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# THE SILENT BALTIC

OR

## DETAINED NEAR KIEL

BY

### MARCUS KNOX

AUTHOR OF

### "INFATUATION,"

ETC., ETC., ETC.

PUBLISHED BY

### ACADEMY ARCHITECTURE,

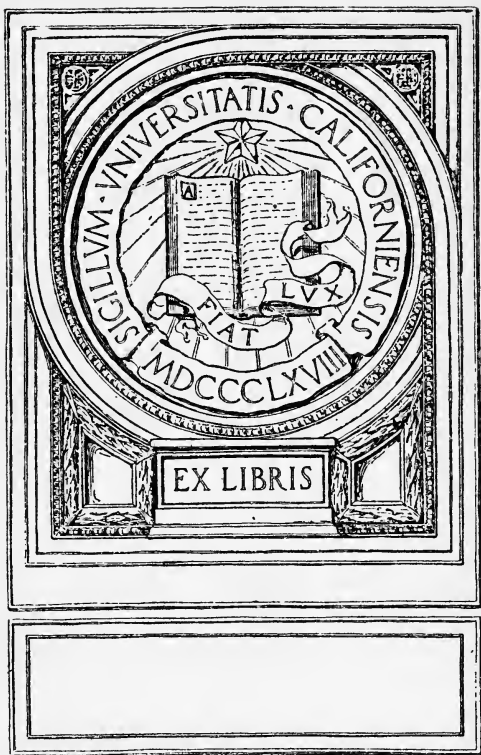
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NOTE.

The Author begs to tender sincere thanks to the lady who supplied him with her experiences.

MARCUS KNOX.



## DETAINED FOR SIX WEEKS IN A GERMAN TOWN.

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WE had long promised ourselves a holiday with our German friends in Holstein, and after a rather tiring journey we arrived there in the beginning of July, 1914.

The weather was glorious and brilliant sunshine ripened the corn in the fields round the little town of Neustadt, near Kiel. All was peace. Women worked indoors or in the gardens and men at their fishing nets or in their boats. In the evening they sat on wooden benches in front of their quaint red-roofed houses, the men smoking, the women preparing the vegetables for the following day. Everywhere reigned contentment and peace—peace—peace! The golden sunshine, the violet shadows, the ripening

corn impressed themselves indelibly on my memory. How plainly I can still see it with my mind's eye, such a picture of sweet quiet life, perhaps for years not to be witnessed again.

Then there came a change—like the rustle of some pestilential wind something swept over the tranquil scene—and that something was WAR. What did it mean? Destruction, ruin, poverty, separation and death!

Men who remembered the horrors of 1870 paled as they looked on their stalwart sons; young women wept to part from husbands and brothers, while little flaxen-haired children clung round their fathers' knees. But the Fatherland called, and they knew nothing but obedience.

“Mein Kaiser ruft mich” (my emperor calls me), said one young man with ruddy complexion and bright blue eyes, as he clasped his wife to his breast. Then he

took the infant from her arms and kissed it passionately. A wrinkled old woman held her trembling hands towards two youthful grandsons—mere boys—who were anticipating the glories of battle. They were all she had left, she had brought them up and without them her old age would be desolate. The poor woman who came to do the washing, actually rejoiced that the invalid condition of her husband would prevent his going to the front—afterwards she found he would be required after all, and many tears flowed over the wash tub. She was but one of thousands!

During the first days all was confusion and unrest. Nothing seemed real, and we hoped the news of serious war to be only a scare. The calm undisturbed tranquility of the Baltic seemed to deny the truth of these hostile reports.

People catch hold of news, or the rumour of news and instantly exaggerate.

But as the long-drawn out hours crept on the rumour became fact and the command to mobilize a reality.

We were staying at the Pastorat (vicarage) and the young girl who came out with me had to return home on the 1st of August, via Hamburg to England.

Conjecture about her not being able to travel alarmed us. The railways were already crowded with anxious travellers—holiday makers whose holiday humour the vision of coming war had overshadowed, who were rushing to their homes; also with men who were already called to take their respective places as defenders of the Fatherland.

We were three friends—two English and one the Pastor's wife. On the 31st of July we walked for the last time together on the sea shore and watched the gorgeous colours of the setting sun fade in the purple of the distance. The waters on which the town is situated are not the



main sea, but a narrow, irregular bay that opens south-east into the Baltic—a splendid natural harbour close to Kiel. Surely, if war had really been declared, some of Germany's great battleships would be stationed here! Could it be possible that what was said in England that we should drive them into the Kiel canal and bottle them up there on the first suspicion of hostilities, had already taken place? The coast is low-lying with small resorts for pleasure or industry dotted about. Here and there a windmill turned in the breeze, but not a single mast showed on the horizon. The path we were traversing winds round and round, sometimes through marsh land, and sometimes fenced in by hedges and trees; wild roses and honeysuckle bloom in great luxuriance and little steamers ply across to the neighbouring hamlets. At one part there is a ferry by which you can cross to a picturesquely situated "wirthshaus,"

where you can have coffee or supper if desired. These frugal meals in the fresh air had always been a special delight of mine; but not often during my stay here this summer could I have this pleasure, for after the first few days all these places were closed. No one had any wish for anything of the kind, and soon even the ferry boat ceased to run.

On this evening of the 31st, however, some people were still able to joke and laugh and talk on many subjects. They could not yet realize the horror hanging over them.

We were sad at parting from our little friend. I intended staying some time longer, but she was due at home. There was some talk about our accompanying her as far as Hamburg, but perhaps there would be difficulty in getting back, and there was a baby in the house to think about.

