

GERMAN SOLDIERS' TRIALS

HARDSHIPS OF THE CONSCRIPTS' LIFE.

BULLIES WITH PADDED SHOULDERS WHO ARE SOMETIMES KILLED IN SHAM FIGHTS—MANY DESERTIONS.

In September, 1880, the great manoeuvres of the year were held near Friburg, in the Province of Baden, and the One Hundred and Thirteenth Regiment of infantry was stationed in the city. One afternoon, during a sham fight, a Hauptmann, commanding four companies, was shot from his horse and died shortly afterward. How was he killed? No one knew apparently.

As soon as he fell from his horse, the soldiers who had just fired a blank volley were ordered not to move, and an inspector passed along the lines examining each gun in hope of finding the one whose barrel differed from the others in being bright inside from the passage of the bullet that had killed the officer, instead of having the sooty lining produced by a blank cartridge. Had a soldier moved or shown any symptom of uneasiness he would have fastened suspicion upon himself, so every man stood motionless as a statue, until the last rifle had been examined and no evidence found that pointed to the one who had fired the shot. Every one knew what it meant, however; the occurrence was too common to need explanation. The dead officer had been a brute to his men, kicking, beating, and otherwise abusing them, until some soldier, maddened by this treatment, had risked detection and shot the officer during the sham fight. The soldier had been able to fire two cartridges, the first loaded, the second blank, and in this way cover up all traces of the bullet that had caused the officer's death.

The next morning the newspapers contained simply the announcement that the officer had lost his life by accident, no mention being made of the shooting.

A similar case is told of by Theobald Lutz, a native of Switzerland, who served several years as an officer in the Seventy-second Regiment of Infantry in the German Army and is now in business at 140 Second-avenue, having been in this country only a year and a half. The man who did the shooting in this case, however, was detected, but as it could not be proved that he did it with malicious intent he was only imprisoned. Mr. Lutz said that shoe-nails, pebbles, and missiles of every description that can work harm are put into blank cartridges and used by the soldiers in a free-target practice at unpopular officers during sham battles.

European travelers living in garrisoned cities in Germany have seen the soldiers marching to and from their work in their linen overalls or pacing up and down on the parade ground with a stride calculated to get out of their legs all the locomotion that lurks within their muscles. They have doubtless regarded both of these as arduous toil and conclude that it is as severe as anything the soldiers have to undergo. But they see only the pleasanter side of army life. They usually return with great respect for the German Army and with an enthusiastic admiration for the uniform squareness of the officers' shoulders, which to the initiated suggests padding. They may contrast them with the diminutive French soldiers and wonder how Napoleon could have so often routed such matchless men as these Germans, but if they knew something of the manner in which many of these square-shouldered tyrants treat their men their admiration would be materially lessened, if not wholly destroyed.

In Mayence the writer has seen a German officer deliberately kick and choke an awkward recruit in a manner so brutal that the man would almost have been justified in shooting the officer. A Frenchman would undoubtedly have done so. Such conduct is not, of course, countenanced by those in authority, but the soldier knows that he is liable to fare far worse if he makes complaint against a superior than if he endures the abuse in silence. Young Mr. Bierman, living at 112 Second-avenue, served several years as a blacksmith in the German Army, and says that his Lieutenant, who was bitterly hated by the men, would often shake his fist in their faces and say, "Oh, I know you would kill me if you had a chance, but I don't propose to let you!"

This same young man told of an instance where one of these bullies was worsted. Two soldiers were practicing fencing with muskets, when an under officer lost patience with what he considered their awkwardness, and seizing a gun cried: "I'll show you how to fence," and attacked one of the men most viciously. By a powerful thrust the officer struck the man, knocking him down and dislocating his shoulder. With, "Well you're done for," he turned upon the other soldier, but this one, being a skillful fencer, by a rapid parry and thrust struck the officer in the pit of the stomach and laid him out on the ground.

