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THE RUSSIAN FRONT



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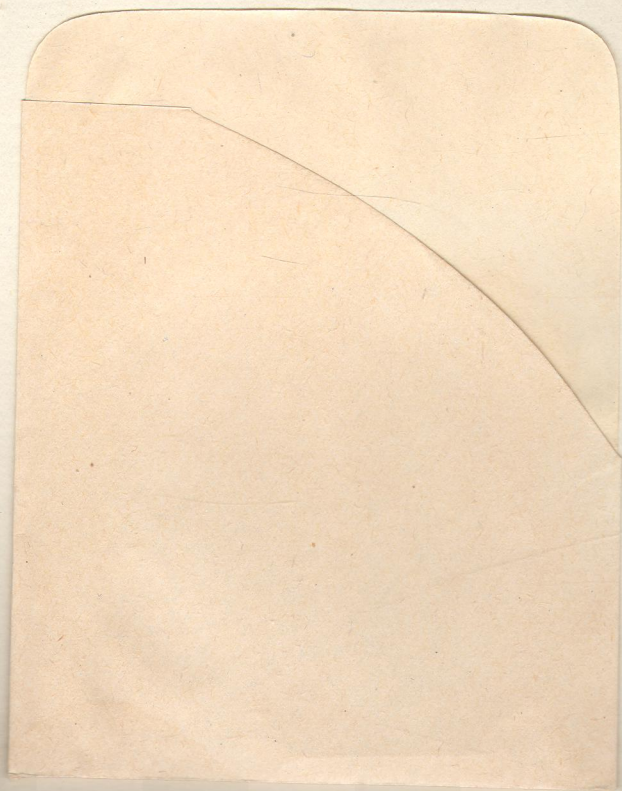