Neustadt lies on a branch line, the main

lines were sure to be overcrowded. Oh, why didn't I decide to leave then with her and both get safe home together! But then we realized as little as the rest what the future had in store. Travel has been made so easy and we have been so spoiled by luxurious accommodations. It is utterly impossible for an English mind to conceive the entire disruption of ordinary traffic when an order for mobilizing a whole nation goes forth, not a mere army of a few thousands is under consideration, but the feeding and moving of millions.

In these early days I never dreamt that I should be practically imprisoned in that little out of the way town, cut off from all communication from the outside world. Let the reader try to imagine for himself the impossibility of any news of dear ones at home reaching him by any means whatsoever. In these modern times of every convenience let him picture to himself that suddenly all railways and means

of transit had for him ceased to exist, then he may have a fair idea of what happened in every town in Germany and for all the English stranded there at the beginning of the war.

We decided to go together to Eutin, where our friend would have her first change, and to part there. All kinds of tales were fluttered about that we should not be able to get back. Kiel, situated at the eastern entrance of the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal, had emptied itself at the first breath of the possibility of war, and the authorities permitted nobody to enter the town without undergoing the most searching examination, as no doubt the fear of spies and bomb throwers was great in their minds, besides which mines were being laid around the harbour. Possibly they feared to disclose the fact that their ships were huddled up in the canal for two reasons; that their position would become known to the rest of the world,

and they would also lose prestige amongst their own people. But Kiel was not in our route, and Eutin is not an important place, merely a railway junction.

We found our station only mildly crowded—no more than on any ordinary holiday, the train had not arrived and the officials were not sure whether it would come at all, however after a long time it did crawl into the station. For some reason or other all trains went at so slow a pace that one could almost walk along and talk to those inside.

At Eutin the crowds were dense. While waiting on the platform we saw some curious people alight from a motor. They were perhaps Russian spies coming from a reconnoitre of Kiel! We thought this later when we heard that so many had been taken. But our imaginations were on the alert to create sensations and unusual possibilities. The incoming train was fearfully overcrowded with pas-

sengers, and our friend found only standing room in a restaurant car. Unfortunately she could take none of her luggage in with her, and it had to be booked to Hamburg, where it was left, and we have since heard still is. The crowd there on that first of August was so dreadful that no one could trouble about luggage, and were glad to escape with their lives.

Our return journey to Neustadt was peaceful enough, but as evening advanced events became more pronounced, and there appeared no longer any doubt that we were on the eve of a European War such as the world had never seen before. All countries were being called to arms and much agitation filled all hearts. Everywhere men were being summoned away from wives and children and women stood about at street corners wringing their hands, but their grief was never loud or hysterical. Silent and heroic they faced their destiny. To think of

having no choice in the matter. How contrary to our idea of liberty ! In England, I repeat again, it is impossible to have any idea of what war really is, or what it means to those whose homes are threatened, and where the male members of every family must leave, in many cases, almost at a moment's notice. It was wonderful to see how they came out of their houses fully equipped in faultless uniform, willing, without hesitation, to leave their all for their Kaiser and country. With stolid fortitude they obeyed the inevitable. It appeared to my overwrought imagination as if a soldier came out from every corner, from every house, and from every nook, in fact from everywhere, not singly, but in bunches.

And yet people still doubted that it could be true that war was really imminent. They had talked of it for so long—surely it couldn't be true, and would

France and England join? How could people fight in this 20th century with civilization at such a height, with money and pleasure at the head of everything? And yet the cloud darkened and the hideous rumours became true.

The post was most uncertain, and we were told that no parcels could be sent, and only letters if open and in German; later they went even so far as to insist that only German characters should be used, no Latin writing, that is the Latin alphabet was prohibited. Many of the young people did not know how to form these characters, and writing became very laborious. Telegrams, too, could no longer be relied upon—they might go as usual, they might take a week, as all the appliances would be required for the use of mobilization and ordinary correspondence be pushed aside. During the whole time I was there, in fact, only one letter train went each day, and that at 7.30 in



the evening. Even the newspapers were very irregularly delivered at first. Law and order, as connected with anything besides the iron law of war, had ceased and chaos taken its place. A blank towards the outside world settled on us—an experience so strange and not to be remembered by even the oldest.

The pastor, who had been away for a holiday, was expected, and we feared for his journey—would he succeed in getting through? He was a delicate man and might not be able to bear the strain. Everyone's thoughts went out to those in distant places! As far as England was concerned, even at this early date all communications with the dear Homeland were cut off. All the letters and cards I had written were returned. Every protective precaution was taken by the Germans as soon as there was any doubt in their minds about the attitude of England.

Many houses had soldiers quartered in

them, for the little town was dangerously situated, and must be well guarded against spies.

We held all in readiness in case any soldiers should be allotted to us, and many hopes were expressed that they would not come before the master of the house returned.

Each day the situation became more strained.

Proclamations were issued that all strangers must leave for their respective countries. Still I stayed on. I feared to travel alone through all the crowded stations, especially as greatly exaggerated stories of the harrowing experiences of other travellers kept pouring in. At that period I felt as if I would rather remain in the shelter of my friends' house and under their protection, and so I lost my chance. Afterwards there was no possibility of my getting through as every train was needed for the military.

With the German's usual thrift and forethought everyone began laying in a stock of provisions and especially of coal, because the supplies from England had ceased. Many shops put up their prices, eager here as elsewhere, to make the best of an opportunity, but soon a law was passed by the Government to fix a standard above which no one might charge. Hints and rules how to economise were published in the local papers. No cakes were allowed to be baked and only a certain number of breakfast rolls. A plentiful harvest lent its abundant yield of fruit and grain to help the thrifty housewife prepare for a winter of need and privation. All kinds of eatable berries were being picked to make into syrup for the wounded soldiers soon to be brought into our midst. About this time we heard that two Russian spies had been taken in a cornfield, and I was warned not to attempt to sketch or I

might be put under arrest. My nerves are not over strong, but somehow I felt as if I could trust the people, and only at times fully realized my danger.

