

THE TREATMENT OF OUR PRISONERS AND WOUNDED IN GERMANY.

The article "How I escaped from Germany after thirteen months' Torture," by Private Sydney Jagers, published in the *Weekly Dispatch* on Sunday, is only corroborative evidence of what we knew would be the manner in which the savage treats those in his power. This story of marvellous pluck and endurance makes one realise how certainly we are going to win this war. Why? Because an army of the Jagers type is irresistible—they have the staying power, the humour and daring which moves mountains. Private Jagers was taken prisoner by the Germans with others at Gheluvelt: "We were all suffering from our wounds but in the eyes of the Germans we were quite well enough to march, and they refused to give us so much as a bandage.

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"Every now and then a frenzy seemed to seize them, for they slashed at us with their whips and spat into our officers' faces, continually addressing us as 'English swine.' When they were not using their whips they were shaking their fists in our faces, at the same time exultantly singing, 'The day has come.' We were marched into Lille, carrying their packs, and if at times we lagged behind because of our wounds they prodded us with their bayonets. Finally we sat down in a square in the town outside the railway station.

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"The news of our arrival reached some of the German soldiers who were in the estaminets, and they rushed out and signalled their joy at seeing us by aiming vigorous kicks at us and saluting us as 'English swine and Kitchener's dogs.' One of them came up to me and said, 'It looks as if you've had enough of it.' While we were in the square an English aeroplane came soaring over. Sympathetic Frenchwomen tried to give us bread, but our captors took it away from us and knocked the women over with their rifles. We sat in the square for about an hour, insulted all the time and continually being spat upon. To have protested meant being shot straight away. Then they said, 'English dogs, get up and march.'

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"At the station we were put into cattle trucks strewn with dung. I shall never forget the day; it was October 31, 1914, the saddest day I ever hope to experience. We travelled night and day until the morning of the third day. The idea of giving us food never entered the heads of our captors. Every time the trucks rocked with the sudden application of the brakes those of us who were wounded suffered excruciating pain. We were shut in exactly like cattle, so that we could see nothing of the country through which we were passing, and all the ventilation we got came through chinks in the boards. At every big station we were told to get out and parade on the platform, to make sport for the German population, who quickly fell into the habit copied from our

captors of addressing us as English swine." Without food it was not until midnight of the fourth day that these prisoners arrived at their destination. Then followed torture of starvation, herded on straw, weeks without a change of clothes.

"A continual thinning process went on. We could see the chaps wasting away and dying from sheer starvation. Outside the barbed wire entanglements there was a graveyard where they buried the victims of kultur in rough black wooden boxes.

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"It was wonderful under the circumstances how cheerful we kept. We used to sing 'Ours is a happy little home.' If it had not been for our natural good humour we would have gone stark raving mad.

"Some of our chaps were now in a pitiable condition. Their clothes, worn out, had literally dropped off their backs and they walked around like Turkish shiekhs with nothing on but their blankets. Our captors then thought it time to issue us some clothes. I remember once laughing at the amazing picture presented by a cheerful Irishman from Sligo whose clothes were in absolute tatters. Whenever we saw him we used to sing out 'Oh, you beautiful doll!' He looked exactly like a human golliwog."

It is not surprising that men who could joke under such circumstances could devise a means of escape and evade their brutal jailers.

Private Jagers ends this thrilling story with the significant words, "Thirteen months of captivity in Germany has left me with a feeling that we are fighting not men but brutes, with an inborn hatred for us so terrible as almost to be incredible in the twentieth century of civilisation. From what I know of them—and thirteen months is quite long enough to learn—if they beat us, God help us!"

There is no "if" in the case. We can leave our fate in the hands of men like Private Jagers—*men, body and soul.*

MESSAGE FOR THE WOUNDED.

The present war has proved conclusively the great value of massage in the treatment of the wounded in many cases, and consequently nurses are increasingly realizing the desirability of obtaining a certificate in massage.

The Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses as our readers know, holds two examinations yearly in London, and one in Dublin for massage. Over 500 of its certificate holders are now working in military and Red Cross Hospitals and convalescent camps; and to meet the demand for further workers, the Society has arranged to hold extra examinations, concerning which information may be obtained from the Secretary, at 157, Great Portland Street, W.

At St. Hilda's, 194, Marylebone Road, N.W., Mrs. Hoghton-Stewart, a teacher of recognized standing, assisted by qualified teachers, prepares pupils, who have the great advantage of hospital experience, for the I.S.T.M. examination.

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