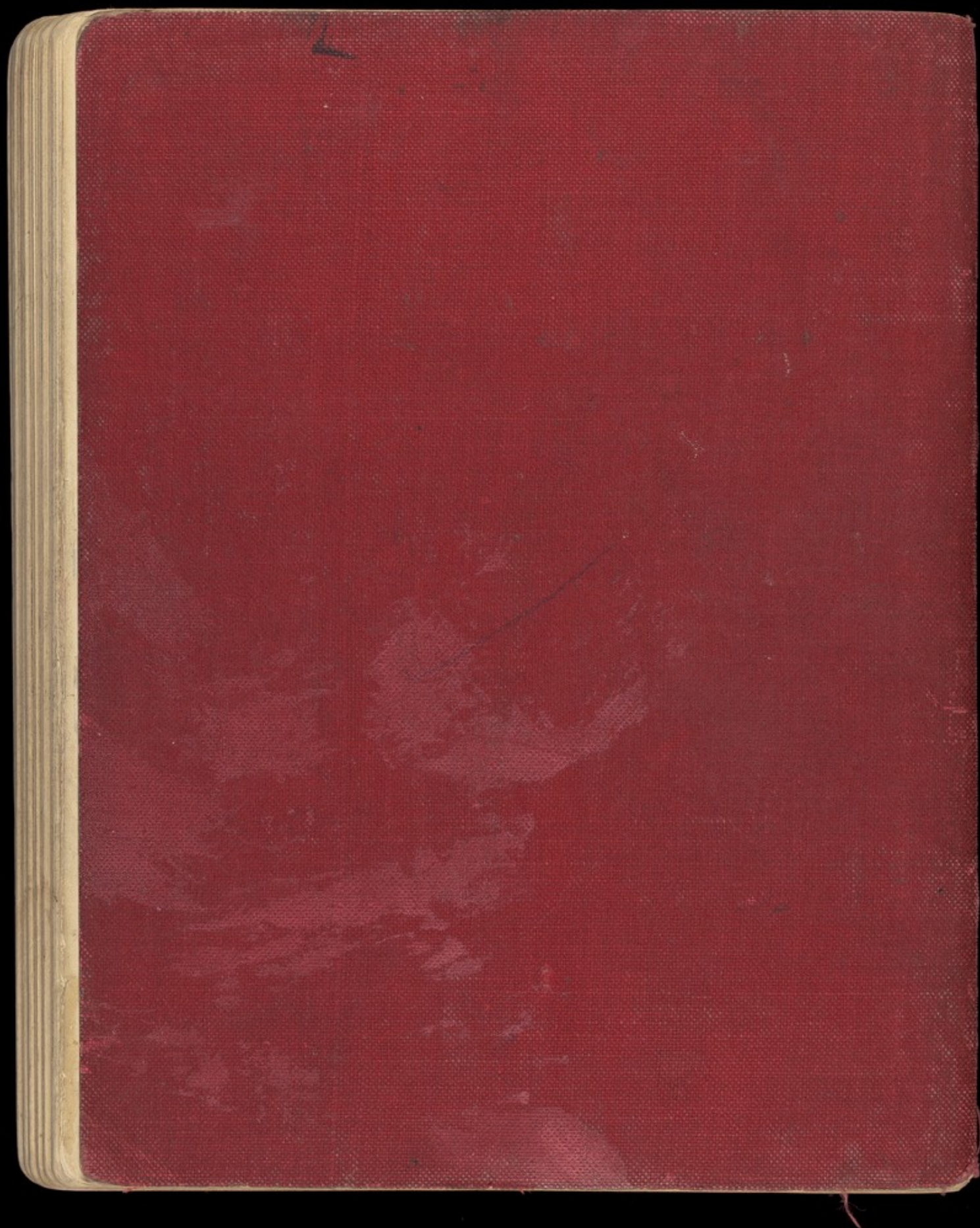
A great many men suffered from dyspepsia which was caused by their coarse food, but there were no cases of starvation at Orléans, and I saw no cases of parasitic skin diseases there.

The tuberculosis ward was much over-crowded, its windows were always closed and its atmosphere was stagnant and stuffy, I had nothing to do with it, but the French doctors who were in charge of it at that time, told me that it was a very dangerous place for early cases, and they asked me not to send any such cases in ~~their~~ <sup>for</sup> observation, and diagnosis, as a short stay in the ward would be sufficient to make the diagnosis certain in most cases. So that here as at Göttingen the Germans did not attempt to save the prisoners from this disease, I often thought and I still think that it is one of these allies. III