On August the 4th the pastor returned and everywhere he received a welcome. We were truly thankful to have someone to direct parish business and console the miserable and over-anxious. This kind man proved in truth a boon to the people in this time of sore distress, but, as far I was concerned, he did not add to my comfort. A German to the core, he could not refrain from arguing and boasting; but that did not happen so much at first, not until England had declared war. Our principal fear at this time was that the Russians would come across the Baltic Sea and land troops somewhere north of Berlin, and I was surprised that the authorities made no efforts to strengthen the seaward defences. Every day the Baltic showed the same still, tranquil

silent surface—not a warship anywhere in sight. A motor filled with Russian spies had attempted to pass through the town early one morning. They were arrested and from that time a chain was put across the bridge and all motors forbidden to enter Neustadt—in fact any person entering the town by the bridge was stopped and examined. Soldiers were stationed at every exposed corner and numbers patrolled the streets daily. They were, however, not overworked and had plenty of time in which to drink beer. So many people were foolishly sentimental about these guardians of our safety and treated them continually at various public houses to drinks so that they were sometimes seen the worse for liquor, which greatly reduced our respect for the defenders of the Fatherland.

The market place was repeatedly filled with horses to be sold for the army.

In fact they were brought in such numbers that the way was impeded and to pass along almost impossible. They had to be tested to see if they were fit for war, and these operations made walking in the vicinity where they were taking place dangerous. So many horses were sold that it was feared there would be none left to carry in the harvest, and in many districts the corn stood in sheaves ready to be carried home. Later school children offered to help with the harvesting as the men were away; and it was a curious sight to see young lads and lasses directed by old men gathering in the golden grain; but at the time of the horse sales the corn was still standing and in many fields not yet cut.

When the horses were all sold the town became quieter and the stillness, after the uproar struck us as almost painful. We felt as in a besieged town so little news of the outside world could be got.

There was, however, no longer any doubt about the seriousness of the situation, for news had been brought us that England was arming against Germany. Soon enemies would entirely surround this land. This news burst upon the people as they came out of church on the 5th August. The Emperor had ordered a solemn service to be held in every church everywhere, and our little building was crowded, while lines of soldiers filled the benches and extra seats had to be supplied. A powerful sermon the pastor preached and many eyes were moist, even men bowed their heads and wept. As we came out the dreadful words "England hat den Krieg erklärt" ("England has declared war") were hissed from mouth to mouth, and an awful gloom fell on all. People seemed to creep along, shuffling their feet in the dust. "We are lost" they cried, and then the storm burst in fearful

curses against the Power which had always been in touch with Germany. These curses were dreadful for me to hear, and my situation became more painful than ever. I feared someone might assault me or at least say something offensive, but nothing happened. By this time everyone knew that an "Engländerin" was being harboured at the Pastorat, but the pastor was much beloved and respected and vouched for my good conduct when a burly policeman came to enquire about me. But on this day, when England declared war, no one noticed me. Men went about the streets with great strained eyes that saw nothing but their inward misery.

"Three against one, the odds are fearful. England by sea and France by sea and land on one side, Russia by both sea and land on the other." They muttered, "We are fighting for our existence, how will it end?"



The thought that they had been the aggressors and that their Emperor and his party could possibly have saved the situation and the peace of Europe, had they been so minded, never seemed to occur to them; that there existed another side to the situation never entered their minds.

Sometimes we walked to the station, but at first I only ventured in the company of my friends. Herr Pastor felt it his duty to say good-bye to the streams of men going to the front, also to cheer the sobbing wives and mothers. Harrowing sights we witnessed during these pilgrimages, but no loud grief ever occurred; the controlled silence of the people struck me as wonderful; and the faces! will they ever be obliterated from my memory? Shall I ever cease to see in my mind's eye the rigid sentries standing at the chained bridge giving people permission to pass. The station lies on the other

side of the bridge, also the post office, which official edifice I always felt nervous to approach. The rigorous discipline of these civil institutions awed me from the beginning. There exists none of the easy good nature so often found in England, for neither here nor at the railway is ever any mercy shown to the late comer. As the clock strikes the post office closes even though a hurrying individual, with a bundle of letters, stands on the threshold.

At the Pastorat all the reserve clothes connected with the Red Cross were taken out, washed and aired to be in readiness should wounded soldiers be sent to this town, the gymnasium turned into a hospital and twenty beds put up; a very small number it sounds, but not in comparison with the size of Neustadt.

There was the same eager desire to be the first to do anything which always

characterises women workers everywhere. No one is ever willing to take the shady corners nor to do the unrecognized tasks !

