

THE WAR AS SEEN BY A FORMER REIDSVILLE MAN

"Follow the Boys" League of Shrewsbury Presbyterian Church, on December 20th, 1917, by A. H. Motley, Jr.

(Continued From Last Issue.)

Most of the historic old homes and estates had been lent to the government as hospitals and convalescent homes. You will be glad to know that our American Duchesses were covering themselves with glory in their devotion to the cause of their adopted country. The great works of charity, the vast benevolence of the beautiful Duchess of Marlborough have won all hearts.

It was grimly amusing to learn that the English "Tomnies" when in the hospitals, if they were allowed to choose a new arm or leg, would nearly always select an American one. The masses in England have a great idea of America as the producer of marvelous labor-saving devices—and patent medicines.

Here follows a suggestion, rather doleful perhaps. One of the largest and the most necessary war industries in Europe is the supplying of artificial limbs and eyes. I have known poor chaps who had to wait for months for a proper artificial leg, so great was the demand, so inadequate the supply.

A Canadian officer whom I knew, who had done the most gallant service in France, was wearing an artificial eye of a different color to his own. But no matter what the injury, they are always "glad it's no worse."

If casualties must and will occur, let us be found ready to meet all requirements. It was interesting to hear that the services of our doctors and surgeons were greatly appreciated (and often preferred) by the men.

The precautions against Zep raids necessitated, as you know, the almost total extinguishing of lights in the cities, towns and villages at night. Pulling down shades was a serious matter. Ten pounds fine (\$50), or imprisonment for six months, was the prescribed penalty for failure to do so.

Police men and special constables patrolled the streets to report violations of this law. As many as 150 accidents due to the darkness of the streets have been reported in one night.

Certainly this was a great trial and added much to the general depression. It made attendance at churches, night schools, theaters or social life of any kind rather difficult. I can imagine no more dismal experience than leaving one's office in the evening to literally feel one's way home through the black streets in a cold winter fog.

Perhaps you can imagine how the great waste of fuel and electric energy in the display of lights on Broadway impressed me on my return.

From my travels in Germany before the War, I had a very respectful idea of their thrifty, law-abiding, energetic, though docile, population. (Let me mention that I don't believe that anyone, except the "War Lord" and the high German officials in charge of the census returns, really knows the population of Germany.)

In the figures given out for the use of geographers, atlases and year-books, it has surely been greatly underestimated. Their census has been deliberately falsified for publication.

In their man power, we have an unknown quantity to deal with, in their territories (and in the far corners undermined by their spies) we have unknown limits to encourage.

Right here it would be interesting to know how many of us have seriously studied a recent war map. Yet it is perhaps the first duty of every man and woman who intends to face this thing (and to help all they can) to follow carefully, and to realize, the seriousness of daily events.

There should be a war map in every home (conspicuously hung). This could not fail to arouse and interest all members of the family, and remind them to perform the every day devotions and sacrifices to patriotism, urged upon us by all our great writers and thinkers. Many of us would undoubtedly be surprised at the alarming changes which we would see have been made on the map of Europe by the Central Powers. No child could fail to realize the importance of ending this. It is said that in Germany the school geographies have already been changed to match German claims and ambitions.

As an enemy, I personally have such a tremendous idea of German strength, of the length, breadth and thickness of their preparedness, that I should most certainly be called a calamity howler, or a "Gloomy Gus" did I express it all tonight.

Returning from Europe, I can only present to you the serious state of affairs that I knew there and which recent events have still further complicated.

The German patriotism strikes one as being fanatic, of the same quality as that of the Japanese. It impressed me as if the average Ger-

man would be delighted at any time to prostrate himself before a picture of the Emperor.

As you all know, the art of music is enthusiastically cultivated throughout Germany. As I remember now, there is not a small town or village that has not its brass band. It is considered an important factor in their scheme of juvenile and adult patriotic education.

I am convinced that much was done in this way to keep the martial spirit alive in the people. Brass instruments can be made to appeal directly to the primitive, fighting instincts of man (and Germans were plentifully supplied with music of this character.)

It is my conviction that Germany's war-time encouragement of music was but one feature in the long program of preparedness. Certainly in London, early in the War, when the recruiting was a bit slow it was noticeable how many more recruits were obtained where music assisted the speechmaking. Men (not only in the Scotch regiments) tell us that they can fight better after hearing music and that the Scotch bagpipes have a special effect upon them.

The religious belief of the average German (if he has one) is that to die on the field of battle means instant translation to the realms above. They have been taught that no crimes committed in War-waged-for-the-Satherland will never be held against them.