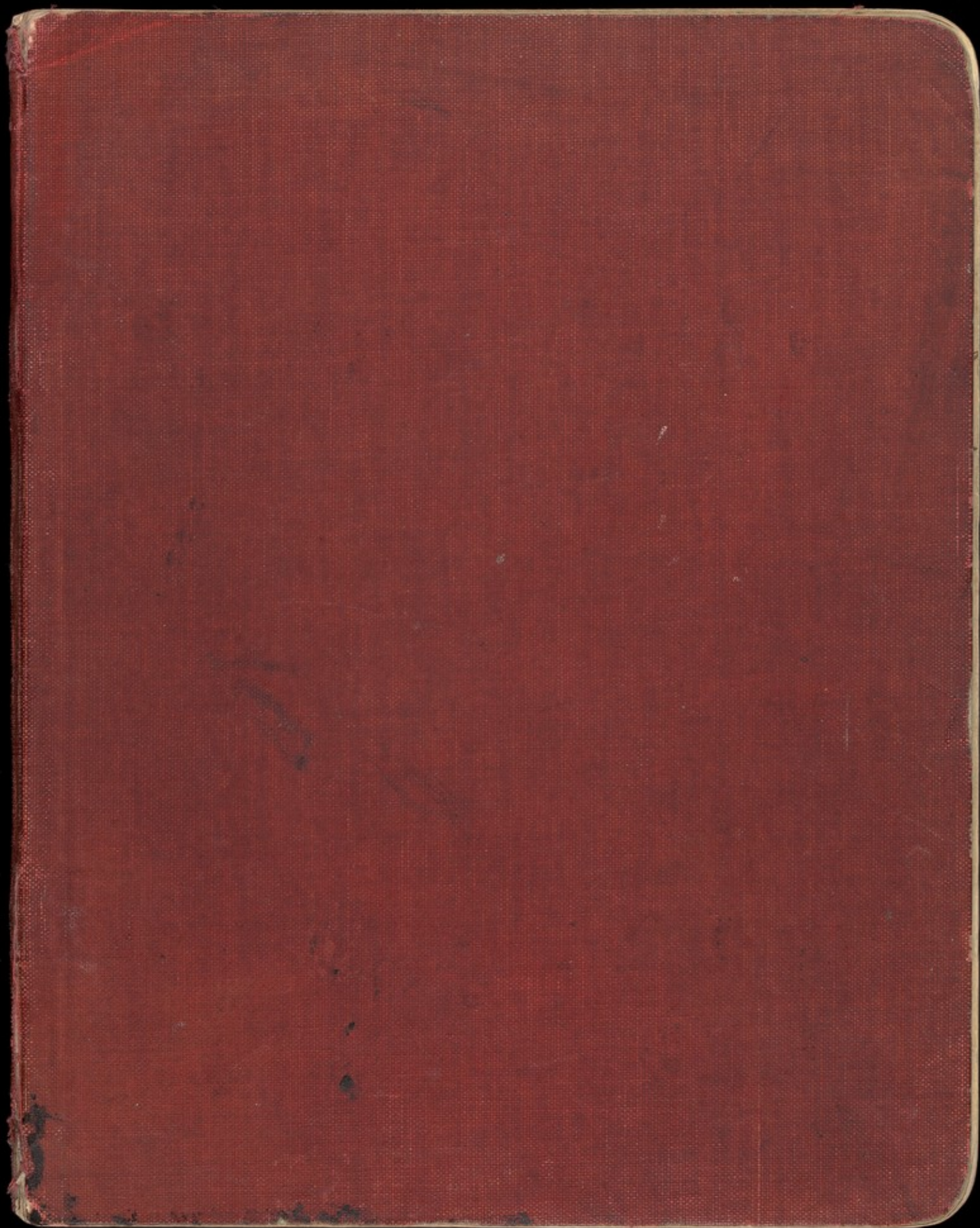














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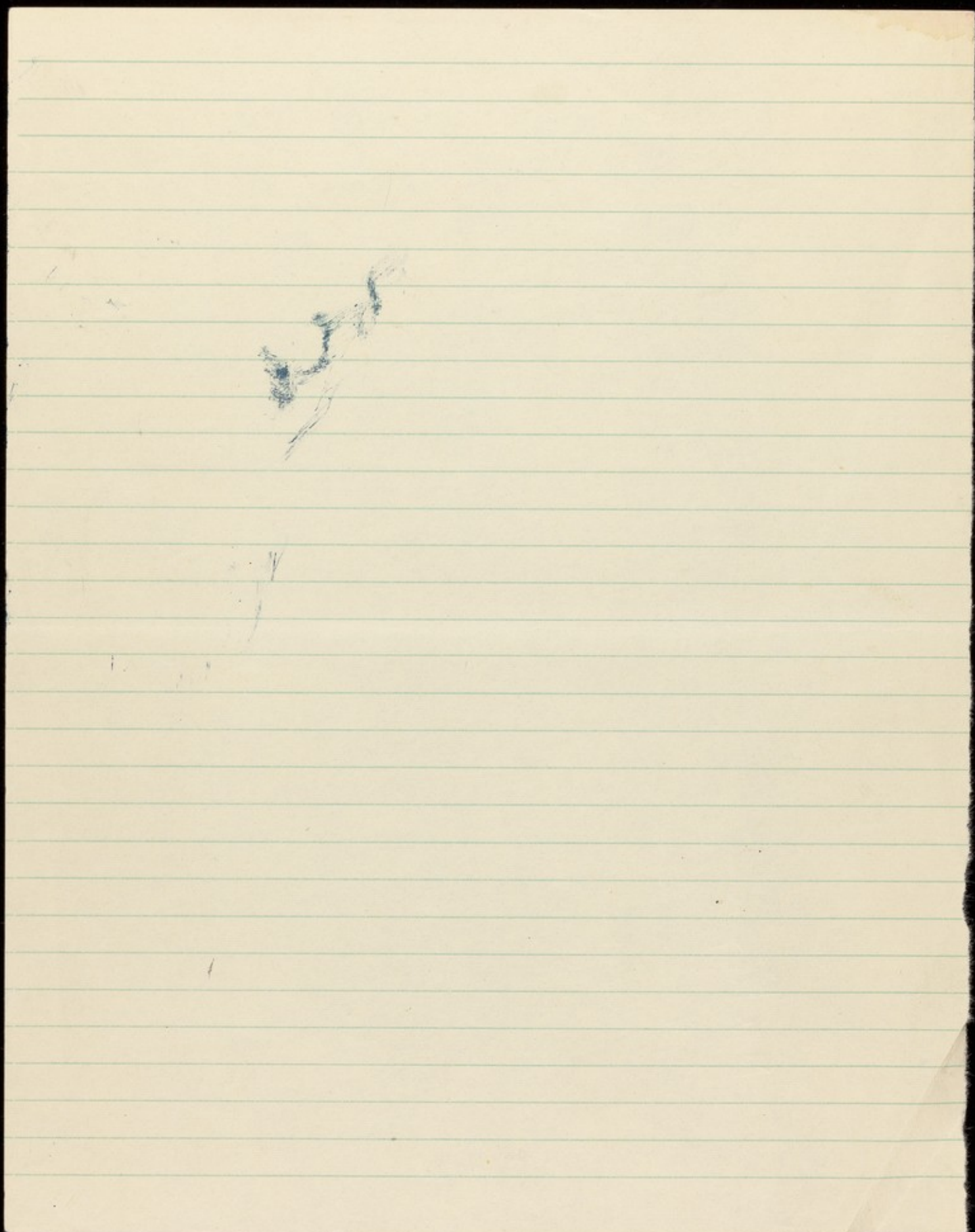
MRS REYNER

910 Lombard Bank

Cox + Kings Branch

6 Park Man







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RAMC 453/3

Mrs KEYNER  
c/o Altona Park  
Ct Kensington  
6 Parkman

The Typhus Hospital at Odradun.

For some months before our arrival at Odradun, there had been an epidemic of typhus fever amongst the Russian prisoners there, and in consequence of this the Russians had been segregated in their camp, and they were not allowed to communicate with the outside world or with the other prisoners in the lager. This segregation was carried out very thoroughly, and the disease did not spread to the other prisoners in the camp, there were no cases amongst the French, and British.

The epidemic had been managed, and the cases treated by some Russian doctors, and it turned out to be a very mild one, only 2% of the cases proved fatal, while in other camps not far away the mortality was as high as 60%, and it was strange that 50% of the cases treated by the German doctors at Odradun, before the arrival of the Russian physicians, evidently the Russians knew more about treatment.

I saw a good many cases of typhus in its later stages in this hospital, they were all recovering, and all of them were suffering from anaemia and debility in varying degrees, and there were no tonics available for their treatment, yet

those convalescent Russians needed tonic treatment, and good food more than any men I have ever seen. It was awful to see them there in the hospital where they could get no better food than in the Lager.

As soon as the Russian doctors arrived the Germans left the epidemic absolutely alone and none of them were ever seen inside the barbed wire fence which bounded the segregated camp, until the danger was well over.

A sergeant of the T. Am. C. was put in amongst the segregated Russians, and he did great work in the camp as a sanitary inspector, there were fewer cases of the disease amongst the men of his company than amongst those of other companies, he was isolated with the Russians for several months, and it was very fortunate for him that he could speak French with the Russian doctors otherwise his lot would have been very hard; on one occasion a German officer spoke English to him through the barbed wire, and this is what he said. "Englishman if you are dying of hunger, do not ask me for food, as I will give you none." The Russian doctors were very good to him, they gave him food, and he is now a living soldier and alive, & well.