I, being a foreigner and an enemy, kept myself free from the jargon of tongues and petty squabbles connected with this branch of patriotism. I kept to myself and stayed in the pretty vicarage garden with the peacefully sleeping baby, or in the almshouse grounds among the feeble and infirm - poor. These unfortunate creatures, decrepit with age, showed me great kindness and the desolate feelings of being an alien oppressed me less here than anywhere else. I might walk in their grounds free among the flowers or sit in the quaint old chapel and look at the hideous Lutheran conceptions of church decorations, if I liked, but everything there was so appallingly ugly that I preferred to remain outside among the natural beauties created by the Almighty. But the sensation of being in a town as if

besieged was at times so overwhelming that no personal kindness could assuage the misery of it. The loneliness of being the one on the other side among all these patriotic Teutons wedged me in as between huge rocks where there was no outlet. Of course I had no sympathy with them, nor they with me; but I was the one in the midst of many, and often and often my heart sank at the thought of how I might be imprisoned for months and months. The more I tried to speak German correctly the more I stammered over it. Certainly it is like a mother tongue to me, but one can never quite get the accent. People knew that I was not a native of North Germany, but I was often, in fact mostly taken for a Southerner. After a while, however, everyone in this small place recognised that I was English—an English friend of the Pastor, and many considered that I ought to leave this very exposed and important

neighbourhood, so near to their great naval harbours and Kiel Canal, and suggested that it would be better for all parties were I, an English enemy, to go into the interior of the Empire away from all temptations of spying or giving information to my countrymen.

I was well aware that I ran considerable risk in staying, but as I had no means of getting away there was no option. English people in times of peace have never cared much about the procuring of passports and other formalities, and when these were demanded my being without them seemed to place an effectual barrier between myself and England.

Once someone had a birthday, the Germans are great on the keeping of such ceremonies, and I was asked by my friends to go with them to the afternoon coffee party. Here about thirty people all advised different things. With a dazed head and utterly exhausted I crept

home to shut myself up in my bedroom and reflect what could be done. In spite of their confusing and terrifying advice, they had all meant to be kind, and most had offered to assist me if possible. The best help came from the town chemist, who possessed a telephone and obliged me by communicating with Rood & Sons in Hamburg, but the reply was most dispiriting. It ran thus :

“It is impossible at present for an English person to cross any frontier, and we can issue no tickets as our offices everywhere are closed during the war.”

Someone suggested that I might travel over Denmark—through the Skager-Rak and Kattegat, fascinating names of my geography lesson days. In that case I should have to cross that alluringly silent Baltic—I should be able to obtain a peep at Kiel—the invulnerable, as the Germans consider the harbour. They could not prevent travellers from looking

into their Canal, if the Denmark bound ship passed near enough ! It would be a great venture—but how and where get the ship when all around was shut up and silent—dead and uninhabited as in the Beginning when the Spirit of God spread over the face of the waters ? or when Columbus stood and looked across the broad Atlantic, wondering what enchanted region lay on the other side.

No Holy Spirit, however, was brooding here, but the Great Demon of war. To me the blue Baltic appeared as an unhallowed pest spot, mocking the world with its silent mystery. What hosts of evil might spring forth from its many bays and inlets ! From a distant standpoint I gazed on its mighty waters and shuddered. I dared not venture across them.

There seemed nothing for me to do after this but to retire into the interior of the country and hide myself either in the Black Forest or in the Hartz mountains.

But again the good Pastor came to my aid by promising that no harm should happen to me while under his roof if I was careful about my goings in and out, and avoided the harbour and sea shore. Though as there was never any visible sign of life on the waters, it is difficult to imagine how I could convey any message had I been so minded. He here again impressed upon me that I had better make up my mind to be quiet until the end of the war. At this my spirits sank to the lowest ebb, and entirely crushed I kept to his restrictions for several days, and had to be contented with the garden and going out with an escort; but my nature being naturally bold and possessing a hatred of confinement and control, I ventured farther afield in the company of one friend of my own sex. At first we walked along the dusty high roads and spotted the sites of blackberries, which were to be picked when ripe. I



engaged myself to be one at the expeditions for picking which were being organized, although my good friends at the Pastorat shook their heads about it. But something I must do, and knit or work for the German soldiers went against my grain. There was a spice of romance about shoals of people picking berries to make syrup for the wounded; and every kind of berry was to be hoarded up for this purpose. Boys, the natural terror of the hedges everywhere, were strictly forbidden by the police to touch a berry of any kind or even a nut, though what good nuts would be to soldiers I could not quite comprehend. Afterwards it came home to me that provisions of any description were likely to become scarce and nuts contain a good deal of nourishment. Even potato peelings were to be saved as when washed they could be boiled for soup.

Germany lives in fear of being starved

out during the winter. As all the holiday guests have fled from the little sea-side places around, the various market gardeners began to moan that they could not sell their produce. As nothing of any description whatsoever might be wasted, beans, peas, and vegetables of all sorts were bought from these people and preserved for winter, in ways unfortunately unknown to English housewives.

As these walks on the inland roads and lanes were unheeded by the police or soldiers, I began to venture nearer the sea as it was certainly more inviting than wading through inches of dust through country where the only interest was the harvesting children, the sight of which was often pathetic.

One day my friend and I walked right through the inland road to a distant strand of sea where we hoped to be able to enjoy a stretch on the yellow sands. For miles not a soul could be seen, all the little

bungalows and villas were shuttered up and everything as dead—the remains of sand heaps and castles made by the children and left as they had to return hurriedly to their homes, made a sad impression on our already heavy hearts. We sat and looked at the beautiful blue and the foam tipped waves without a sail or boat anywhere, and were just planning a tiny kind of pic-nic for another day, when we were unpleasantly disturbed by two very up-to-date German soldiers, who I must say very politely informed us that we must not sit there—that in fact no one must sit by the shore and not even walk there without papers to show their identity.

Silence was my game. My German friend did the talking. She thought I was frightened, but I do not believe I was half as frightened as she was.

Having no papers we hurried home through the inland dust.

The soldiers must have espied us through a telescope from a distant light-house to which our backs had been turned, for we had not seen them coming.

Now that no one, not even a native, was allowed to sit or walk by the sea the sense of being in a besieged town became stronger than ever. The quietness that began to oppress us was worse than before. Everyone felt it, and of course I more than the rest.