The most salient point in the many successful German campaigns has been to my mind the extreme mobility of their armies, the rapid transportation of troops from one point to another.

When I remember what a network of efficient railroads Germany was for tourists, before the War; how easy it was for a traveler to "box the compass" there, in the shortest time, it is easy to understand the massing of their troops on one front and on another so quickly.

France has good roads and fairly good trains running north and south, but when it comes to a trip east or west the roads were round-about, and progress slow. (I am sure the French Government must often have wished for more and better railroad facilities during the War.) Now that the same matter has become a mooted question here, let us quickly realize the necessity of turning over all possible railroad facilities to the Government for the better conduct of the War. We must exact Germany at every point.

Let each one of us do all we can to "clear the roads for action." Let us not complain when we are told that there must be no unnecessary travel, that personal baggage must be of portable weight.

Again, do all of us realize that the Russian millions are now dangerously near to coming under German domination, with wonderful German war technique, German genius for managing and equipping new armies, for disciplining and training this untutored masses of their allies? German officers would quickly bring order out of the chaos in Russia. Russia, that sleeping giant of the European peoples! Will she not be very apt in her illiteracy, in her primitive state of national evolution, to accept and take on German fancies and German peace? (Should not her real terror and dread of fiercer neighbor, Japan be used at this juncture of affairs to restore the equilibrium?)

Russia has always seemed (to the eyes of the American traveler) a child of beauty, omagination and genius, with unlimited possibilities for growth and development, with perhaps the most sympathetic national soul in Europe.

What a pity that more could not have been done, in the beginning of the War, to strengthen and guide Russia—instead of expecting so much from her immaturity!

Did we realize that Germany had been at work there for years, gauging Russian weakness, gaining access to all her government secrets, insinuating in the simple minds of the people an exaggerated belief in German superiority and efficiency, spreading the German language systematically over all Russia (so that a knowledge of German will carry a tourist comfortably through even the smaller villages in the interior, and everywhere could be found at least one Russian who understood German)? French was the language of the Court and the cultured people.

We can imagine the wild disorder and demoralization that followed the enforced and dramatic abdication of the Czar. He was, as you know, the head of the Church, and had been an absolute and despotic ruler over all things temporal and religious.

Traditions are all that the millions of simple, uneducated peasantry know. They were given the most limited opportunities for education, allowed no freedom either in reading or in speech.

They know practically nothing of the outside world. Their judgment would necessarily be weak and vacillating. It will be at least a generation before the real Russian soul can emerge and take its rightful place in the world-march of progress.

If the pendulum swings again (and they come back as our loyal allies) we should not expect much of them. Germany has been on the ground for years! The Germans understood the practical problems of Russia bet-

ter than we do. They know every phase of their civil, political and religious life.

It will take a vast amount of idealism and faith, on the part of Russia, and powerful coercion and encouragement on ours, to keep them true to their own best interests and loyal Allies. At present the only foreign type that is entirely familiar to them is the German. It is he who has backed most of their successful commercial enterprises. Alas! Russian railroad guards, and officials everywhere, spoke fairly good German. All this would make it easier for the present German purpose—to dominate Russia, and will make our altruistic task so much the more difficult.

Frankly, it does not seem as if there is in our individual or national attitude the intensity and seriousness that the facts (and immense possibilities) warrant.

We can thank God that we have no grave political complications to increase our difficulties. We have wise, able leaders of unassailable integrity and idealism; Our problem is to make ourselves worthy of them and their counsels.

Is it not true that as a nation, in every crisis of our history, we have had highly ethical guidance at home, and able representation abroad? Are we not all tremendously proud of the accomplishment of our last ambassador to Germany, of our present respected and admired ambassadors to England and France?

In London, through all the criticisms, the unpleasant feeling (caused by our failure to at once side against Germany), there was only one opinion expressed of the Hon. Mr. Page, the warmest appreciation of his untiring activities, of his able handling of the very difficult diplomatic problems that confronted him, of his fair and just management of the interests of all countries.

His splendid speeches have been, throughout, a credit to his country. He stands surely with the other great foreign representatives who have helped to make our country respected and great in the world's history.

Now an impression that is quite widespread that undoubtedly delays our progress and dampens our ardor, is that "this is not our War."

In spite of all that has been said and written by our best minds, many still regard this War as an ill-vised crusade, a gigantic "Lafayette Expedition," and a needless interference in the affairs of Europe.

There are many who do not see that this has become beyond all doubt an out-and-out War of defence; that our annihilation is ultimately contemplated by this very generation of Germans.

Did ever any scheme of world conquest stop of its own volition? Were there ever any limits to the dreams of the world's great aggressors?