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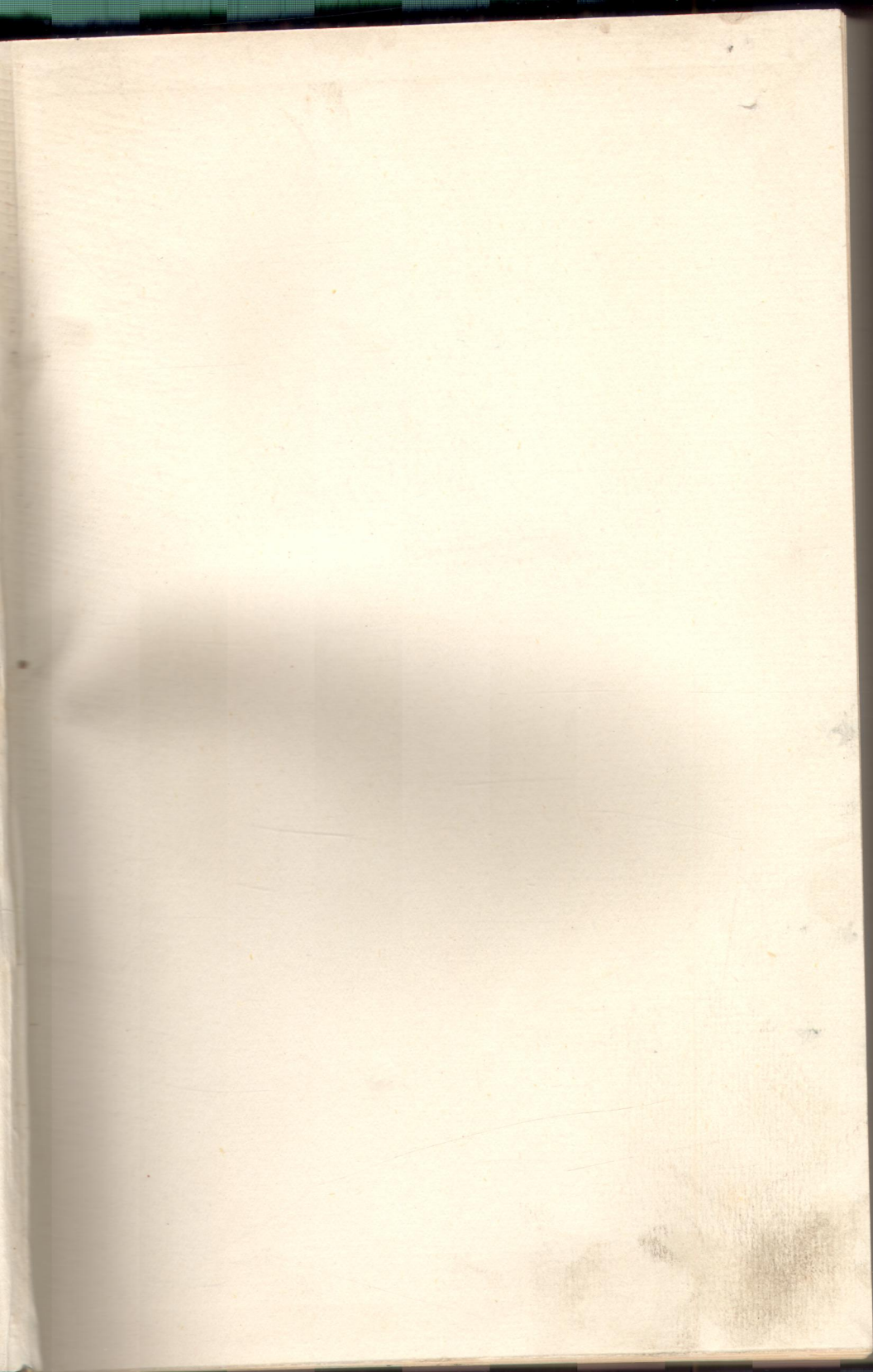
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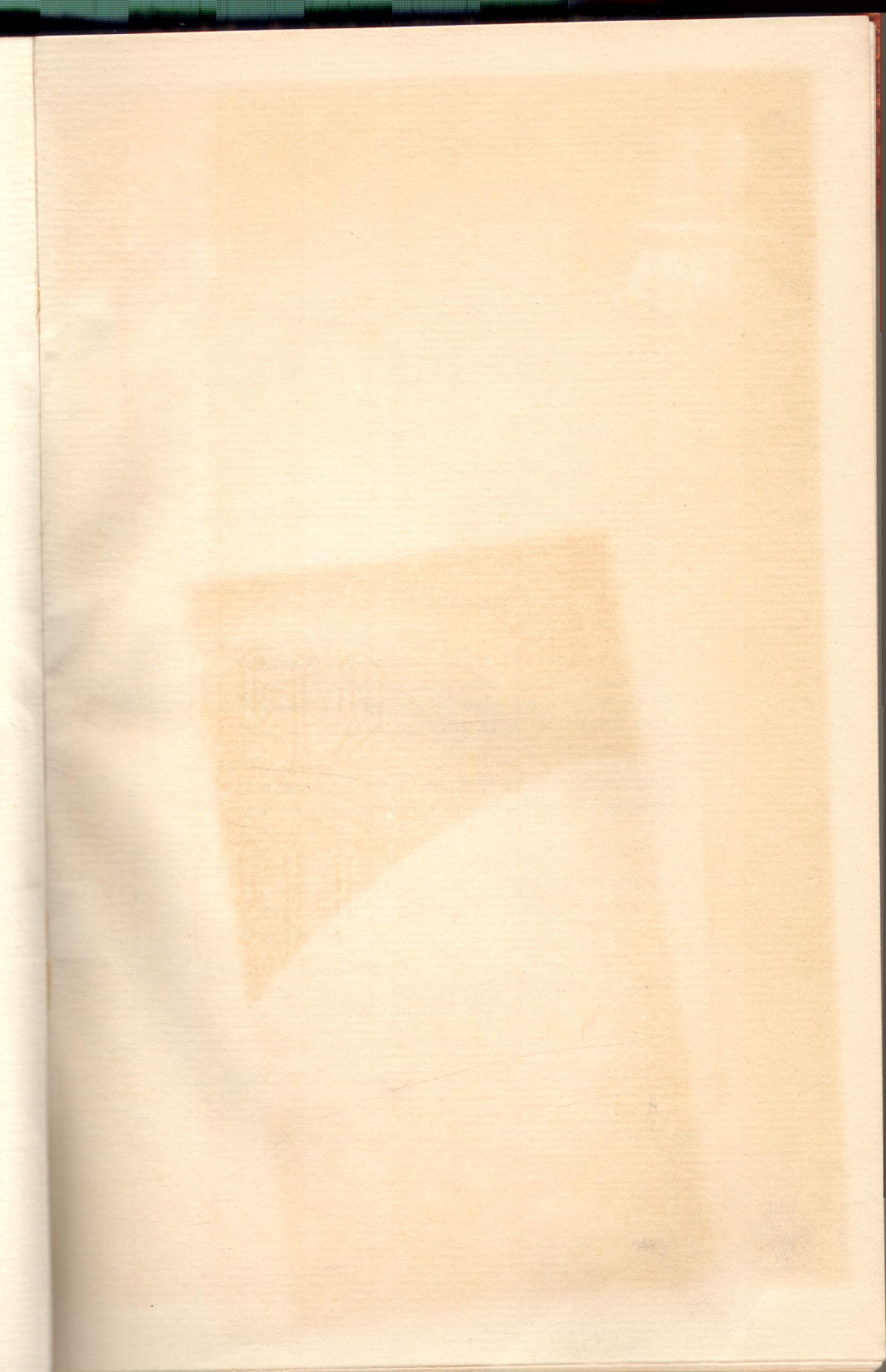