Women kept coming to the Pastorat with tales that husbands, brothers or sons had gone to fight, and that they must have support for children and sick; and none of them looked pleasantly at me.

Whenever the good Pastor had had a heavy morning with these poor creatures he vented his indignation on me across the dinner table, and held forth against England until all my self control was required not to quarrel. The opinion against England became stronger every-

where as fresh items of infamous news arrived, while wonderful tales of German prowess were spread about. The difficulties of my position were augmented by my having no disposable money. When I presented my English gold at the German bank in the town, they asked me :

“What shall we do with it? It is of no use to us. Shall we keep it until the end of the War? No, we would rather not.”

On my mentioning the word cheque, a loud laugh greeted my ears.

I had to hoard the few marks I had left to buy absolute necessities such as stamps, etc. I must explain why I wanted stamps. I had a few people with whom I corresponded in Germany. My friends would willingly have lent me as much as I required, only they themselves were in difficulties as all their private income was held back and the Pastor's stipend was a very small one. So I was penniless

as well as a captive. Vague schemes of getting into clearer air floated through my mind, only to be extinguished as soon as formed.

A small parish life too is always irritating. The backbitings and envyings are the same here as everywhere. Oh! the intolerable dulness of the dreary days, with the everlasting singing of patriotic songs and the patrolling of the soldiers often the worse for drink! German patriotism does not quench thirst, it rather encourages it!

But in spite of all they are a great people, full of sublime ideals that I often fear we do not understand.

I think it was about at this period that we heard that all the inhabitants of Heligoland were ordered to quit the island as it was very dangerous and only soldiers were to be stationed there. The accounts of these poor fisher people leaving their little homes and wandering off

into the unknown with their children and bundles of portable possessions affected us deeply. Of course they fade into nothingness when compared with what has been enacted in Belgium, but they came nearer home to the inhabitants of Neustadt, because some of the people were related to theirs.

News of one German victory after the other kept coming in. On August 17th a great victory over the Russians at Stallupönen, somewhat south of Königsberg, then another at Namur on the French-German frontier. News of Japan's demand that German ships should leave the Chinese and Japanese waters or be disarmed, also that Kioutschau should be delivered up by the 15th September. Fearful stories of Belgian outrages all swell our anxious fears. But in this out of the way place the news came in by fits and starts, and to me never seemed quite reliable as not a single English newspaper

of any kind ever came to my hand. Naturally the latest war news was posted up in many of the shops as is done here. Little groups congregated in front of these windows, and many remarks greeted my ears, some not altogether complimentary to the Kaiser; some urging that war ought to be a thing of the past as it brought only untold misery all round. I never lingered in any of these small crowds for fear of my nationality being recognised, or even of being personally attacked.

It seemed incredible that the English army should have been totally annihilated at St. Quentin. Surely our great nation's force could not go down before a mere machine! So many have been the brave heroic deeds of the British soldiers in the past; on so many occasions have they upset their enemies' best calculations, and it was unthinkable for me, the one English woman in this town, that their



very human nature should have changed and succumbed to the first onslaught of the Teuton.

A number of German papers came daily and almost every evening an extra "Blatt." We used to wait for these nightly telegrams and whenever they arrived they only told of victories, never of defeat, and I had to retire to my room with the thousands and tens of thousands of prisoners being shrieked into my ears, so that I dreamt of these multitudes of humanity which the victorious Germans would have to feed from their impoverished stores.

Then they used to laugh at our small number of soldiers being sent to France. What use were such a handful of men against *their* armies?—the contemptible little army so often mentioned since. All kinds of insults were heaped against my country by these people swelled by victory, and I

was forced to be silent. How could I retort, situated as I was, alone, defenceless and penniless, in the hands of the enemy? Sometimes I walked up and down my room perfectly beside myself with rage at my powerlessness to defend myself.

But once the temptation to give a smart answer overcame my usual cautious self control. The pastor, who had never been in England, was boasting that the Germans would never be satisfied until they marched into London.

He asserted with great pride that one day "The Kaiser will be in your Tower of London."

"Yes," I replied with a quick laugh: "I hope he will, for that is our state prison."

The Pastorat is close to a school and the children sang all day the detestable Fatherland songs. "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles," "Morgenrot," and one

I disliked more than any, of which I cannot remember the words, but the tune is the same as our hymn, "Lord if now of Sion's city. I have often stuffed my fingers into my ears so as to shut out the hateful sounds. Even when the children were silent in the evening, the servants of the house took up the strain and the eternal ding dong went on.

Now that the victories kept pouring in, a band would often play in the market place, and this completed the consummation of my despair.

On the 22nd of August news of an enormous victory over the French in the neighbourhood of Metz was telegraphed, 10,000 prisoners had been taken. At this the people put out flags from all the public buildings and from many private windows.

The Pastor, however, thought it too soon to decorate the town. "Birds that sing too early are caught by the cat," he

said with a grim smile. 'And, alas, for Germany! his warning proved only too true, for shortly afterwards the German loss at Heligoland occurred.

The afternoon had been rather sultry, and the distant boom of cannon had been mistaken for thunder, but I had my doubts and shuddered with fear as I walked over the cobble stones of the market place and discerned through the stillness the vibration of far off guns.

"Were the Russians really approaching?"

A beautiful evening, with a primrose-coloured sky followed. I stood at the door of the Pastorat and saw an old man with a fine face and penetrating blue eyes rush across the little square calling out in an agonizing voice :

"Heligoland and loss!"

I had often seen him before. He has two sons stationed at Heligoland. I shall never forget the expression of his face.

