

# AMHERST PRISON CAMP ALL ANYONE COULD WISH

Men Get Very Best Meat, Have Widest Liberties, and Their Grievances are Such as Could Be Found in Any Boarding-House — Berlin Charges Unfounded.

Special to The Star.

Halifax, N. S., Sept. 4.—In a great red brick building, formerly a malleable iron foundry, in Amherst, Nova Scotia, there have been for nearly a year now six hundred and ninety three able-bodied Germans, who are prisoners of war. And Germany has declared they are not receiving correct treatment from their Canadian jailers.

To discover what basis there might be for such a charge, a newspaper man paid the camp a visit. Major Oulton and Adjt Redeout, the two superior officers in command, knew absolutely nothing of the proposed trip.

The station is a great oblong red brick building of one storey in height, of the usual factory type, with huge windows from floor to ceiling and with additional light coming through the cupola roof. It is lighted with electric light and heated by steam. To get this building ready, about \$30,000 was spent. The machinery was removed and the place thoroughly cleaned, the necessary partitions were erected, and a complete water system installed with modern plumbing and an unlimited supply of hot and cold water for shower baths and the washing of clothes. Twelve big ranges were put in for cooking purposes, and separate quarters for seamen and officers provided. In the same way a complete installation was necessary for the more than two hundred guards.

### Men Have Exercise Ground.

There is a compound or exercise ground, more than long enough for a football field, but too narrow for the playing of the game under our rules. Around the building and compound run barbed wire entanglements, six or seven feet high and as many wide. At the corners of the compound, as in the middle and inside the prisoners' quarters, platforms raised ten feet from the ground contain a Canadian soldier guard, rifle loaded and bayonet fixed.

Three thousand meals a day have to be served. I do not think it is any exaggeration to say that the German prisoners at Amherst get as good meat as anyone in Canada, and a good deal better than a great many Canadians do. The meat comes from the Harris Abattoir Company, of Toronto, which has the contract for supplying all these stations, and is heavy, prime meat such as the Amherst people say they would be mighty glad to get if they could. It arrives every two or three days, and is carefully inspected. When approved, it is immediately placed in a big, new and spotlessly clean refrigerator chamber, such as the most modern butcher shops use and, when needed, is cut up by expert butchers. The butter is choice dairy butter, delivered in waxed papers, by the pound. The prisoners are getting new potatoes, and new boiled potatoes cost you ten cents a portion at a good restaurant these days.

### Oven/Penalty Not Severe.

The famous ovens, about which so strenuous an objection was raised some days ago, are brick chambers, the interiors of which are, roughly, twelve feet long by eight broad. The arched roof is well over six feet high at the centre, sloping at the walls to about five feet. One-half of the iron door is pierced by holes about four inches in diameter, set within six inches of each other. The only light within the ovens comes through these holes. Ventilation is secured by means of the same holes in the door and two ample flues in the walls, connecting with the great smoke-stack outside—in other words

the ventilation is excellent. The inside of these ovens is kept perfectly clean, and a layer of clean straw covers the floor. Into these ovens some prisoners have been put for offences against the regulations.

When a prisoner is sentenced to solitary confinement over night he is given a good bed and clean bedding. Only one man has been put there for more than twenty-four hours since the station was established. There is not one municipality in one hundred in Canada that provides as comfortable temporary quarters for the breakers of its laws. The great majority of the commitments to these cells has been for the breaking of the rule which forbids smoking in the bunks. As we shall see in a moment, a fire among these would mean great danger and perhaps loss of life. The men know perfectly why it is forbidden, and those to whom I spoke approved of the rule. They are at liberty to smoke anywhere else.

### The Prison Is Merry.

Once inside the prison proper you are greeted by a buzz of conversation punctuated by laughter. You might be in any Canadian factory at the noon hour for all the suggestion of prison there is in it at first. Only when outside the window, you get a glimpse of barbed wire and when, above your head, you catch the smack of a rifle stock as the sentry in his box presents arms, do you realize that the men before you are under forcible restraint. It is a great cheery hall, blazing with sunshine in this morning hour. Along it in orderly rows stretch deal tables, without cloth, but spotless. Seated at these or walking about are a couple of hundred men, chatting, playing cards, reading, skylarking with one another, and all smoking like chimneys.

In the kitchen twelve big hotel ranges have been established and they are presided over by the head chef of the Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse—nearly all the prisoners in Amherst are from the big German sea-raider sunk off the African coast a year ago last month. He has a whole corps of assistants—and every prisoner who does work of any sort whatever gets twenty-five cents a day from the Government—and his cuisine is of the strictly German variety. The fish steaks rolled in a batter of bread crumbs which he was turning out were good enough for the visitors, anyway.