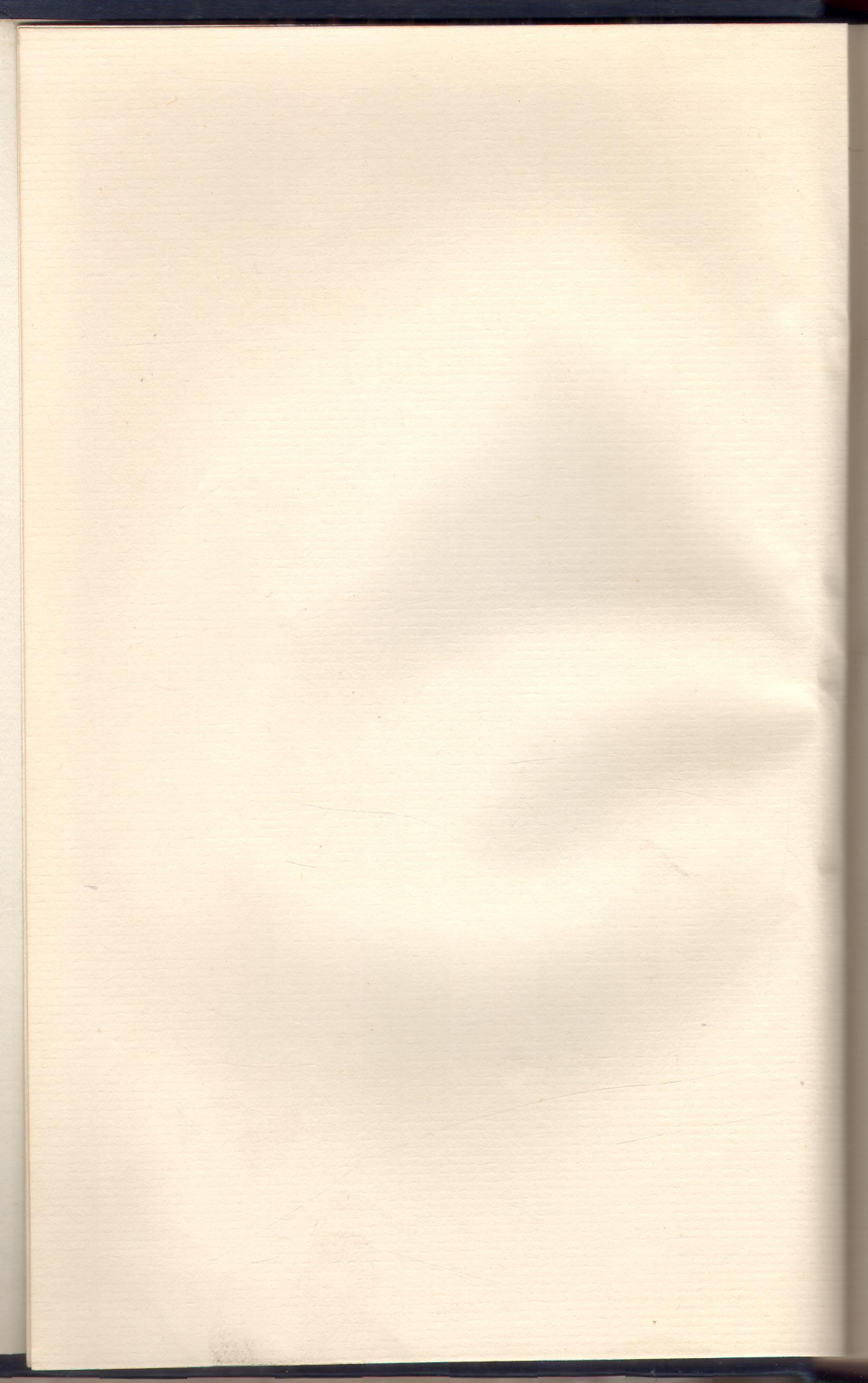














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