

British Prisoners in Germany Suffer Untold Hardships

American War Correspondents Describe Conditions. Interned in Cold, Insanitary and Verminous Camps. Starvation Rations, Rye and Potato Bread and Cabbage Soup.

Judging by the details furnished by Messrs. Herbert Corey and Frederick Palmer, well known American war correspondents, who have recently arrived in England, there is a marked difference between the treatment of prisoners of war there and in Germany.

They visited, for instance, the camp at Doberitz, on the outskirts of Berlin. This camp is a barbed wire stockade, very much after the Aldershot pattern. The ground is sandy, and canvas tents have been erected, which shelter from 250 to 500 men. About 3,000 British, French and Russians are imprisoned here.

"You can't expect prisoners of war to have a very gay time," said Mr. Corey, "but theirs is the most horrible position, next to the trenches, that you can possibly imagine. You will be glad to hear that the German guards are quite complimentary about the way the British soldiers accept their position. They are well disciplined and obey all orders, but they are quite dignified and don't cringe. Both British and French soldiers try to keep themselves clean and neat in difficult, indeed impossible, conditions.

"When I visited the camp it had been raining for days, and the ground was very sloppy, so, perhaps, I didn't see the place under the best conditions. The men sleep on straw pallets and have one blanket apiece. When they arrived many of them were very poorly clothed, but Mr. Gerard, the American ambassador, has interested himself in the matter, and secured more clothing for them.

MAIN SOURCES OF COMPLAINT.

"Mainly, the prisoners have three things to complain of. In the first place there is the frightful monotony—there is absolutely nothing to do. Those who volunteer for it are allowed to indulge in manual labor—hauling carts and timber, and they seem glad to do this.

"Other hardships—rising in the scale—are—the food, lack of sanitation, and the plentitude of vermin. In the morning each man gets a hunk of bread—war bread, made of rye and potatoes—and a cup of weak tea. At night the supper is the same, with once in a while a small piece of sausage. The one warm meal they get is in the middle of the day—a vegetable stew, very watery, and with little more than a suspicion of meat in it.

NOT ENOUGH TO EAT.

"They don't get enough to eat, either in quantity or sustaining quality—that is the solid fact. Most of the men are pale—some of them so pallid that they frighten you. As to the suggestion that the rations are the usual military rations of the German army, that is ridiculous. Different countries have different standards, but I know that we wouldn't treat any kind of prisoners in America in this way.

"We saw the dinner being served out when we were at the camp," said Mr. Corey. "The men marched up to the cooking tent through a series of double-runways—two abreast. Each man had a little tin bowl and a fork and spoon, and as he passed the tent he was handed this slop. Nine thousand of them were served in this way in little over an hour—a very fast operation.

"I don't know what the other camps are like; nobody except officials are allowed to visit them, but Doberitz is the show camp, so that the others are probably not better.

NO SANITATION.

"Perhaps the worst feature is the absolute lack of sanitation. There is no provision whatever for bathing or washing clothing, except a kind of horse trough, with, of course, cold water. Soap can be bought in the canteen. I saw some of the British stripped to the waist trying to get clean under these unpromising conditions. The camp is swarming with vermin; we were warned against going into the tents on that account; even the guards do not escape. They cannot do anything to get rid of the plague. When a man becomes very bad he goes into hospital, and then makes a fresh start with a new draft.

NO EXCUSE FOR TREATMENT.

"When the really cold weather comes on—Doberitz was pretty bleak when we were there—the men are to be moved to a new camp of very substantial frame buildings. They have been built for the German troops during maneuvers—later on—if there are any left. The prisoners will, at any rate, be warm there, for the sheds are well built, with double sides and roofs, and heated with stoves. But they will be horribly crowded. The guards told me that it would be necessary to fill these

huts as full as men can lie, elbow to elbow, and foot to foot.

"The British do their very best to keep themselves in condition. They play games of various sorts and take all the exercise they can. Those who have money can buy at the canteen some of the minor comforts—tobacco and a variety of rough food. They are allowed to receive and cash money orders. Otherwise they have no money.

"We were not allowed to visit Ruhleben, where the civilians are detained, and I believe the conditions are much the same there as far as food is concerned. I am told the Germans hunted all round to get a camp which would match your Newbury racecourse, where the Germans are imprisoned. Ruhleben is the trotting racecourse of Berlin."

"It is miserable, unhappy life at the camp," remarked Mr. Frederick Palmer, in supplementing the description of his colleague. "This thin cabbage soup, which is the staple of the ration, is absolutely insufficient to support men, especially in that rigorous climate. I don't see how they are going to exist through the winter on this stuff. And the Germans cannot make the excuse that they are short of food—there is plenty of food in the country."

Clever Coup by British Troops

Eighty Men in Tight Corner Surprise and Capture 100 Germans. A Bayonet Charge.

Thrilling in the extreme is the story of how a British detachment of eighty soldiers, separated from its regiment, captured 100 Germans. It is told by the *Liberte* and quoted by the *London Times'* Paris correspondent.

The detachment, it appears, found itself cut off from its regiment during the fighting near Ypres. The writer proceeds:

"In vain the detachment sought to retire, but the way was barred. Happily, night fell, and the men in khaki found a refuge in a little wood in the neighborhood. There they hid themselves, as best they could, in the undergrowth, whilst the officers consulted together. Several solutions were examined, none appeared practical.

"The chief of the detachment then assembled his men, and addressed them as follows: 'My friends, we are surrounded, and there is little chance of escaping from the fate which you all know. I'm sure you will defend your liberty to the utmost. Now let us take a little rest. Tomorrow we will consider our position.'

"These proud words were listened to with admirable 'legme.' Not a man showed signs of fear, and when the major ended the detachment stretched itself quietly on the ground and awaited developments. The night was untroubled by any attack, but at dawn a violent fusillade broke out near the wood. Profiting by the obscurity the allies had advanced close to the German lines, and when day broke they commenced a vigorous counter-attack.

"Suddenly the major of the detachment had an inspiration. 'Lie down,' he said, 'and don't fire until I give the order.' Some minutes later the Germans were forced back upon the little wood. This was the moment awaited by the British officer. 'Fix bayonets. Charge!' he cried. The men emerged from their hiding places, flung themselves upon the enemy, and threw them into confusion.

"Not knowing the number of their adversaries who had intervened so suddenly in the fight, the majority of the Germans threw down their arms and surrendered to the number of 100. The others succeeded in getting away."

The High Sea Fleet.

Our daily life, writes a member of the crew of the H.M.S. *Princess Royal*, may be summed up in a little poem:

It's the same old stretch of ocean,
We're churning up each day,
We know by name each porpoise
Which follows us in play,
We forecast each day's weather
In sky tints, pink and green,
But as for bally Germans—
They're nowhere to be seen!

It's the same old daily routine,
The same old lack of news,
The same old daily "spreading,"
And "Close up, turrets' crews";
The "third day's tribulation,"
The same old coaling feat,
But not a single sign of
The German High Sea Fleet.