Groups of anxious enquirers gathered round the newspaper office eager for news, and the flags seemed to mock their sorrow.

Soon after this someone kindly showed me the prison, where if I did anything foolish I might find myself, but this was really only a joke, although rather an unpleasant one for me. This old prison is now a museum and by some good chance I got inside and saw all their curiosities somewhat to the amused indignation of the custodian and to the startled consternation of my friends who could not believe their ears when told where I had been.

On the 2nd September the anniversary of the victory of Sedan was celebrated and everyone went wild with exultation. Processions paraded the streets singing the everlasting Fatherland songs. I had nowhere to go but to flee into the back garden and console myself with the baby.

About this time I became aware that I was not the only English person in

Neustadt, that an Englishman with his wife and child were detained in the principal hotel of the place. Of course I felt eager to know them. The sense of national kinship is strong, besides they might be possible travelling companions. The Pastor and others, however, warned me on no account to speak to them. I used to stand on the other side of the market place and watch the young English woman with her baby sitting on the balcony. I am sure they were well treated, but were prisoners in a sense like myself. I wonder who paid their expenses! To see the father and mother go out with a perambulator, closely attended by a military escort appealed to my sense of the ridiculous. These unfortunate people had probably no papers with them to prove their identity and nobody to vouch for their good conduct as in my case, therefore were doomed to military surveillance. Even when the

Englishman went for a dip in the sea, which naturally every Briton is sure to wish to do, the German soldier walked by his side, but significantly only the Englishman carried a towel. Whether they got into the water together I could not see. It would have been interesting if my countryman had been able to swim away, but what would then have become of his poor little wife and baby?

Once I could not resist when passing her while sitting on the low verandah, to say, without looking at her, but straight ahead as I walked :

“ Why, that is a little English baby.”

Instantly like a flash of lightning her head came over the rail, and :

“ Are you English ?”

“ Yes,” I replied, still without looking at her, but going slowly along. “ But I am shut in this town like you are, and we must not speak to each other.” And then I had gone too far for more. I did not

dare to stop in that public place where dozens of soldiers had their eyes on me, but, oh, the delight of an English word, of the sense of fellowship in danger and loneliness! It was worth much to get this consolation!

We often passed and nodded after that, but we never spoke to each other again.

I began however to surmise, that, kind and hospitable as my friends were, they would at heart be relieved if I left them. My repeated ventures and the ominous threats that came from time to time about harbouring an enemy and such like made them hint at the possibility of a way being found to get me across the Channel to my own country. I, too, had quite made up my mind to get away if possible. The everlasting harangues at every meal against the English nation were beginning to affect me seriously, and my patience reached its summit of endurance when I was informed that the English



fleet through cowardice had sheltered itself in the Irish Sea. I remember saying on this occasion :

“ I have listened to all the other epithets you have heaped upon my nation with as much patience as I can command, but cowards you *shall* not call them in my presence. Look at your own navy, where is it? Why, shut up in your canal and harbours, frightened even to venture into the waters of the Baltic.”

Although difficulties confronted me on every side, I watched desperately for an opportunity, and soon I heard of a young Anglo-German lady, who wanted to try to reach London, would I accompany her? Of course I would! I must get a passport from the American Consul at Hamburg, and this must be done in person.

The Pastor, somewhat reluctantly consented to this attempt and kindly promised to lend me enough German

money; also to drive me to a station at some distance where there was a better connection with the main line.

So early one September morning, after a six weeks' stay in the little town by the Baltic, I drove through the keen air for over two hours in an open carriage and caught the train on the direct line to Hamburg.

It surprised me much to find scarcely any travellers the whole way to Lübeck, and I can only remember two gentlemen, who, of course, were talking of the war, one telling the other how his eldest son, a boy of fifteen, had begged him to alter his age by two years so that he might go to the front.

At Lübeck all was as dead—the restaurant and catering arrangements, formerly so excellent, had ceased to exist, and only with difficulty could I obtain some lunch. I had three hours to wait, which I spent in nervously walking about

the roads near the station, and looking at the disgraceful postcards and pictures concerning English and French; and others showing the bravery and prowess of the Kaiser. One I noticed especially; a huge poster displaying the Kaiser gallantly marching to fight with three sons on each side of him, while our King George sat at Windsor Castle drinking tea and sending messages of encouragement to his men for risking their lives for him; and the Czar shut up in a glass case afraid his own subjects would kill him.

This obnoxious caricature made my blood boil, and I longed to smash the shop window in which it was exhibited.

The journey between Lübeck and Hamburg, though tedious was uneventful. At Hamburg a mountain of difficulties arose. The lady who was to travel with me met me, according to arrangements, at the station. English by birth and education,

she possessed a German name from her father, who had been naturalized in England. She with her mother had come to Germany in July to visit her father's relations, and now she wished to return to their home in London, but owing to the war and the discomforts connected with travelling, the aged mother was to remain in Hamburg.

The daughter had been told that morning at the American Consulate that our passports would not be sufficient to get us across the Dutch frontier, or rather to allow us to leave Germany; that permission from the police authorities must be obtained. She had then repaired to the chief police station, but the permit had been refused as the negotiations between England and Germany, about granting their respective people permission to leave, were not completed. She had also been told that it was possible in the near future, if the rancour on each side con-

tinued, that every British subject, old and young, would be ejected from Germany—in which case her mother would have to travel alone to London. I did not think this latter law would ever be enacted, but I surmised that she wavered about leaving.

As the idea of travelling alone, or still worse of being obliged to remain in Germany—perhaps to return to Neustadt—now confronted me, my heart sank within me.

We repaired together to the Consulate to obtain my passport.