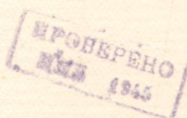
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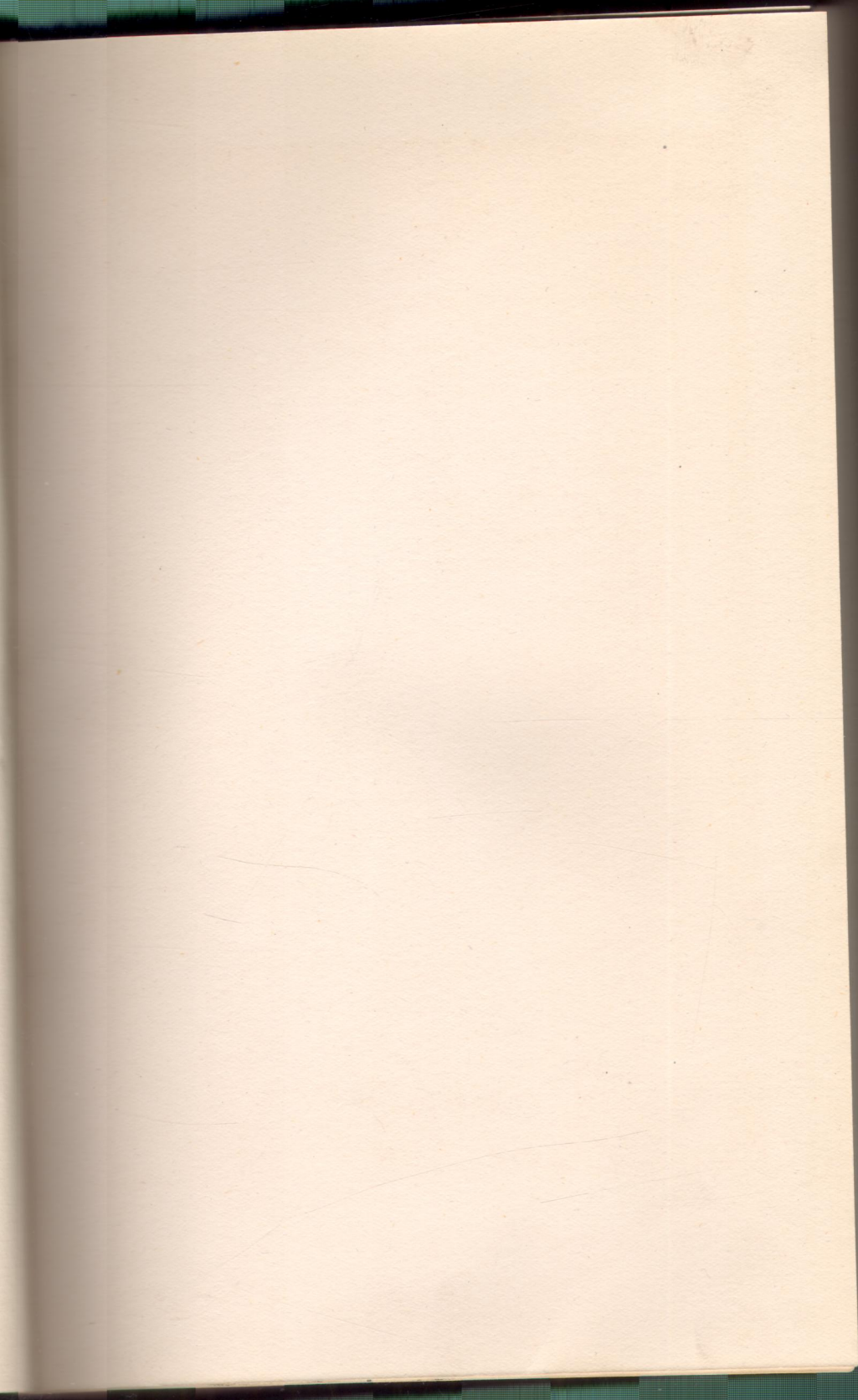