### Fine Sleeping Quarters.

Now we come to the sleeping quarters. To the right of the centre of this big hall bunks rise, one above the other, in three rows of three tiers each, to the height of about ten feet. There are bunks for over eight hundred men, and as there are not quite seven hundred prisoners, there is no overcrowding. Each man has a sleeping space of over ten feet long by four feet or over wide.

In many cases two chums have knocked out two lower bunks thereby making a little room big enough to stand up in and, with the two adjoining bunks, forming a fair approximation to their quarters on the defunct Kaiser Wilhelm. Planks have been begged from the carpenter and the bunks enclosed, little curtains have been hung and the extemporized walls and ceiling covered with photographs, either from home or cuts of pretty girls clipped from magazines. One man has his parrot, a large moth-eaten green bird with a bad eye, hanging in his bunk. There are no white sheets or pillow slips, but plenty of thick clean blankets which are washed every three weeks and replaced by new ones every three months.

The one thing the men must not do is to smoke in the bunks, and this for obvious reasons. These bunks are wooden, covered with bedding, curtains and clothing; a fire in a lower berth and the men on top might have to scramble for it.

### Men Have Choral Society.

These big bunk tiers rise to the right of the central line of the building, leaving a considerable floor area to the left clear. This is the "Franz-Josef Platz," as a sign in good sound German capitals announces. In it are several tables, and seated at these are groups of prisoners playing cards, reading, or writing. Another table is surrounded by a crowd, and the centre of attraction is a man doing beautiful inlay work in colored woods. His only tool is his jack-knife; yet he has turned out several pieces of intricate and beautiful design, all brought to a high degree of finish and polish by dint of innumerable buffings.

To the right of "Franz-Josef Platz" runs "Von Hindenburg Platz," leading to the exercise ground, at right angles to it, between the bunks and "Von Kluck Strasse," and, lastly, "Zeppeline Allee." "Zeppelin Allee" has, as is appropriate, a vision of the open sky, but "Von Kluck Strasse" is short on daylight and long on shadows. Overlooking Franz-Josef Platz there is a little blackboard, and on it the visitor notices the announcement of the next practice of the "Gesangverelin" or choral society.

Beyond the sleeping quarters of the men are the washrooms, toilets, and shower baths. Looking at these, you understand why it cost so much to fit the place up. There are two long rows of porcelain toilets of the latest pattern and half a dozen shower baths, with unlimited hot and cold water. Down the centre of the place there are installed long trough-tables, with taps at frequent intervals. These are for laundry purposes, and the amount of laundering that is done is astonishing. If cleanliness be next to Godliness, these German man-o'-warsmen are close to salvation. The whole place is swept out four times a day, the flap of the sodden garment is loud in the land, and at all hours of the day one or two pink-skinned giants are to be observed frolicking under the showers. The hospital, next to this, has a dozen or so immaculate hospital cots, with only one or two occupants at the present time.

### Caste System Is Kept Up.

The quarters of the wardroom officers come next, a little more luxuriously furnished than those of the men, perhaps, but of supreme importance to their occupants, chiefly

## WOMEN CAN HARDLY BELIEVE

How Mrs. Hurley Was Restored to Health by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Eldon, Mo. — "I was troubled with displacement, inflammation and female weakness. For two years I could not stand on my feet long at a time and I could not walk two blocks without enduring cutting and drawing pains down my right side which increased every month. I have been at that time purple in the face and would walk the floor. I could not lie down or sit still sometimes for a day and a night at a time. I was nervous, and had very little appetite, no ambition, melancholy, and often felt as though I had not a friend in the world. After I had tried most every female remedy without success, my mother-in-law advised me to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I did so and gained in strength every day. I have now no trouble in any way and highly praise your medicine. It advertises itself."—Mrs. S. T. HURLEY, Eldon, Missouri.



Remember, the remedy which did this was Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. For sale everywhere.

It has helped thousands of women who have been troubled with displacements, inflammation, ulceration, tumors, irregularities, periodic pains, backache, that bearing down feeling, indigestion, and nervous prostration, after all other means have failed. Why don't you try it? Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lowell, Mass.

as enabling them to keep away from the common herd. When the whole party of prisoners arrived from Jamaica, a long time ago now, there were a score or so of officers among them. These demi-gods required special attention, valets and what not. Nor would they for one instant associate or even look at the men whom they commanded. It was an affront to them to be confined. Even under the same roof with their A.B.'s. So long as they were kept there they nursed their wrath in separate quarters, refusing to come out. Perhaps most of us in the camp commandant's place would have let them stew in their own offended dignity, but not so with the Canadian "tyrants," now accused of cruelty. The German grandees were put in a special car and taken to the citadel at Halifax, where they can take the air without coming in sight of anybody less exalted than themselves. So far as I could judge, the warrant officers left behind are doing their little best to keep up the German caste system in the prison. At least, they have their own quarters and stick to them.