My work at Ibadan consisted of seeing the morning sick of the three companies, and I used to superintend the disinfection, and medically inspect all the men at the bath house every day, this was the routine work, and it was rather tiresome after some time, but it might easily have been worse. At one time I was very busy at typhoid inoculations in the afternoons, each man in the three companies had to be given three injections of vaccine at an interval of one week being between the injections. A German doctor did a share of this work, but the prisoners preferred to come to me for ~~injections~~ their injections so I did most of the work, there was no trouble with any of the cases so the technique must have been all right.

I used to go and see our wounded in the hospitals nearly every day, and I tried to cheer them up as much as possible, there were a good many amputations amongst our men, and there were two cases of tetanus, one of which recovered. They were always cheerful in their beds in the hospital, even those who were badly maimed ~~and~~ were able to pity their more complete comrades, as only those who had had amputations above the knee were to be sent home in the first batch to be exchanged.

It was strange living in German barracks at Ohdruf, but I soon got used to the life, and I did not mind the insults and threats of the German soldiers, which for a time were an everyday occurrence, but after I had been there a month or so they let me alone.

The shouted insults did not trouble <sup>me</sup>, because I did not understand them, and when parties of five, or six Huns used to threaten me by pulling back the bolts of their rifles and pushing them violently home again, behind my back, on the way to the camp, I did not mind, I used to hope that if they fired they would hit a German officer farther along the road, when I saw one ahead of me I used to cover him up very carefully, accidents might happen even in Germany.

When I had been a few weeks at Ohdruf, the German soldiers got used to seeing me about, and insults from them became very rare, some of them used to salute me, but only when none of their superiors were present.

To the civilian population of all ages and sexes I was always a kind of animal on view, and when they came through barracks in large numbers, on Sundays and holidays I stayed in my room as much as possible

as I disliked being stared at, by rude and vulgar people.

I often wondered what I should do if I were attacked by half a dozen furious frogs, on my way to hospital on a Blank Holiday. Some of them looked as if they would like to get their nails into me, but I am glad to say that they never molested me in any way.

On Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1915, I went into the Major's room at 3 P.M., and found him packing up to go to Lasse, he had just received the order to go there with five French doctors and one Russian, the party moved off at 4 P.M. with a guard of 6 men, & an N.C.O. there was considerable firing of bayonets, and the munitions magazines were loaded with great violence, which reminded me of our first guard at Yogan, and this display of militarism made those of us who were left behind think that the move was a bad one.

We heard that they were really going to Langensalza where there was a ~~typhus~~<sup>very severe</sup> epidemic of typhus fever, they did not go there but to another typhus camp where one of the French doctors soon died of this disease.

I met Major C- at Bussels on the way home. And we had not forgotten our parting at Olsdorf.



The worst time I had at Bladney, or in all my captivity for that matter, was after I received the order for immediate departure for England on the 26<sup>th</sup> May '15, with the Sanitary Personnel (British) from the Camp. I went to the Camp to warn Sergt Rondel, and two regimental stretcher-bearers of the Somersetshire Light Infantry to be ready for immediate departure, I found them all ready, and full of hope for the best. I finished my packing rapidly and waited for 3 P.M. the hour for departure, it came, but we did not depart, then the order was for 7 A.M. the following morning, and in due course the clock in the barracks struck seven, I had heard it strike all the hours, and all the quarters ~~at~~ that night, and I was ready for the road long before the appointed time, but it had passed, and we remained.

We began to despair, but we were ready to move at any time, the kits were packed, and the food for the journey was all there in a box. We were told to be ready to go in the afternoon, and if not that afternoon, then the following morning, but a good many mornings, and afternoons came and went, and remained in the camp, this was a terrible time

for us, we hoped afresh every morning and all day up to late in the afternoon, and we despaired in the evening, after about ten days we thought no more about it, and settled down to normal conditions, but we had been tortured by hope, and I have read somewhere since that torture by hope was ~~the~~ first practised in the Spanish inquisition. In nature we see it when the cat plays with the mouse, and who does not feel sorry for the mouse?

All the clocks in Germany strike the quarters, I shall always hate such clocks, it was horrible to listen to them measure out the time in those <sup>quiet</sup> days.

#### The Arrival Of Wounded Prisoners at Odruf.

There were 3 or 4 very ramshackle old ambulance waggon in the hospital compound at Odruf, they had evidently outlived their period of utility, and were only fit for the lumber yard. I often wondered why these old waggons were kept at the hospital, where other things were up to date. One evening I heard the sound of screeching wheels on the main road, and on looking out I saw the old waggons, being dragged along by a party of French prisoners, they were going to the station.

to meet some wounded prisoners who were due to arrive at 5 P.M. After some time they came back dragging the waggons full of wounded to the camp.

Germans both civil, and military jeered at and howled insults at this miserable convoy as it moved slowly, and painfully along the road.

The prisoners who were pulling the waggons along were urged on with the butts of the rifles of the guard.

The wounded saw, and heard all this.

The effect on both the prisoners from the camp and the wounded was very depressing, I suppose the German intention was that it should be so.

We in this country do not do as they do, and they can never do as we do; if we were reduced to the last horse, or the last motor ambulance I am sure that even then we should not tolerate German prisoners to antagnated ambulance waggons for the purpose of moving these wounded comrades from the railway station to the hospital.

On the arrival of the wounded at the hospital they were got to bed quickly, and they were well treated there.



Some Germans in Germany.

I met Professor Carl Stange at Göttingen where he was engaged in writing a history of the war, he was known as "the professor" to all the prisoners in the Camp.

He collected facts for his history by questioning French and British prisoners about the part they had played in the war, each prisoner who was brought before him was minutely cross examined as to his share in Armageddon, and the professor carefully noted the answers. The prisoners suspected the professor, they thought that he was trying to get at them, and as many of them had seen their comrades "up against a wall," they were very careful to avoid telling the truth to the professor, so his history of the war will be of very little value.

Carl Stange told me that he had lived in England before the war and that he had many friends in this country. He got back to Germany by the last boat from this country before war was declared, while he was in England he saw all the miseries of the Vaterland, with his English eyes, and he believed that all was lost when war was declared on his country, but when he returned to

Germany he saw the wickedness of England, through his German eyes, and he also saw the rightness of the Vaterland. He hated England as much as a good German could, and he had great hopes based on the submarine blockade which was to commence on the 18<sup>th</sup> Feb'y 1915. "All is fair in love and war" said the professor and that seemed to be his defence for all forms of frightfulness.

The professor was very careful about what he said in the camp, he thought a great deal but he did not speak much, he usually spoke the truth, and if the whole truth did not happen to suit him, he was content with the part that did.

A full minded French prisoner was sent back to France from Löttingen early in 1915, and amongst other things, when he got home this man stated that two British prisoners had been shot at Löttingen, this prisoner's statement was published in "Le Matin" and in due course a copy of that paper with the statement reached the camp of Löttingen; the professor saw it, and wrote a most indignant denial of it in the camp paper, but he did not state that one man (British) had been foully murdered there under the circumstances which I have so already stated.

