

GERMANY SEEN FROM INSIDE BY A MAN WHO WAS ON SPOT

Elmer Luck, Former German Prisoner, Tells of Teutonic Barbarity

Zedarill, May 13.—Residents of Belleville had an opportunity last night of getting a glimpse of life in Germany and earning something of the Teuton character. Mr. Elmer Luck M. A., who has been living for three years at Leipzig and was imprisoned when war broke out, gave an interesting lecture on "Experiences and Observations in Germany" at the Tabernacle Church. Speaking for over an hour and a half he gave some instances of German barbarity which had come to his knowledge, and expressed the opinion that the war would not be over this year, but he hoped it would next year.

Mr. Luck proclaimed at the outset that he intended to be fair, and he should say nothing that he would not vouch for himself. He proceeded to speak of the German character, and described the people as industrious and sober. They drank beer to excess in every spare moment, but it was light and contained so little alcohol that they could drink it all night without being overcome. They were a wonderfully law-abiding people, and had a marvellous system of gathering information. This was developed to such an extent that on the outbreak of the war the Government knew the foreigners to a man and where they came from. Coming to the other side of the picture, Mr. Luck said the first thing he noticed in Germany was that women were everywhere regarded as inferior to men. The first sight that greeted his eyes as he pulled up his blind at the hotel, was a dog and a woman hitched to a wagon, and each pulling their hardest. In all classes of society the wife was not regarded as a companion for a man, but as a better class housekeeper. Immorality

was everywhere prevalent, in a way almost impossible to believe. The people were open scoffers of religion—except in a few instances he never saw any real religious feeling in Germany, although he looked for it. The churches were entirely under the control of the municipal councils. The Germans believed in baptism and confirmation. Stores and theatres were open on Sundays, and the theatres were always packed. There was absolutely no independence in the people—they had no spirit of self-reliance. They looked to the State for everything, and as a consequence became improvident.

Coming to the outbreak of the war, the lecturer said it was generally believed in Germany that England would remain neutral or come on their side. He should never forget the evening when England declared war against Germany. The people were dumfounded—it came like a bolt from the blue. The general opinion was that it would come to a contest between the navies and that chances of success were hopeless. It was not true that foreigners were given 48 hours to leave the country—they were not given ten seconds.

"We will never know," said Mr. Luck, "how many British subjects were shot in these first few days as spies. The Government seemed to go mad, and thought everyone was a spy. The poor British subjects who had not been there long enough to make friends suffered severely. Foreigners were taken out by the dozen and shot in the first week of the war."

The Louvain Outrages.

Mr. Luck spoke of hearing a postman read a letter from his brother who was a Lieutenant in the army. He described the awful sights he had seen at Louvain. A little girl of ten was shot because she was accused of killing soldiers! Their method of "frightfulness" was that thousands should be killed rather than a single soldier should die. Men, women and children were shot in groups of 100. But that was too slow, so they marched the people out altogether, and turned the machine guns on them, until men, women and children dropped, and they were left to die. All this was stated by the Lieutenant, who believed it was absolutely necessary to save the lives of German soldiers in future.

Mr. Luck narrated an incident which he said made his blood boil. In a cafe he overheard a conversation of some German officers, one of whom was telling his companions of 20 English soldiers who had been taken prisoners in France. The commanding officer gave the officer who was telling the story, the task of taking the soldiers away to a detention camp, at the same time giving the officer a wink. He marched the prisoners off—with their hands tied—to a wood, where they were all shot. "That was what they intended to do," said the officer, "if they found a British wounded soldier—kill him; if they took one prisoner—kill him."

Mr. Luck stated that he called upon two German friends of his who had been imprisoned in England, and they both spoke of the good treatment they received—even being allowed beer. The papers were full of stories of cruelty to German prisoners; and one of his friends tried to get his story inserted, but no paper would take it. The lecturer spoke of his experiences in prison, and of his being liberated through the only friend he found in Germany. He told many interesting incidents, which were listened to with the greatest attention. There was not a shadow of doubt, he said, that our prisoners were half starved. He knew for a fact that Germans were not so short of food as people believed. There was a strong feeling everywhere that they were going to win in the end.

Canada for the Germans

They believed, amongst other things

that they were going to have a part— if not all— of Canada. That was talk- ed of 'openly' in the streets. "The tragedy of Germany," said the lectur- er, "is that she entered upon the world's history too late. She is a great nation smothering for want of room to expand. The one thing that caused the war was that Germany be- ing so strong she thought she would be in a position to get what she need- ed.

"Then comes the question," said Mr. Luck in conclusion, "how long will this war last? I for one am not among the optimists who think it will end soon. From all I have seen of Ger- man character, I think they are go- ing to fight to the bitter end. I have no hope that the war will be over this year—I hope it will next year. One of the things that is certain is that the end; and there is going to be no giving in until Germany is no long- er a menace to the nations— until peace is ensured for all time to come.