I was half dead and faint for the Englishwoman's greatest comfort—a cup of tea, but there was no time for this luxury, as the Consulate closes on Saturday at 5 o'clock and it was now past 4.

Shall I ever forget the chaos at the Consulate? All kinds of peoples and nations were collected there, and women typists ticked their machines in the midst of the ceaseless jargon of tongues.

Of course we had to wait, and there were no chairs, while, as no windows were open, the heat was suffocating.

When at last we did get a hearing, we were told that there was no hurry about my passport, as I could not leave Germany without police permission, which at present could not be granted.

But I, eager to grasp at any straw, had been listening to some men in another room, and had heard that several women were being smuggled through, therefore I pressed for the filling in of my papers, which, after tedious waiting, and long after the usual hour of closing, was completed.

I took a room in the hotel "zum Kron Prinzen" opposite the station, and then accompanied my new friend to her relations. One glance at the beautiful old face of the mother convinced me that if I were her daughter I would not leave her. She sat like a marble statue, saying noth-

ing, determined not to persuade. Every possible chance and difficulty was discussed, and at the daughter's urgent request our Sunday travelling was postponed until the Monday.

"Give me a day to think it over," she whispered to me, looking anxiously at the white face and thinly pressed lips of her mother.

Then I returned to the hotel and went to bed but not to sleep. (At that hotel the things were good, the charges moderate, and the kindness and attention which I received I shall always remember with gratitude).

I was almost the only person besides the staff in the house and the lonely corridors were silent and desolate.

With fresh apprehension I discovered that I had caught cold during that long morning drive, my chest felt sore and breathing was painful. I wondered what would happen if I were taken ill. Most

likely I should be put in some German hospital where no one would know anything about me. But, after drinking a hot lemonade and rubbing my chest with camphorated oil, I fell asleep towards the early morning.

About 7.30 I heard a tap at my door and in a startled fright I jumped out of bed and rushed across the room to find my proposed travelling companion standing outside the door. She had come to say that she could not leave her mother, and came thus early to give me an opportunity of going by the Sunday express as had been at first arranged.

We talked a long time together, and I tried to comfort her and impress upon her that she was acting quite rightly. But all the same I was inwardly filled with dismay at the prospect of the long lonely journey.

She endeavoured to persuade me to remain in Germany until the permission



was given to quit the country, but I could not consent, I had suffered too much. I so far agreed that should any question be asked when I took my ticket to Rotterdam—England was not to be mentioned—I would not go. As no remark was made and I found my luggage could be booked through to Rotterdam, I left on the Monday morning at 9.15.

As far as Bremen the carriage was full of Germans railing against England. I bought a German paper and read it, only speaking when absolutely obliged.

At Osnabrück, where I changed first, the restaurant was closed, and I could get only a cup of over-salted bouillon, which I dared not drink dreading the thirst that would follow.

No porters were available to carry my hand luggage, which was heavy and cumbersome, as I had packed enough in my hat box to enable me to stay a few days on the frontier if detained there. I also had a

bulky bag and an umbrella case. To carry all these myself at once was not possible, so I had to take first one and then the other, risking the stealing of the one left. This I had to do at more than one of the many places at which I had to change trains.

Whilst standing disconsolately on the platform at Rheine (one of these stages of the interminable journey), with my packages around me, a voice sounded with a hiss in my ears: "Wann fährt das Schiff" (When does the ship sail?)

"That is no business of mine, I am going to Rotterdam," and I pointed to the label on my bag.

Shortly afterwards I arrived at Bentheim, the German frontier town. Here a rigorous investigation of all luggage took place, and I, with my heavy belongings, dragged myself wearily into the custom house.

We had to pass single file through

soldiers and policemen, who looked at our passports and asked an infinite number of questions.

I must here record the kindness I received from the chief official, who, seeing my difficulty of luggage transit, sent me a boy to carry my things, and also allowed me to proceed without waiting for my registered box, which had not yet arrived. How grateful I felt towards one who spared me weary hours of waiting and a chance of not arriving at Rotterdam that night!

At Oldenzaal, the Dutch frontier, the same business was gone through, the same single file through bayoneted soldiers, the same close inspection, and added to this, a policeman came into my carriage and demanded to see my permission to travel, as well as my passport.

"This is the climax," I thought. "Now I am to be put out on the frontier—stranded in a field between the two

countries, miles from any station or habitation, according to the delectable vision that had been held warningly before me at Hamburg by the American Consul!"

Driven to my wit's end I produced my passport and pretended not to understand the official, when, fortunately for me, a young man, whose papers were all wrong, diverted his attention by pushing himself between us, while I slunk away into a corner of a third class compartment, concealing myself behind the burly form of a Dutch woman and a huge basket. Between the two men a lengthy altercation must have taken place and saved the situation for me.

No proper refreshment could be obtained anywhere. At one station, where we had to undergo another revision of customs, we saw at the farther end a tea restaurant, with two trim maids standing outside. I, as well as several others, beckoned eagerly to them to bring

us tea, but they never moved, only smiled and pointed. I was afraid to get out. Suppose the train should go on! But had I known how long we were going to stop I might have had twenty cups of tea. No one replied to the ceaseless enquiries. Near me sat an East Prussian woman who had had nothing to eat or to drink all day.

Suddenly we were all commanded to descend and then the cause for the conduct of the tea girls became clear. They were guarded by armed men.

We had to walk again single file through the back part of the station and the same minute examination took place, only no one asked me for my police permission. Good tips helped my cause, and, oh joy! at the end of the passage we found ourselves in the restaurant, where tea, etc., was being liberally consumed.