One evening the professor walked with me from his office in the camp to my quarters also in the camp (B 7) on the way I pointed out to him the famine scenes that had been a daily occurrence amongst the prisoners for months past, he appeared to be surprised and pained at the misery of the prisoners, but he had had his office in the camp for some time before and he had not observed the obvious hunger, and emaciation of the men until I pointed them out to him.

Soon after this Major C- & I were moved from Löttingen to Osdorf, and it seemed to me that the cause of our move, was that we were seeing too much at Löttingen.

The professor was a most violent type of anti-England German, he was a great believer in the secret treaty which had existed between England and Belgium before the war, according to this treaty we had undertaken to invade Germany through Belgium in conjunction with the Belgian army, in the event of war between Germany and France. The professor said that a copy of this treaty had been found at Brussels, and on account of this all Germans hate Britain and Belgium.



Dr. Kachbender

Dr. Kachbender was an elderly physician who came to treat prisoners of war in the Kriegsgefangenen Lazarett at Löttingen early in March 1915.

The doctor was a fat man, there were many scars on his bald head, and his face was scarred also, those scars were the result of his numerous fights in his university days.

As a physician he was good at diagnosis, but he did not go in much for treatment of his cases, in that he was merely an agent for Bayer & Co.

I have seen him take a keen interest in some of his cases especially those who were seriously ill and in danger of death, to all such cases he gave the products of Bayer & Co. and when any of them recovered, he was very pleased, and when they died, nothing mattered.

He had a most awful voice which he used with great effect on going round his wards, when he shouted "Hören" on entering a ward he used to make things shake and after that mighty word not a sound could be heard in the ward except the heavy footsteps of the doctor as he passed on from bed to bed, the patients were afraid to whisper, because if they had done so, he might

shout "Horen" again, or possibly something stronger.

I have seen Hackebinder perform acts of kindness while going round the wards at Göttingen, he once gave cigarettes to the elderly Belgian civilian who had been torn from his home, to die of cancer of the stomach in Göttingen, and he frequently cheered patients up by his cheery manner of talking to them in the ward, yet in spite of his professional knowledge, and his cheery manner he could be more brutal to patients than one would have thought possible. I saw him stand one day at the foot of the bed of Pte Thomas, who was just past the crisis in double pneumonia, and he made the wretched man sit up in bed for examination. Thomas was so weak that he could hardly sit up, and on seeing him struggling to get up, the two French orderlies hurried forward to help him, but Hackebinder did not allow them to give any assistance, apparently he wanted to watch the struggles of the patient, who might die at any moment because of this exertion. In the position in which the patient was, he ought to have been examined lying down in bed. Hackebinder was only a brute.

He has also to his credit the "Atem für Kan Ponce" incident already related.

### The Big Inspector.

He did not know his name, but everyone at the prisoners' hospital knew him as 'the big inspector'; this was because of his size, and occupation, he was cigarette inspector and sutter-officer, ~~and~~ very much suter.

He was a big man, and very fond of his supposed resemblance to that idol of the Germans, Von Hindenburg; he was a typical beer loving, and sausage eating German, his voice was terrible when raised in anger, or when cursing the much hated Englishers, he produced a volume of sound on those occasions, that was extraordinary even for a bulky German. He fancied himself so much that some of his fellow inspectors used to say that his likeness to Hindenburg had turned his head.

He always tried to look brave, but it was useless because everyone knew that he was one of the biggest and most arrant cowards in the Vaterland, and that is saying a good deal for his cowardice as in that country loud words, and brutality towards starving prisoners of war pass for pluck.

When the epidemic of cholera appeared amongst the Russian prisoners, 'the big inspector' ceased to inspect that part of the hospital which was given over



to those cases, he was afraid of catching cholera, and so he did not do his duty. It was said by some that he had run away from the disease, but if he did run he did not go very far, it required too much exertion to move such a mass, so he stayed in his office and nearly died of funk there; when the epidemic was over and things had settled down again in the hospital, it was noticed that he had developed a most obnoxious form of dyspepsia. He said that this distressing complaint had been caused by all the hard work which he had done during the epidemic, it was really due to his dietetic excesses combined with a sedentary life, & funk.

It is well known that on a certain occasion he had beaten a British prisoner who was lying ill in bed in the hospital, and no one knew why he had done this.

I have seen him hit a British prisoner across the face, because the latter had lost his trousers in the hospital, and on his discharge was going out without trousers.

I have written so much about this brute man because he is to be found at all the prisoners camps in Germany, he is a typical Lazarett Inspektor.

He is to get the Iron Cross for his work during the epidemic.

The Kommandant of Orléans.

His name was von Stolz, his rank was Oberst = Colonel.

He was a man to be avoided, as he had a violent temper, and he had plenary power in accordance with the German military code. The prisoners said that he had sentenced many Belgian civilians to death at Orléans in the early days of the war.

We did not meet him often, but Major C- & I had a memorable encounter with him on the 1st April 1915.

We had just stepped out of our quarters as he came round a corner near by, so we saluted him, and passed on, but we had not gone far when he stopped us with guttural word of command. He wanted to know who we were, and why we were there, I tried to explain this to him in German, and after a few simple sentences he suddenly boiled over and ordered us to his office to get an interpreter. We walked along with him talking pigeon German to him until we came to the main road, his rage appeared to have died down, as he spoke quietly to me, but it would not do for the Kommandantur to be seen talking to British officers, and on reaching the road he again blazed forth in anger. I have never seen a man

get so red hot in such a short time as he did, he might have died of apoplexy then and there, he became incoherent with rage, and he could only bellow hoarsely at us, with his fat right hand he grasped the hilt of his sword, while he waved us behind with his left.

He led on and was followed and arrived at his office in a few minutes; his hand never left the hilt of his sword on the way, and the back of his neck was red in anger. He strode on right mightily, beating the ground with his great feet, as though he would like to shake the earth, but all his display did not impress us very much, and there was no earthquake.

At the office we found an interpreter, (a civilized German officer) and <sup>our presence at Aachen</sup> ~~the matter~~ was being explained in a few words of English. The Kommandantur stood by still holding his sword hilt, and gradually cooling down when he suddenly realized that a German officer was speaking to two Englishers in their accursed language. Ach Himmel he said Das ist streng verboten. (Oh heaven that is strictly forbidden)  $\pm 0 \ 160^\circ$

So much to the amusement of the interpreter we ended the explanation in French.

It was the 1st April.



Der Chefarzt.

Von Egerling was the name of the medical officer in charge of the prisoners' camp and hospitals at Osdorf. Before the war he had been professor of pathology at the university of Jena, and on mobilization he became a Stabsarzt and was appointed to Osdorf. He was a very polite man, and was always got up regardless of expense, it was his smile that made him famous. He was by far the best of the Germans I met over there, he worked hard in his office every day, and he made frequent inspections of the hospitals. He was not liked by his junior medical officers because of the von in his name, they thought that this was much too aristocratic, and none of them possessed that little prefix to their names which were common in comparison.