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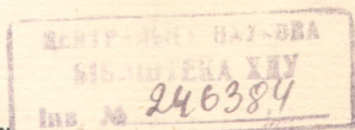
By  
STANLEY WASHBURN

(Special War Correspondent of the  
"Times" with the Russian Armies)

ILLUSTRATED BY THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF GEORGE H. MEWES

SECOND IMPRESSION

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# THE RUSSIAN FRONT FROM NOTES FROM

STANLEY WASHBURN

(Special War Correspondent of the  
Times and the Russian Army)

Illustrated by the Photographs of General H. Allen

STONE & SON

LONDON: ANDREW MELROSE LTD  
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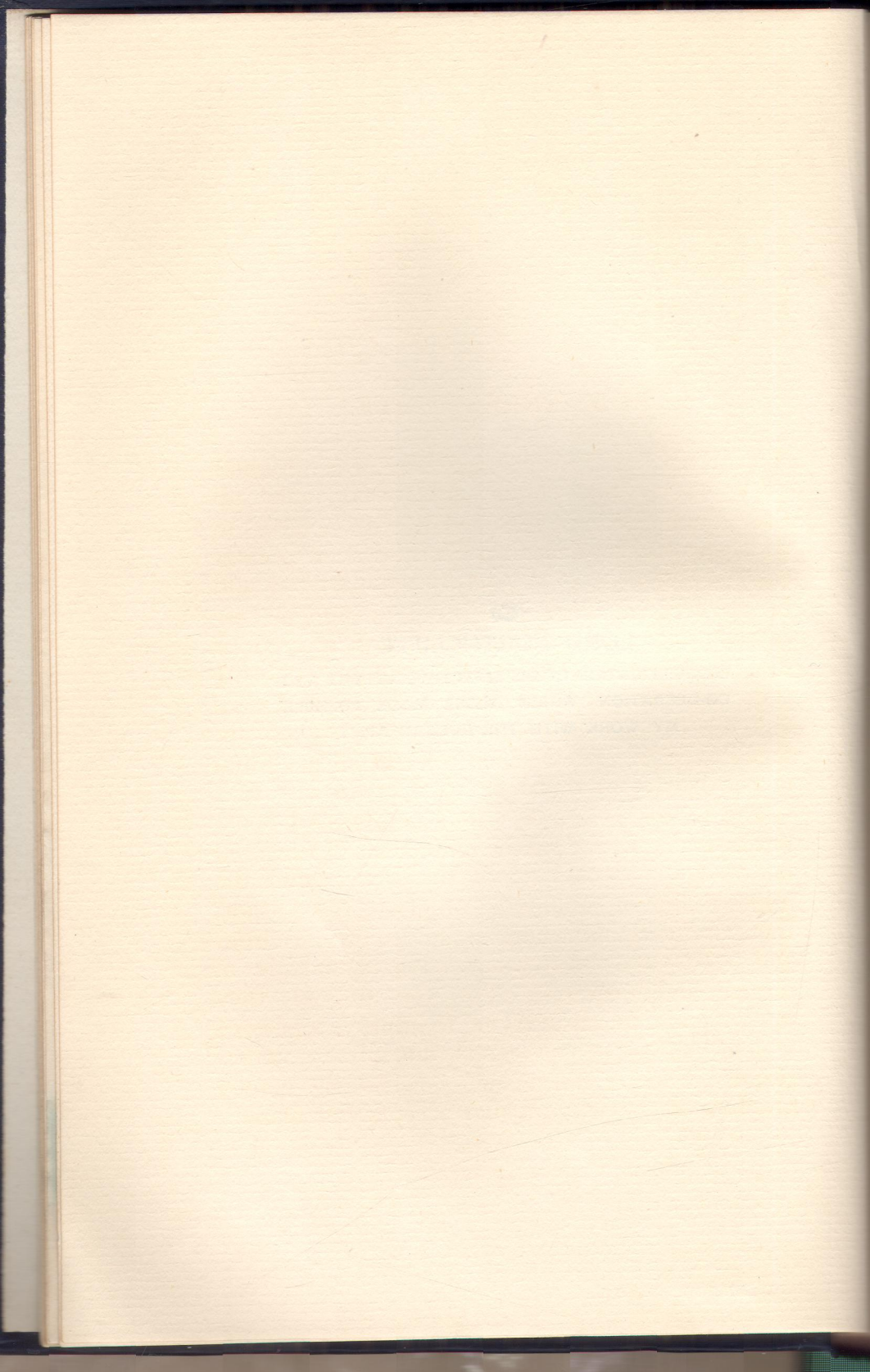