Refreshed and much relieved we crawled into Holland. How I loved every field and dyke of this neutral land! How

happily we threw open the windows, hitherto tightly closed, and let in the free air! Red bills were posted in all the German carriages begging us to respect the safety of the bridges, etc., by keeping the windows shut, and thus prevent destroying bombs from being thrown from the trains. In one place I saw what looked like a bomb lying in a corner seat, on it was written "Excelsior." One may imagine I left it alone and fled to the farthest end of the train. To be discovered even near it would have been ruin.

As the train crept on thirst again took possession of the worn-out travellers. Soldiers filled the corridors, and while leaning out of the windows drank beer. I pushed one aside and asked if I could get a drink of anything?

"We are just off," said the conductor, and I retired to my seat, wishing that I had even a pebble to suck.

Two or three stations off that dear man

tapped me on the shoulder, I was half asleep—to tell me that here there would be an opportunity for getting some lemonade. God bless him, though he was a German!

And now the black windmills stood out against the red sunset on the horizon, for the long, long day drew to its close amid the glorious colouring peculiar to Holland, and to some extent peace settled over us.

I must have fallen asleep, wedged in as I was between odoriferous East Prussians, for Amsterdam, with its many lights and reflections, passed as the vision in a dream. At Rotterdam my friends met me towards midnight, and the remainder of the journey to London was without incident.

No one knows what freedom means until he has been a captive, nor the value of friends and country until he has been separated from them. Oh! the delight of again being home, of seeing old,

familiar faces and landmarks; to find that the barbed wire I had been told was stretched all over London to catch the Zeppelin bombs was an illusion of the German mind, or a fabrication of their mean little papers, as well as the monstrous victories they had gained. Buckingham Palace, too, still stands, as also all the other public buildings I had been forced to believe were burned down. What a relief to find our dear, secure island home still the land of the kind-hearted, the true and the free. My heart throbs with admiration to see how the call to arms has awakened the old British spirit and there is now no need to ask in the words of the song :

“Where are the yeomen of England?”  
for from every corner of the grand old country comes the answer from thousands of marching men :

“Here we are again!” and

“It’s a long, long way to Tipperary.”

MARCUS KNOX.



# INFATUATION

BY

MARCUS KNOX

PUBLISHED BY

ROBERT ASHLEY, 44 DOUGHTY STREET  
LONDON, W.C.

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**SIX SHILLINGS**

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**SOME PRESS REVIEWS**

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## THE TIMES.

“ This depicts the pangs of heartache in the souls of a young Italian Abbé and of Helen Rivers when they knew that they had given their hearts to each other. Another thread in the story is the problem of the secrets of the confessional.”

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“ Hero and heroine fall in love with each other, of course, and their mutual infatuation causes them many griefs and sorrows of heart. But there is more than this. There is a great mystery and a trial.”

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“ When once the preliminaries are over, the tale moves swiftly towards a dénouement, carefully prepared and successfully accomplished. The reader is carried along through scenes of intrigue and passion to the murder of the Abbé Malo, for which an innocent man stands his trial, and subsequently through those of confession, death and restitution. To divulge the real criminal would be to mar the interest of intending readers, for in a novel such as this considerable enjoyment is to be

derived from piecing together for oneself the many details of the author's pattern. A good and interesting story is offered in 'Infatuation,' and much skill and imagination have gone towards its presentation."

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"Mr. Knox, even by this one tale, proves himself a writer worthy a place in the front rank of our modern authors. In brief, the story deals with the contrasting characteristics of sacred and profane love. The interest of the tale is well maintained, and captures the reader's complete attention until the dénouement. The story is written around the township of Santa Croce, in Italy, and the characters and motives are taken from real life. Mr. Knox is to be congratulated on the intimate knowledge he possesses, and reflects of the characters and manners of people he has moved amongst, and, coupled with a moving plot, the story should find instant appreciation."

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"The problem for which Mr. Knox, in his most interesting novel, 'Infatuation,' has, with consummate ability and skill, endeavoured to find a satisfactory solution, is the old one in which a conflict between love and duty occasionally arises, a conflict which in the present case is complicated by very exceptional conditions and considerations. His power of analysing motives, creating environment, and describing incidents is of a very high order, and has enabled him to produce a book of conspicuous ability and value, which will bear to be read more than once, and is likely to become a general favourite."

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#### **HARROW OBSERVER.**

"The book is quite interesting and the incidents are given the full scope of their importance. In short we can recommend its perusal to those who like a book with its episodes running from the fountain of love into the stream of criminality, herosim and self-denial for the sake of principle."

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# INFATUATION

BY

MARCUS KNOX.

**A. VERNON CAREY** (Reviewer to the "Athenæum.")

"Infatuation," by Marcus Knox, is a work of remarkable promise and considerable insight distinguished alike by natural writing and vivid realism.

The main theme concerns the love of a young and beautiful English girl for an Italian priest, who is devoted to his faith, and the author pictures with tragic stress the sacrifice that both make by their complete surrender to the claims of the higher life.

The great problem raised in this book will certainly provoke acute controversy, dealing as it does with a vital aspect of the eternal conflict between the spirit and the flesh.

The author depicts with rare and convincing skill the clash of passion with faith, the war of temperaments; and throughout the pages of an arresting story he weaves a thread of excitement, adventure and sustained interest.

In dealing with deep and debatable questions of sex, Mr. Knox writes with fearless courage and complete sincerity. Moreover, his characters are drawn with a knowledge born of experience; in a word they are real. He has given us a book that will compel thought and provoke interest, a volume that must by no means be overlooked; a story that every man and woman should read.

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PUBLISHED BY ROBERT ASHLEY,

c/o 44 DOUGHTY STREET, W.C.