On a stand in the centre are big war maps, one of the Russian frontier, six or eight feet long, drawn with the most minute detail, another of the Dardanelles, of the same painstaking accuracy. The men get the daily papers and every move the cable chronicles is instantly reproduced on the big maps with pins.

#### Men Have Lots to Read.

The farthest point of the building so far accessible to prisoners is the canteen, in charge of a detail of the Guards. Here a little of everything may be purchased, tobacco and soft drinks, candy and fruit, needles and thread, shaving brushes and canned tomatoes, shoe polish and toothpicks, anything and everything a man may need. Naturally the prisoners are not allowed to have any considerable sums of money in their possession. Their money was, in fact, taken away from them, and is paid back as required. For instance, a man having \$100 or over, is allowed \$5 per week, his allowance decreasing in proportion to the decrease of his capital. In case a prisoner has no money at all the Government gives him \$1 per month. As for reading matter, games, etc., they have more than they know what to do with, thanks to the activities of certain German-American societies, which get together bundles for them and thanks, too, to the kindness of the Canadian "tyrants" who allow this stuff in.

The compound or exercise ground is a fair sized field, which, however, should be three times as large if it were possible to have it so. However, as it is, there is room for football of all sorts—Germans usually play football with their fists—and quite an array of little wooden "snops" without roofs, where soft drinks, bought by the prisoners at

four cents a glass, are sold over the counter at five cents, and the profits turned in toward the enrichment of the orchestra. And do not let us forget the little gardens. There are two of these, and the dozen or two of varieties of flowers planted in them, together with the strips of fresh sod, thrive mightily. They are typical German gardens, with not a square inch of soil wasted and everything trained with the most minute care. It has been found necessary to guard the beds from the depredations of the prisoners' pets, a pugnacious rooster which beats up a cockerspaniel two or three times a day, and certain dissipated looking white Jamaican ducks with red eyes. So there are little wire screens over the flowers and ten-syllable German swear words when ducks, chickens, or ogs venture near.

### Grievances Are Not Serious.

So much then, for the quarters in

which the prisoners are lodged. Now what about the complaint they made.

I was allowed to mingle with them quite freely, and to talk to them without the slightest restraint, Major Oulton and Adjutant Ridout interfering in no way whatever. And the complaints were, except in one or two cases those which one may hear in any boarding house in any city in the world. There is one important exception to be made to this though: I did not hear one single man complain about the food.

"Come and see my sleeping place, no light, no air, not fit for a dog and I am fifty-one years old," said one prisoner. He lives down in the middle of "von Kluck Strasse" and it is hard and stuffy there. But when you come to find out, the prisoners themselves are to blame for this. The regulations forbid them to enclose their berths by planks or cur-

tains, in order that light and air may visit them all, but when the prisoners objected to this, and went quietly ahead boxing themselves in, the authorities anxious that they should arrange things to suit themselves, allowed them to do so, so that our friend of von Kluck street, was the victim of conditions which his own friends had created. Another man, an inhabitant of an upper bunk at the end protested that if he rolled over in his sleep he would wake up ten feet below in the ground. But all he had to do was to request a carpenter to nail a board along the side of his bunk.

### Probably Were English Sparrows.

Upon another man, likewise an upper berth holder, the sparrows had knocked down dust from a rafter. But to close the cupola window meant to cut off needed ventilation and it was quite within this man's power, by standing up to brush off the dust of his rafter with a broom. Then rafters have all been cleaned, but dust will rise from the feet of seven hundred men in a wooden floor. Another man had been bitten on the head by a mosquito, and deplored the barbarity of it all, still another didn't like the drinking water. Of course you have to be a native of Amherst to appreciate Amherst water. It is healthy, but sometimes muddy and the prisoners get

the same water as the townsfolk.

Still another man found the company too mixed--there were civilians among them, some men who had been miners, for instance. This man was, needless to say, on the highroad to becoming an officer himself. Another man protested that he was wrongly incarcerated, being a harmless subject of Holland, and a victim of persecution. But a short examination of his record showed that he was German born, had fought with De Wet against the British in South Africa and was unable to realize the unwisdom of cheering for Germany when the present war broke out.

In no case did I see a legitimate request made to Major Oulton or Adjutant Ridout on this occasion which received other than courteous and sympathetic attention. One man pointed out, for instance, that the floor of the wash room had not been able to withstand the constant deluge of water and that in consequence seepage was accumulating under the floor of the sleeping quarters. It was at once decided, therefore, that a tin floor could be put in the wash room by the prisoners themselves.

There is only this to be said of it: if our Canadian boys, prisoners in Germany, are given as good treatment as these German prisoners in Amherst are getting, we and they have every reason to be satisfied.