To

LORD NORTHCLIFFE

IN APPRECIATION OF HIS EFFECTIVE SUPPORT AND  
CO-OPERATION WHICH ALONE MADE POSSIBLE  
MY WORK WITH THE RUSSIAN ARMY





## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

WHEN Mr. Washburn sent the original typescript of the notes that make up this volume, he accompanied it with a letter in which he said he depended on the writer to exercise his judgment as to whether the matter should be published in book form or not : and in case of publication to give it careful and if need be drastic revision. The writer's judgment being that there was in these notes a sincere and even valuable book, there remained but to take advantage of the free hand which the Author gave him in the matter of revision.

The result is a considerably compressed book, but owing, however, to the limitations of time and knowledge on the part of the writer, and the impossibility of submitting proofs to the Author, there are no doubt technical and literary crudities which Mr. Washburn would have made right in normal circumstances. For the present they must remain, and if in trying to improve a passage which bad typescript made difficult to understand, the writer has made "howlers," he hereby absolves Mr. Washburn and accepts full blame.

A. M.

THE BURNING

The burning of the  
city of Jerusalem  
was a terrible sight  
to behold. The flames  
rose high into the air  
and the smoke filled  
the sky. The people  
were in great distress  
and many were killed.  
The city was destroyed  
and the people were  
driven from their homes.  
The burning of the city  
was a great tragedy  
and a great loss to the  
people of Jerusalem.



## PREFACE

NO one realizes better than the writer the ephemeral character of the rough notes which form the bulk of the matter contained in this volume, and it has been with some hesitation that the material has been placed in the hands of the publisher for reproduction in book form. Much of the contents has already appeared in *The Times* (London), and various leading influential newspapers in America. It is by permission of the proprietors and editors of these journals that they are now reproduced, and to them the author extends his thanks for this permission.

The excuse for having these articles reprinted now is that the subject matter is still of current interest. The author is well aware that it is impossible to write authoritatively of operations so recent and of which at best he has been able to see but a trifling portion. He believes, however, that in Russian Poland will be decided the ultimate issue of the great contest



## PREFACE

that is now shaking the civilized world, and of Russia and the Russian armies there is less known perhaps than of any other of the factors now in the field. These Field Notes may be of no vast importance, but it is with the belief that impressions gained at first hand of this army and of their operations, of which so little is known, may be of interest, and perhaps of encouragement, to the Allies and the sympathizers of the Allies in neutral countries, that the writer is having them published in book form.

In justice to the writer it should be remembered that these notes were for the most part written during the period he was with the Russian army in October and February, 1914-15, and were, almost without exception, turned out under great pressure. Many of them were written on trains, and many late at night in hotels between operations. A few days in Petrograd between trips have been available in which to throw these notes together in the too loose form in which they are now presented. The intention of holding the material for a more serious and painstaking work has been abandoned in the interest of immediate publication, in the hope that the subject matter, such as it is, may be in print early enough to convey to England, and those in America who are in sympathy with the Allies, the impressions of the Russian armies by a neutral observer at a