The Lieutenant pluckily refused all assistance, however, and hobbled off to his tent, not daring to make complaint for fear it would be discovered that he had injured the other man. Afterward, however, the officer probably took the common means of bribing some of his soldiers to beat the man who had injured him. Only the other day there appeared in a Dresden newspaper an account of the death of a soldier who had been beaten to death by his comrades.

The annual manoeuvres of the German Army, usually held in September, are truly grand affairs. People from all over Europe flock to witness them by the thousand, the women far outnumbering the men. One hundred marks are often paid for the use of a favorably situated window from which the drilling can be seen. A mounted military band of forty pieces accompanies each regiment, in addition to the drum corps.

The infantry rise at 4 A. M., and sometimes they do not leave the field before 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and many poor soldiers, completely exhausted by this unnatural strain, are carried from the field on stretchers. In a hand-to-hand contest the fighting is often so fierce that one might well imagine it a real battle. A cavalry engagement presents the most animated scene. On a dry day nothing can be seen of a flying regiment but a cloud of dust, and as this rises it usually discloses men rising from the ground or trying to extricate themselves from the gear of their fallen and struggling horses. There are, of course, fatalities every year. Sometimes a crowd of spectators following a cavalry brigade is caught by the cavalrymen suddenly wheeling about and riding in the opposite direction. In such cases, when the line is long, it is useless to run, and all one can do is to stand still and allow them to ride around you, though you must expect a smart whack or two from a swinging sabre sneath. Trying to dodge the horses is almost sure to result disastrously.

It is dread of these abuses that drives such large numbers of intelligent and educated young Germans to this country every year.

If young Emperor William could be put in telephone communication with a room full of young Germans who are living in this city as voluntary exiles from home and country, having come to escape the hardships of army service in the Fatherland, the left ear of that youthful monarch would probably burn to the point of being consumed as it listened to the criticisms of its royal possessor and his method of government, in language wholly out of tempo with the accepted traditions of Court etiquette, and emphasized by guttural exclamations and violent gestures. Most of the young men he would hear talking would be new arrivals in the land of promise, and many of them would bear evidences of having come from homes where wealth and refinement are not unknown. The more violent ones, however, would, almost without exception, be those who had been pursued over the border by enlisting officers when they returned home to meet their parents after a residence here of a few years.

HAIR DYEING AS A FINE ART.

"Hair dyeing is rising to the level of a fine art," says a writer to the *Pall Mall Gazette*. "A woman who dyes hair is a 'specialist.' Her business she calls her 'practice,' and, like a fashionable physician, she makes up her appointment book three or four days deep. Mrs. Fairbanks is a striking example. It was with difficulty that I could get a short chat with her, so busy is she. She showed me her book, in which she had registered appointments for three days in advance. Mrs. Fairbanks is a middle-aged woman, and her own hair is an advertisement. She has a mass of auburn tresses, and 'Every hair my own,' she said.

"What is the most popular tint?" I asked. "Golden auburn," said Mrs. Fairbanks. "There are half a dozen tints, and it takes about two hours to change the color of a woman's hair, so I can only see about four people a day. I am always careful, however, to get one customer away before another arrives, as ladies like privacy in the mysteries of their hair."

"But can't people dye their own hair?" "Yes they can, but it is best to have the first two applications from the hands of an experienced person. I make a study of the hair and the complexion, and try to get tints that will match the skin. Then there is the difficulty with amateur hair dyers of getting the same shade over the whole head of hair. I sometimes have women come to me who have made the most fearful mess of themselves with hair dyes. There are women with actually green hair, and in the heads of others are tufts of gray and red when they have failed to get a consistent dye."

"Mrs. Fairbanks is an enthusiast in her profession. She pulled out a tress that she had dyed for some one, and exclaimed: 'There's hair! There's color for you! I think that's glorious. Now here is a tress of gray hair. I am going to dye this to a rich golden. I shall be in this and darker tints during the week, and at the end of the time my hands will be like a nigger's. The tints are very permanent. They usually last a fortnight: on some hair they last a month. The time depends on the nature of the hair, you know.'"