Greater armed resistance, greater, more burning patriotism (crushing defeat) have ever been the only barriers to their progress. Have they not all sighed "for new worlds to conquer?"

One hears so often in conversation, "It seems such a pity to send our boys 'over there.'" What we should hear and feel is, "Thank God we are not giting this War alone, that we have great and trusted Allies to whom we can send them. We believe in meeting our enemy more than half way."

Perhaps our chief concern as parents and friends, as loyal supporters of our young men in the service is in the quickest and most effective ways to make it easy for them to do their best.

We must make them feel that we care every minute what they are doing and what becomes of them. There should not one discouraged, lonely, half-hearted boy leave our shores for this great ordeal.

Let us, in our well meaning efforts, be organized—in Leagues such as this, and the Y. M. C. A. The sending of too many individual gifts complicates the transportation problem and (if the many camps which I have visited) was a serious annoyance to those in authority.

Let us not allow a superfluous k to go forward, or an excess of sweets, or gifts of any kind.

The Y. M. C. A. has deserved and earned our complete confidence in peace, and our great admiration in War. A League such as this can well supplement their efforts in several ways. But as a nation (except in cases where one is especially interested by close ties of blood) let us leave it to the Y. M. C. A. to spend our regular contributions, to attend to the comforts and pleasure of the men (as only they can.)

Your dollar and mine, spent at random, can not be of much service (once the boys have left our shores). Only the Y. M. C. A. (with its vast funds, its facilities, its prestige with the Armies and Governments) can be of any real help to our boys abroad.

I have had men (officers from all over the world) (from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa) tell me in London that the Y. M. C. A. had meant everything to them during their stay in England, that too high praise could not be given!

Over and over again I have been asked by officers and men to say all I could when I reached home in praise of the wonderful insight and understanding of the needs of the men which the Y. M. C. A. has

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shown. Surely the work of the Association has been one of the marvels which I so heartily approve of the War.

Let us not fail to send our boys frequent letters! This (to my mind) is the finest feature of this League. As Emerson says, "A letter is a so spiritual gift." It can do much to encourage, inspire and safe-guard our boys. Loneliness is perhaps their greatest danger! Thoughts of home, and high sentiment, should be kept always before them.

We must remove every temptation from their paths here at home. Supervision of our young girls is the plain duty of all parents, a duty to the soldiers as well. And here comes a rather serious thought; one that is difficult to express, but which should be forcibly brought to our soldiers for their moral guidance at home and abroad. I shall use the words of the eloquent Father Bernard Vaughn of London: "The doing of any harm to a sister, or a daughter of a fellow-man, is to be a 'hun' in the very worst sense."

It is my serious opinion that the conditions in Europe were more shocking and blacker than our own. I do not know statistics, but my impression is that vice and irregular living were more flagrant and more generally tolerated abroad than here.

There is no trace of Puritanism in our standards that was utterly lacking over there. The Y. M. C. A. was their guardian and refuge! Representatives of this Association met every troop train to London at all hours of the night and morning, with a warm invitation to the men to come to the Auts and to pass their furloughs in a decent atmosphere.

It is the Y. M. C. A. that helps our boys to do the right thing wherever they are. It is a positive force, worth all the "dons" in the world! Can you imagine how much this help and hospitality mean to homesick boys in a strange land? The soldiers who dissipated, who in some forlorn way became victims of whiskey, were those who would not accept the hospitality of the Y. M. C. A.

The Salvation Army, too, did wonderful work among the soldiers and had (as always) a very strong appeal to many classes of men. The work of the Red Cross was superb—every returning soldier sang their praises. We can certainly entrust our boys to their care, with the knowledge that their organization is as perfect as it can well be. I have now given as many impressions as I feel it right to impose upon you. I doubt if I have said anything that you have not heard, I read before, but not to have made his effort would have been a failure.

SUMMERFIELD

Miss Kate Moseley, teacher at Glencoe School visited her parents Saturday morning.

Misses Ludy Pearman, Ruth Humphreys and Ollie Williams spent the weekend at the home of Mr. Wittry. Miss Kate Moseley and Mr. Cary Williams spent Tuesday in Greensboro.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Bob Apple, a fine girl.

Another good citizen has departed this life. Mrs. Mary F. Bradshaw died at her home on Summerfield Route 1, on February 3, 1918, age 85 years, 11 months and 16 days. She is survived by two sons, Mr. W. C. Bradshaw of Summerfield and Mr. G. S. Bradshaw of Coolee, N. C. The funeral services were held Monday February 4, being conducted by Rev. John Knight. Interment was at Bethany cemetery.

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