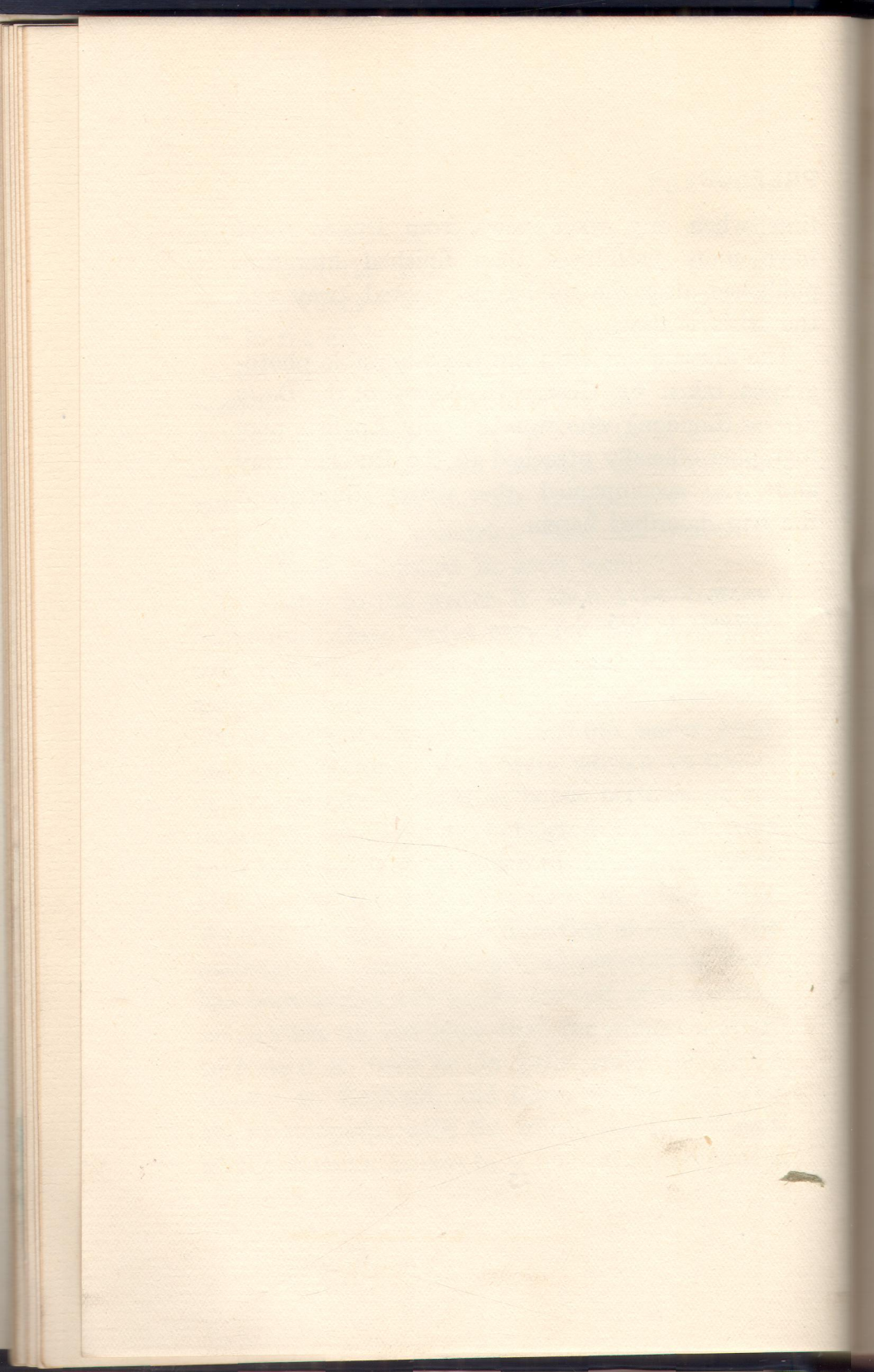
## PREFACE

time when any good news from Russia must have more usefulness than finished literature published after the smoke has cleared away and the crisis is past.

The illustrations are from the admirable photographs taken by George H. Mewes, of the *Daily Mirror* (London), who was the only English photographer officially attached to the Russian army and who accompanied the writer throughout the trip described herein.