The only thing which I know against von Egerling is that he never attempted to treat the typhus patients during the epidemic, the management of which he left entirely to the Russian medical officers who were there, yet when thanks to their efforts the epidemic died down he accepted a decoration which was granted to him for the able way in which he had checked the spread of the disease and treated the cases.

Lusitania day in Dordref.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1915 it was rumoured in the camp that the Olympic had been sunk by a German submarine, German soldiers shouted at one more than they had been in the habit of doing, that day. They were very much elated at the news of the greatest victory of frightfulness. Sinks of Olympic haput, Olympic torpedoed, Olympic gunnham were what I heard most, and I was called a Schweinhund by a great many horse men that day.

All the flags were flown that afternoon, this was the usual sign of a German victory, but later in the evening, when the band began to play it was evident that they considered that this outrage was far more important than any ordinary victory.

The officers of the garrison kept up their rejoicings late into the night, they kept up their singing until about 2 A.M. on Sunday morning 9<sup>th</sup> May 15. By that time most of them were so drunk that their rejoicings ceased automatically.

On the following day it became known that ~~the~~ the Lusitania had been the victim, not the Olympic and ~~it~~ was immediately said that the torpedo was justified as the Lusitania was armed, and loaded up with ammunition.

The food of the prisoners at Oshdorf.

The men received three so called meals every day, but of the 4 which were issued per week 12 were absolutely unfit for consumption, this left only 9 which were eatable, or more correctly drinkable, as the only solid food they had was the 'K' bread, and whatever this bread may have lacked, it did not lack solidity.

The cooking was done by prisoners, who were always either French, or Belgian, the British were not to be trusted in the cook-houses. These cook-houses were very smelly places, especially when soup was being made out of rotten, or half rotten fish in them; they were at one side of the camp and the latrines were at the other, so the smell in the camp depended on the direction of the prevailing wind. Many prisoners preferred the stench of the latrines to that of the cook-houses, it was the less objectionable.

I have often seen the men's dinners at Oshdorf they always consisted of soup, which never had a trace of meat in it, and frequently the smell of the soup was just as bad as that of the cook-houses.

No man could have lived for long on this ration.

On the next page is a copy of a diet table which was originally made for me by a prisoner at Oshdorf (2)



This diet table was made out for me by a British R.C.O. who is still a prisoner in Germany.

Diet Table Of Prisoners At Charing.

The only solid food was was bread 200 grams per diem.

[illegible]

From the foregoing table, it will be seen that the prisoners actually received only five breakfasts, two dinners, and two suppers which were fit to be eaten, per week, only nine meals in all, and these nine were far from appetising, they had to be forced down by the hungry men, and they never succeeded in appeasing their hunger even at those meals, though as one of the men said to me, "there is always enough for a second helping, except at dinner on Sundays and we do not leave enough then to go round."

The men could not have lived without food from home, at first our prisoners did not receive ~~the~~ parcels regularly, and until they did so they were helped by their French friends, who very early in the war got food parcels from France. In those days most of the prisoners at Chidrop were fed by the French.

Lately parcels for our prisoners were delivered much more frequently, and by this I hope that they are far better off than they were in those evil days.

Extras could be bought in the canteen but there was not much in it at any time, milk, margarine, sugar and artificial honey, were the best available, sometimes men bought bad sausage (Blut wurst) there, and I saw them at the medical inspection rooms next morning (22) for treatment for the effects of bad meat.

On a little bare space to the west of the camp, was what was known as the "Indian Village"; here the prisoners cooked food on little fires which they made between stones in true Indian fashion. Some made coffee and it was possible to get better coffee there than in the German officers' canteen, others fried shipped potatoes, they were able to buy potatoes in the canteen for 10 pf., but there were other ways for getting potatoes besides this, others made sweets, and chocolate, and several kinds of testotal drinks were made there. Prisoners used to enjoy themselves in the Indian Village.

I have seen men at Dordrecht, pick dandelion along the roadside, & take it to the camp to make it into a salad, it was the only fresh vegetable that they had.

It has been stated that the prisoners receive 2700 calories daily in their food, (Vide *Prisoner's Journal*) and this is considered sufficient for men not doing hard work, but there is something in food cannot be expressed in calories, and that is missing.

There are a great many calories in a lump of coal, yet no man can avail himself of them, it is much the same in the case of the prisoners' food in Germany. (23)



It appeared to me that the food of the prisoners was the same in the three camps that I had seen, (Altegrabow, Löttingen, and Ohldorf) and I am fairly certain that when any prisoner in Germany has soup made of bad fish, or sans kravt, that all the other prisoners in Germany get similar soup at the same time.

In the same way the brutality is standardized for the camps, the punishments are the same in all of them, and blows with the butts of rifles, and floggings with the bayonet occur in all them.

The epidemics which occurred varied in the different camps; typhus fever appears to have been most frequent one heard that it was everywhere. At Münster there was an epidemic of cerebrospinal meningitis, at Löttingen there was cholera, and scarlet fever, at Altegrabow there was typhoid. As <sup>prisoners</sup> patients were moved from camp to camp it was quite possible for men to have been exposed to all the above infections. The only disease which was common to all the camps was tuberculosis, and this threatens to become the greatest cause of death amongst the prisoners. German organization standardizes everything for prisoners except epidemics.

### A Surgical Operation.

I was ordered to give chloroform to Russian prisoner at Göttingen, for Dr Reingrubber.

The operation was undertaken for drainage of an abscess in the calf muscles, I do not remember which leg.

Dr Reingrubber made the incision from the lower 2/3 of the thigh to the middle of the calf altogether about a foot in length, a two inch incision would have been sufficient, and it was quite unnecessary for the incision to have extended up to the level of the knee joint.

Dr Reingrubber handled the limb very roughly during the operation, and though the only abscess was at the lower end of the incision, he deepened the latter throughout its length.

The patient had been shot through the thigh, and this wound was septic but there was no apparent track from the wound to the abscess, this appeared to be pyaemia.

The result of the operation was permanent mutilation and crippling of the patient. The heel became flexed considerably by the contraction of the scar tissue, the result of the unnecessary incision.

Was this malpraxis?

### Prisoners at Work.

All the prisoners who could work had to do something for which they received no pay. At Altengraben the Russians used to be employed in cleaning up the German barracks, and in hauling heavy waggons about the place.

At Lötzingen, Belgian and French prisoners were employed at the gas works in the town, and a large number of Russians left this camp for the purpose of putting Cologne in a state of defence.

At Oedingen French American and British prisoners were employed at various jobs in the German barracks and in the surrounding district, they did sanitary work in the barracks, they planted various crops in the district, and they made roads, and railways wherever required for all this they received no pay.

At all the camps the British prisoners were specially selected for the dirty work, they were the cleaners of the foul latrines, and they were not given proper implements for this disgusting work, which they had to do in a manner which was calculated to degrade them in the eyes of the other prisoners, and in those of the German Guard. After some months our men earned some respect from their guards and



they were no longer specially selected for this work, but even so they remained always the hewers of wood, and drawers of water.

