

A STORY OF LIEGE

WRITTEN BY CAPTAIN CLARK,
WHO WAS OVER THERE WHEN
WAR STARTED.

Lieutenant Johann came in last night with his regiment for a ten-days rest and is billeted with us in the "American" villa. However, he doesn't regard it as much of a rest, for at this little summer resort town the wide "plage" at low tide furnishes an excellent drill ground and there is more activity with parades, reviews and exercises than there is in the trenches where they are only wearily watching and waiting.

La Pann is virtually the capital of Belgium now because it is the only town on the tragic triangle of unoccupied Belgian soil that has not been more or less shot up, and because it is here that the Queen makes her home where she can be in touch with her people and can make almost daily visits to the hospital to bring cheer, sympathy and gifts, and dress the wounds of her soldiers. It is here, too, that King Albert comes to review his troops, to pin decorations on the heroes and present the flag to newly-formed regiments. And it is here, a muddy six miles from the front, that the Belgian regiments spend their ten days out of fifty in recuperation from their trench life.

Like most men, we have met here who have been through the real thing, young Johann talks reluctantly but we got his story in pieces partly from him and partly from others who knew him. He had just finished his examinations in a law school in Brussels when at the call of King Albert he joined his regiment, which was placed to hold the line between the forts in front of Liege.

For six days the forts held out but with the coming of the forty-twos they were demolished in a few hours and the infantry was left to receive the assault of the Prussian masses.

Six times the Bosches came in close formation, shoulder to shoulder, heads up, chests out, guns held down horizontally at their sides, each man grasping his comrade's gun with his left hand and holding his own with his right. Six times they melted away on the wired parapet. The seventh wave came over—the dead and wounded piled on the wires made it easier to get across.

Our friend Johann was there. In moments of supreme excitement why is it that one is likely to have great difficulty in doing a little thing which under ordinary conditions is very simple? He could not get his clip of cartridges in his rifle. It was all in a moment, yet he seemed to struggle with that clip for hours. In desperation he put one cartridge in the barrel, closed the bolt and looked up. A Prussian officer was above him aiming a revolver. The young Belgian got him with his last cartridge, then with the rush of Prussians over the parapet he fled and with about seventy-five of his comrades was taken prisoner.

Guarded by uhlans, these Belgian prisoners were marched through Liege. Johann was alert for a chance to escape. As they passed a narrow alley one of the uhlan horses took fright, wheeled into the column of prisoners scattering them for a moment in confusion. Here was his chance. In the gathering dusk he darted into the alley, leaped upon a doorstep, stiffened himself erect against the door and held his breath. The uhlans passed on.

In the house he changed his uniform for civilian clothes, re-entered the alley, made his way through the now dark streets and out of the city in the direction of Brussels. At the little town of Hollogne the next morning he was arrested as a German spy. All his stories of the fight, his capture and escape were taken for lies. Where was his uniform? His appearance, his name and his civilian clothes were all

against him and he was sentenced to be shot.

He appealed to the burgomeister of the village.

"If you are who you say you are, I know your father in Brussels. Describe him and tell me what business he is in," challenged the burgomeister.

Johann did that and more, after which he was given food and aided on his way to Brussels. After a rest he got a new gun, new uniform, rejoined his regiment and went through the "Gettysburg of Belgium" on the River Yser in October, 1914.

He will be with us for the Christmas eve party at the hospital tomorrow night and unless we have another airplane raid to put on the lights we will have a good time and try to forget the war for the evening.

BY CAPT. WILLIAM ARTHUR
CLARK.

SUNSHINE LETTER

H. AMY & COMPANY,
44 and 46 Wall St.,
New York.

Commanding Officer,
Base Hospital,
Camp Greene, N. C.

Dear Sir:

I wish to express to you my thanks for your kind attention shown me and my brother-in-law on our visit to the Base Hospital during the serious illness of my son, James C. Amy.

I cannot too highly praise the efficient treatment which was given my son. I consider he received equally as good care and attention as he could have received in any of the best hospitals in New York City.

I also desire to commend the doctors and nurses for their efficiency and attention.

Yours very sincerely,
(Signed) ERNEST J. H. AMY.

Sergeant Chester Leighton is with us again after a furlough.

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