

might have guessed the importance of this stronghold from the size of the garrison which was employed to hold it, and from the tremendous efforts which both Austria and Germany have made to relieve the insistent Russian pressure of the past six months. Some short time ago we read of a series of terrific German drives on Warsaw, and undoubtedly one of the main objects of these onslaughts was to relieve the situation in the Cracow region. Hindenburg, we were told, throwing the ordinary maxims of military science to the winds, was sending wave after wave of massed formation upon the Polish capital; and the fighting before Warsaw, it was said, was probably the bloodiest in the whole of this bloody war. That means, in effect, that it was the bloodiest fighting in all history. The measure of the sacrifices made by the Austro-German forces to relieve Przemysl is the measure of the greatness of the Russian victory.

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Cowardice and inefficiency are never pleasant to contemplate whether in friend or foe, and it will be satisfactory to all parties to read that Przemysl fell honorably, the garrison surrendering only under the direst stress of famine and exhaustion. The truth is that the reports which have appeared in our New Zealand papers have from the first consistently failed to do justice to the work accomplished by the Austrian forces. The impression has been almost uniformly conveyed that the Austrians were worthless and inefficient fighters, and that in spite of their numbers and training they were practically an almost altogether negligible quantity. From the fuller information appearing in American papers it would appear that the reverses which they sustained in the earlier stages of the war were due almost wholly to the fact that they were left to face the Russians single-handed, and were hopelessly out-numbered. The Kaiser, in point of fact, in delaying to send any assistance to his ally, played right into the hands of the Czar, whose policy it was to deliver first a crushing blow on Austria, and then to devote his undivided attention to the Germans. At a later stage the Austrians scored some very notable successes against Russia. At the end of September the Czar's troops were in the immediate vicinity of Cracow, and had made an almost uninterrupted advance, capturing place after place, and confidently counting the days when they would take possession of Cracow, Breslau, and Budapest. By the end of October they had been driven right back to the river San, to a point at least eighty miles east of the point that had marked their furthest advance; and the tide of battle had turned completely in favor of the Austrians. Yet little or nothing of this appeared directly in our cables. The impression which has been created in English-speaking circles that Austria has proved an unsatisfactory ally to Germany has been emphatically contradicted by the German papers. Thus the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* has spoken in enthusiastic terms of the valor of the Austro-Hungarian troops and the skilful generalship of the leaders. Writing at the beginning of October, just after the Austrian retreat movement, the *Fossische Volkszeitung* said: "The Austrians hitherto have fought with extraordinary valor. The fact that they were forced to retreat before the enormous Russian forces is not astonishing. But Austria will find ways and means to balance the inequality in numbers. We have the fullest confidence in our heroic comrades in arms." It is only fair to the Austrians to mention these things, and fair also to the Russians, as showing that the undoubted victories gained by the latter have been won over no mean and despicable foe.

A Very Human Document

In view of the practical suppression of the professional war correspondent, the public has been constrained to look more and more to the soldiers and officers themselves not alone for an account of actual military operations but even more for some description of the conditions under which the marching and fighting are carried out. So far we have been exceedingly well served in this matter; and the letters of the Tommy

Atkins of all nations have thrown a flood of light on the work and life of the men in the trenches. Hitherto, however, the bulk of the letters published in the English press have been concerned exclusively with the western area of the conflict, and we have heard literally nothing from the fighting men of the state of things prevailing in the eastern theatre. A special interest, therefore, attaches to the publication of a remarkably human document in the shape of the diary of Lieut. Albert Reinhardt, who was shot by a Russian patrol near Skierniewice in western Russia, on September 29. This lieutenant went originally with the German troops into Belgium; but later he was withdrawn with those troops who were hurried to the Polish frontier, where the Russians were attempting invasion of Germany. The diary furnishes a vivid picture; and from the earnestness with which the writer longs to get back to France or Belgium it would seem that conditions on the eastern front are degrees worse than the worst that the west can show. The chronicle begins with his arrival at the Russian frontier, and ends three weeks later, on the day before he was killed.

Sept. 6.—At Landsberg a railway destroyed, telephone plants demolished, houses burned met my eyes. At Eyslau, where the Russians remained eight days, the country people point to their empty barns—the animals of the farm yard all gone, as the signs of the Russian occupancy.

Sept. 9.—The German aviators have given fine information concerning the positions of the Russian batteries. The Russians pretended not to anticipate an attack on the inferior wing, but they concentrated their force there. A duel of artillery continued till evening. We did not succeed in reducing the Russian batteries to silence. Nine of our men were killed and eleven wounded. The nights are already terribly cold. I warmed myself at the camp fire before burying myself beneath the straw for two hours trying to get warm.

Sept. 21.—The roads are terrible here in Russia. When we were forced to deviate from the highway it was impossible to think of going forward. Thank God we have a little chocolate. We know nothing of the enemy. The southern division is a hundred kilometres away. The superior officers say that we will occupy Poland nothing more. No one can imagine the conditions in which they live here—men and beasts. In one room there are fourteen of us. The sheets on the bed look as though they had not been changed for years. The houses in the villages are all alike, covered with thatch and with dry straw. The people have nothing to eat. The cats have been driven away, the horses have disappeared. They sleep on straw.

Sept. 22.—And still we have not yet seen the enemy. Only a cavalry patrol appeared forty kilometres away. To-morrow we encounter the Austrian Landsturm. It is horribly humid and oppressive. We have received the newspapers but they tell us nothing new. I pass the entire time reading future policies. I have for nourishment an egg, abominable butter and abominable bread. The only thing which we may be permitted to hope is that we will not have to go far into this wretched country. God forbid that we fall into the hands of these people; we should be lost. The natives are courteous. As an example, one woman of whom we demanded hospitality replied, "Wait till the Cossacks come." It seems that we are to go to Holland. The soldiers have found a little beer. Blessings on the country where beer abounds. I believe that when we depart from here we will make a hundred centimetres a day through force of pure joy.

Sept. 27.—The Eleventh, Seventeenth Artillery held the advance position. The highway upon which we advance is apparently the best in Poland. We have stopped in a magnificent castle belonging to a Polish count and have slept well here.

Sept. 27.—The Eleventh, Seventeenth and Twentieth Corps of the Guards follow their columns, while the army with the left wing advances to Warsaw.

Sept. 29.—We are making our way toward a little fortress. When we have that position the "Landsturm" will occupy Poland, and we will return to Bel-