At Göttingen the prisoners built their own huts, and there also they put up the barbed wire fence which separated them from freedom.

At Oshodorf, prisoners were constantly employed at carrying boxes filled with stones, on their shoulders up a hill to the camp, the guard saw that the boxes which were carried by the Britishers were always better filled than those carried by other prisoners. I remember on one occasion having heard how a man of a Highland regiment had his load considerably lightened because he declared his Scotch nationality. These stones which the prisoners carried up the hill so laboriously were used for road making, and since I have been home I have often wondered why we do not employ some of our Germans at similar work. The roads of Surrey are in such a shocking state.

The only prisoners who received pay at Oshodorf were some French red cross men (Brancardiers) who were employed in the hospital.

### Hate

The German people hate the people of England with hatred of extraordinary intensity, and they must have done so for years before the war, otherwise it would hardly have been possible for such a hatred to blaze suddenly forth at the very beginning of the war. The hatred was common to people of all ages and sexes, very small children were taught to say "Loth stafe England" in the schools.

The cursed British prisoners all the way from France and Belgium, into Germany, and even their Red Cross personnel at the railway stations refused to give a drink of water to thirsty British wounded.

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres a badly wounded Canadian soldier who had been taken prisoner there, asked a few times for water when he was on the way to Germany; none was given to him, but when the train stopped at a station, a highly cultured Hun threw a bucket full of it over him.

When British prisoners arrived at their destinations in Germany, in a great many cases they were whipped, and otherwise maltreated by the civilian population during their march from the railway stations to the prison camps. A single word

of command from the German Guard would have stopped this instantly, but this word was not given, very often the Guards took a share in the manning of the prisoners.

"Gott strafe England" appeared to have been written all over Germany in 1914-1915. During my move from camp to camp I saw it everywhere, and all the people said it to each other, and shouted it at us, a German official at Lötzingen told me that it could be heard all along the German lines every day from Danneberg to Königsberg. It was everywhere, I have seen it in the offices of fat podgy Kommandants where it was hung up on the wall in the form of a scroll, it was stuck up in railway carriages in stamp form, and it was stamped on some of those one and two mark war notes. At Gotha I saw a picture of John Bull being held over a fire in a frying by a very angry God, and "Gott strafe England" was printed in flaming letters all round the top of the picture.

Everywhere John Bull was being hanged in effigy; looking back on it all now it seems rather amusing, & silly, but at the time it had its effect on all of us it made us hate the Germans.



It was surprising to find that even educated Germans, and Germans who had spent the best of their days in England were all absolutely silly in their hatred of us. We have no friends in Germany, all of them without exception hate us, they all hope that before the war is over England will be invaded, and that Hindenburg will march to London. Nothing gives them more pleasure than to hear that men, women, and children have been killed over here by their Zeppelin bombs.

The population of Germany before the war was 70 millions and at that time they used to say "Guten Morgen" to each other when they met in the mornings, at present this greeting is seldom heard, it has been succeeded by the familiar "Lott stropfe England".

### German Sport at Löttingen.

During my internment at Löttingen the ground was frequently covered with snow, for several days at a time, and at these snowy periods there was great distress amongst the birds, though they were far better off than the prisoners as they could fly and enjoy the freedom of the air. In those bare days no birds ever came to the camp in quest of food it was evident that they knew that they would not find any there, but some stupid tame pigeons from the town used come daily to the prisoner's hospital, where they searched hard for stray crumbs.

One day a German soldier cleared the snow from about a square yard or so of ground up near the inspection house, and having done so he scattered bread crumbs about in the clear space, I was surprised to see him do this especially as he was one of the principals in the "roch" in the Engländer Kaput incident. Here was evidence of kindness and sympathy on the part of this vile man.

One thought that perhaps it is the custom of the country to feed the birds in time of snow.

The <sup>clear</sup> space was soon covered with pigeons who gorged themselves with crumbs, and more hungry birds came up from the town, then when the ground had

been baited again the Hun got a large board, and propped it up by means of a stick, so that it leaned over the feeding ground, and having tied a string to the prop, he sat in a window near by, smoking his Landsturm pipe with the end of the string in his hand; he had not long to wait and as soon as a good number of pigeons were feeding, he pulled the string, then he ran out, and jumped on the board and flattened out his birds.

He plucked them in the disinfection house, and sent them home to his wife, it was a cheap way of getting meat, and she wanted it.

In the same ground a Belgian caught a pigeon without killing it, and he did not wing it, and he sat it, though he was sorely tempted to do so.

He tied a little note to the bird's leg and let it go. It flew about the hospital and the German barracks for some little time before it was seen by the guard, and was reported to the Kommandant.

Then there were signs of unusual activity in camp and barracks, naturally enough suspicion fell on some of the townspeople, but who could have tried to communicate with the prisoners?



<sup>was issued</sup>  
Order, for the capture of the offending bird, dead, or  
alive, and soon the poor pigeon, and the note were  
blown to pieces by means of a charge of heavy  
man stopping shot at close range.

The local head of the criminal investigation  
department was consulted, and in a short time he  
~~had~~ put that little torn note together again, and  
then he found that it contained only three little  
words in French. "À bas Guillaume."

There was much L'entente cordiale, on this discovery,  
but as usual it ended in nothing.

#### How a German Officer Mounted his Charger.

One day at Chodov I saw a German groom leading  
a good looking horse up and down outside the officers'  
quarters. A French doctor, & I continued to look at the  
noble animal in the hands of the man. Presently three German  
officers appeared on the scene, and one of them, a short thick  
man with bullet head, and bull nose and wearing enormous  
spectacles proceeded to mount, but the horse was restive, and side  
stepped at the critical moment, & the officer dropped his spectacles

Then his altered appearance frightened the poor beast who  
would have none of him, so that he was given a leg up, & (38)  
soon as he missed, finally he got up by means of a step ladder.

Das Englische Pferd.

The common English cart horse has a bad time if he has the misfortune to fall into the hands of the Huns, as the following incident in the life of such an unfortunate animal will show.

One evening at Dindorf, I saw a horse pulling a very heavy load up the hill towards the Russian hospital. The horse was weak, and thin, the work was hard and the hill was steep. Just as I got level with the waggon, the horse stopped, because he could not go farther. The driver, a sleek German used his whip viciously on the trembling animal, and he shouted so that I should hear, "Englisches Pferd", but the horse did not understand the language, and the whip could not make him move just then, as he had stuck in the hill.

The driver shouted angrily at the poor beast, and drew my attention to him, I looked at the animal and saw that he was of advanced age, but there were no marks of ~~of~~ its nationality on it, there were some numbers on its shanks, which conveyed nothing to me.

As I was passing on the driver raised a greasy looking cloth which was across the horse's eyes, and

revealed numerous ulcers which were discharging pus, again he used his whip fiercely, shouting all the time "Engische Pfund"!!

I went on to the hospital, and told some of my wounded friends who were there about it.

He sympathized with that horse.

"Fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind."

#### French Prisoner & German Bully.

At about one day a German soldier of the camp guard <sup>with a bayonet</sup> attached, a French prisoner from behind, he kicked the prisoner savagely, and sent him forward a few paces, nearly knocking him down. The French man pulled himself together at once and turned round to face his enemy, and on doing so he found the German's bayonet a few inches from his chest. Speaking perfect German, the French man said

"You are a coward; kill me if you wish, you can do so safely as I am not armed," or words to that effect.

The German did not strike, he was surprised and he could not act. A commotion occurred in the camp and the guard turned out, and the Hun was run in & punished if he had killed his man he would have had the iron but he had hesitated and lost.





<sup>now</sup> they are at rest in their enemies' country.

May the unfriendly soil press lightly on them.

We used to salute that little cemetery every morning  
on our way to work, and we shall never forget those  
lonely graves far away in Thuringia.

### The Journey to England.

I received definite orders for the journey home on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 1915; and for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time I said good bye to all my friends in the hospitals and the camps.

The journey commenced on the 16<sup>th</sup> June when my party marched off from the Commandant's office at 4.30 AM. The party consisted of Sergt R - R.A.M.C. & Regimental Stretcher-bearers of the Somersetshire Light Infantry, and myself. Our escort consisted of one German officer, and one private, and the latter did not even fix his bayonet. Our kit was ~~then~~ put into a small dog-wagon which was drawn to the station by a British prisoner.

We got a train at Oshdun after a short wait and for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time I found myself travelling 2<sup>nd</sup> class this time with the escorting officer, the three men went third escorted by the private.

As the train steamed out of the station we saw the old camp for the last time, I can see it now as I saw it then, looking so ugly through the morning mist which hung round the hill; it is sad to think of the wretched prisoners who are waiting there for the war to end, and where in the meantime some of them



will die nearly every day. It was with a feeling of pain that I looked at that camp for the last time.

A few stations down the line I was ordered to travel 2<sup>nd</sup> class with the men; the *Levier* Commandant (Commandant of the railway line) said that ~~the~~ prisoners were not permitted to travel 1<sup>st</sup> class.

I was very glad of the change as it was much more cheerful travelling with the men, and I had a haversack well stocked with provisions for the journey which I was able to share with them.

It was a most uneventful journey we were not worried by insults this time, the people took very little notice of us, and the precaution which we had taken in case of attack, was not wanted.

In case of trouble we intended to let them know that we had been treating typhus fever, <sup>and</sup> we knew by experience that the mere mention of Fleck Fever was sufficient to put most men to flight, but something must have happened to those people during the ten months which had passed since September 1914, it seemed <sup>as though</sup> that they had become less civilized by the war.

We arrived at Bernards at 7 am. on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1915.  
as soon as I stepped on to the platform a German officer  
accompanied by an interpreter came forward and asked me  
most politely to accompany them, and they took great care  
to assure me that my luggage would follow.

Outside the station a splendid touring car was  
waiting and I was asked to get in to it, and to make  
myself comfortable. I was escorted by the officer and  
the interpreter only, and it was a new experience for  
me to find Germans so polite as they were. I suppose  
that they had been ordered to be so.

We were driven through the quiet streets of  
La Belle Ville, to a big military hospital, where  
I was ceremoniously shown into a ward in which  
was a bed waiting for me. Two of my old friends  
had already arrived, and were sleeping in this ward  
when I arrived there. They soon woke up and we  
put 2 + 2 together and came to the conclusion that we  
were for the shore, but I well remember how  
we three agreed that we could not be certain of  
home, until we had crossed the Dutch frontier.

We were not yet out of the woods.

Breakfast given to us in the ward, it consisted of good coffee, & bread, & butter, it was far better than the usual breakfast at the prison camps, and it was served by German soldiers, and later in the morning these same soldiers cleaned our boots. This was a change from our first journey from Thon to Aachen.

Entris were placed outside the door of our ward, and we were not allowed outside. It was strictly forbidden to open the windows, this was evidently to prevent us communicating with people outside.

Early the following morning, a large party of R.A.C. officers, and several chaplains arrived in our ward, amongst them were many of my old friends in misfortune, all of whom were looking a little thinner than when I saw them last. They were surprised to see me as I had been reported dead of typhus fever, somewhere in Germany and some of them had already thought out what they should say to my widow in case they should meet her in London. (*De mortuis nil nisi bonum*)

A German doctor came into the ward some time later to see if he could recognize any of us as former friends, and he told us that we were for England. He is an F.R.S. (H)



After breakfast we were driven to another railway station in 2 large motor coaches. The streets through which we passed, looked rather sad, none of the people smiled, and there were not many Belgians about that day.

We found still more P.A.M.C. officers and Chaplains at the railway station, and there were a great many rank & file of the P.A.M.C. assembled there also. I soon saw many of the faces that were once familiar in 16th Field Ambulance.

The men for the most part looked fit but some of them were thin and weary looking, one D.H. S. had lost a lot of weight, which might have been superfluous, but he was looking steady.

We waited in the station from 9.30 A.M. to 12 Noon, during which time we had a last roll call, & we were asked if we had any complaints to make.

Many complaints were made then, but nothing has been heard of them since.

The wounded began to arrive about 10 A.M. they were driven up in motor ambulances, and quickly passed into the waiting train, they were for exchange to England. All of them were so badly damaged

that there was practically no possibility of any of them taking part in the war again. It was very sad to see the numbers of amputations above the knee, the blind and others who had been mutilated by shell fire. Most of them had been wounded early in the war, and they had been many months in German camps where they had been treated shamefully, but not one of them was down hearted that day at the railway station at Brussels, they were all glad at the thought of home again, and they made the most of the pleasure of expectation.

The train left Brussels at 12.30 P.M., and we passed through Malines and on through the lonely and scarred country to the outskirts of Antwerp, then we turned to the North and headed straight for the Dutch frontier, halting only at the frontier station.

During this last many of us had misgivings about the remainder of the journey, and I fancy that if the train had not moved on in the right direction when it did; several of us would have been out making a dash for it, but happily the train went on, and we crossed the frontier into Holland.

### Holland.

The journey through Holland will always be a pleasant recollection for the prisoners of war, who ceased to exist as such on crossing the Dutch frontier on the 28<sup>th</sup> June A.D.

All our doubts as to our destination were set aside, as once in Holland we knew that we were free once more, and there was no danger of any German "Belwimeri".

The German soldiers who had been on guard in our train, left us at the frontier station, and there were no more Guards in field grey with saw edged bayonets along the line; instead of these there were smartly turned out Dutch soldiers on guard, and they laughed and cheered us on our way through their smiling country.

It seemed as though all Holland was smiling, & gay that day; we had a great reception at the only station where we stopped, it was such a change for all of us after having been strafed for months in Germany, that men could hardly understand all this kindness at first, and it made them "come all over queer" to see pretty Dutch girls smile at them while offering them tea that had cream in it and splendid bread & butter, sandwiches cakes, & fruit to eat.

It was a great time for all of us, we had



been looking forward for this for many months, and now all our expectations were more than realized.

The Dutch girls asked us for souvenirs, and they got an extraordinary collection, many ~~a~~ men who had been bringing home ~~a~~ rings which had been made in the camps in Germany out of French Russian Belgian and British military buttons, parted with them that day to the pretty Dutch girls who were so kind to us. R.A.C. badges were very popular with the girls.

Our journey to Flushing was very pleasant the people cheered us all the way, and it was good to note the well fed prosperous appearance of the men and animals, we had around us men who were fat and <sup>in good</sup> left those with the "lean & lumpy" looks behind in Germany.

We got on board the S.S. Orange Nassau at Flushing that evening, and we remained in the harbour that night, as it was safer to cross the North Sea in day light.

We crossed the North Sea on the 30th June 1915. The wounded being under the care of the Dutch Red Cross Society.

Home Again.

We crossed the North Sea in the SS. Franzi Nassau without incident on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 1916, and we steamed up the river in the afternoon, arriving at Tilbury at 5 P.M.

All the ships in the Thames gave us a great welcome with their steam whistles as we came along by them on our way to Tilbury, the sound was like what I had heard before on several New Year's Nights when I had been near the river, and it made me feel very glad to hear it again.

Tilbury is rather a dull place at best of times, we found it so that day. Rain began to fall when we were getting off the ship, and we had a long and weary wait for our train.

The people who met the boat were very quiet, and they hardly spoke to our men or to the wounded. I heard some of the men shout to them "For Heaven's sake speak English." When we had been waiting for a while at Tilbury the people thawed a little and some of them spoke English to the returned prisoners of war.

We travelled from Tilbury by special train to St Pancras, where we got a great reception from

London.

crowds of people who were waiting for our arrival at the station.

I <sup>was driven</sup> ~~drove~~ out of the station in a very fine motor car through cheering crowds. The car stopped at the Royal Free Hospital where I dined with several other returned M.C.s. After dinner I took a taxi and crossed London to West Kensington, where I joined my family, and was home again.

Driving across London in a taxi is an exciting journey for one who has been inside barbed wire for months, I felt that the pace was simply terrific, and I feared collisions at every crossing, it was so thrilling for me that I asked the driver to go slowly, & needless to say we crossed without accident. The taxi man scornfully refused German money for his fare, I had no other money at the time so I borrowed a few shillings for him.

The one thing which pleased me most about London on my return was the number of men who were in khaki in the streets, they were all fine young soldiers, smartly turned out, and they looked far superior to any of the field grey warriors I had seen in Germany, what I saw in town convinced me that



we have better men than they have, of course I always knew this but it was good to have the living proof upon my eyes. I have always been an optimist about the end of the war, which however I believe to be farther off than most people <sup>think</sup>, and I became a more ardent optimist than ever in London. Seeing British Soldiers once more in England was better for me than any tonic, on my return from the ~~the~~ enemy's country after ten months illegal detention there.

During the few days which I stayed in town, I was greatly interested in recruiting posters, I remember well, how carefully I looked at every poster which I came across. Many of them were strangely familiar to me, as I had seen photographs of them in the German papers, and I had read their scathing remarks on this method of recruiting; the German editor saw only the photographs of these posters, they had not seen our men, hence their remarks on our failure to raise an army.

A German officer once said to me that without conscription they could not raise an army of half a million in the Vaterland, he could not believe that men would enlist to go to war of their own free will, as they would not do so in Germany. (43)

### Germans At Work.

All the German people who can work in any capacity appeared to me to be doing their utmost for the Vaterland. They commenced work at a very early hour and worked late into the night, I have seen some of their munition factories from a distance and they seemed to be working at full pressure at all times.

The amount of work which had been done on the land was marvellous, during my journeys from camp to camp I noted that practically every square yard of land in the country had been cultivated, and so made to do its bit.

The workers in the fields were for the most part women, and elderly men obviously unfit for military service, I saw them working in rows on my way home from Rhodorf, they were all hard at it, and even in remote country places they did not stop their work to gaze at the train as it went by.

All the country people who are in Germany work hard for their country, and as long as they continue to do so they will have sufficient food.

### A Prisoner's Camp in England.

Soon after my return from Germany, I went to see a camp for German prisoners somewhere in England, it was not my intention to fear at the Huns, I only wanted to see them down, and subdued. I expected to find them much better off than the prisoners whom I had left behind in Germany in a state of starvation and <sup>down with</sup> rags.

I found the camp in a level plain between pine woods, the its situation was all that could be desired there were British soldiers on guard; and both the guard and the prisoners were under canvas, the camp commandant himself lived in a tent inside the outer barbed wire fence, but separated from the Huns by the inner fence.

At the time of my arrival <sup>outside</sup> at the camp a band was playing German music inside, and the prisoners had just come in from their football field for tea in the camp.

I was allowed inside the outer fence, & so I was able to look at the Huns at a distance of about 20 yards, they all looked content and they were obviously in the pink of condition.

They appeared to be well clothed in new German uniforms, their boots were good. (50)



They strolled about the camp as if they owned the whole place, and they appeared to me to be far happier and more at ease than the German soldiers of the 11<sup>th</sup> Army Corps were at Chodrup.

In that comfortable camp somewhere in England the prisoners were free from German discipline, there was no fear of the "Paraden Marsch" with packs filled with bricks or sand, they were safe from this and more, they had more than enough to eat and drink, they had their exercise ground, they were not made to work, and last but not least they had their German band; I wonder if they had "any complaints".

The Germans who are prisoners in England are very lucky men; the British who are prisoners in Germany — I have written all I know about the conditions in which they live, & die.

### Guns and Machine Guns.

<sup>Always</sup> Guns were in position on some ground from which they dominated the three camps for men in which I was interned in Germany. (Along about Lodding, & Oldorf) they were old guns but evidently they were good enough for use against defenceless prisoners, in case any disturbances should occur in the camps.

As there was no cover in any of these camps, most of the prisoners realized that they should have to chance it in the open or in wooden huts if the Germans for any reason took it into their heads to try certain fire on the hapless prisoners.

Machine guns were very often in evidence at Oldorf where elevated platforms had been made at convenient corners around the cages. Gun teams used to mount these platforms frequently, and train their guns on crowds of prisoners in the cages, but during my time at Oldorf they had no occasion to open fire, though they constantly threatened the prisoners with the machine guns.

I went to see a foot ball match which was played on the hill at Oldorf one Sunday, and during the match I happened to glance round and saw the gun teams with their machine guns all ready for immediate action about 200 yards behind the backs of the prisoners who were looking on at the foot ball.

With only one or two exceptions all the incidents which I have recorded in this account of life in German camps, have been witnessed by myself, and I can vouch for them, and in <sup>the case</sup> those incidents which I have recorded from hearsay evidence, I am prepared to produce witnesses to support the accuracy of my statements in every one of them.

If I were to record a small fraction of all I have heard to the discredit of Hitler, I should have to write for years to come, but I fancy that what I have written will show that men who have been prisoners in Germany will have very little love for the man, even after the war.