S. W.

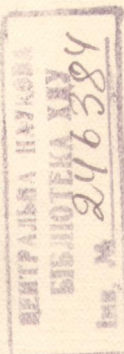
WARSAW, RUSSIA,  
*February 1, 1915.*





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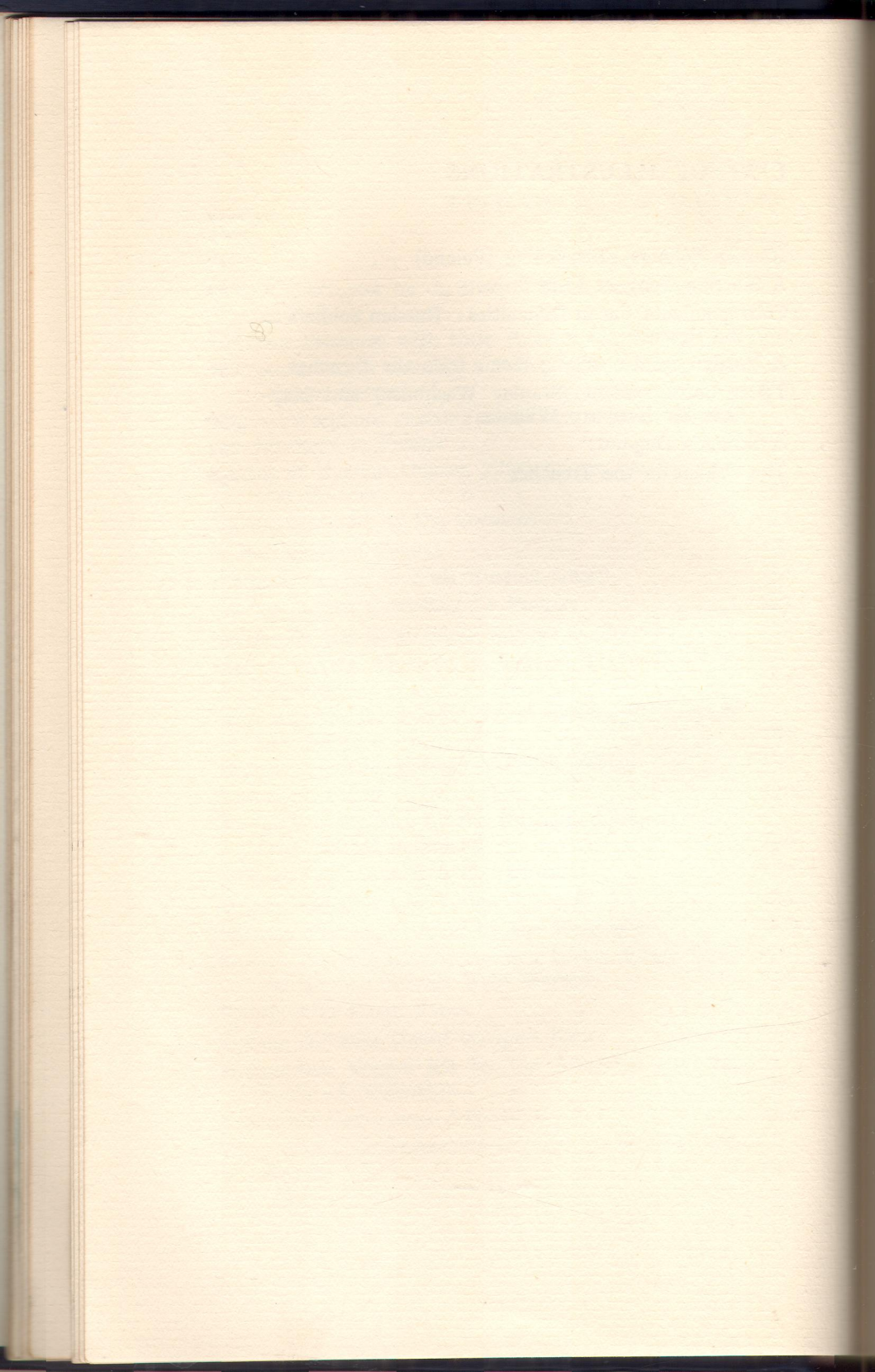
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THE NEW RUSSIA

THE NEW RUSSIA



## CHAPTER I

### THE NEW RUSSIA

PETROGRAD, RUSSIA,  
*September 10, 1914.*

WHEN Wilhelm II of Germany signed the declaration of war against Russia, the hour struck throughout this vast empire which the future historian will register as one of the great epoch-making moments in the history not only of this month and year, but in that greater narrative on whose great white page the rise and fall of races and the ebb and flow of civilizations as registered by centuries are traced. For in this hour there dawned in Russia a new era, and from the twilight of the ten years of chaos and uncertainty which followed the Japanese war there can now be traced the rising of a great light in which the world shall see a New Russia revealed, a country alert and ready to take its place among the progressive nations of the world.

The philosophy of the Teutons has completely misjudged the psychology of the Russian

## FIELD NOTES FROM

nation. There seems small doubt that the Germans believed, if worse came to worse, that by raising the old familiar cry of the " Slav Peril " the sympathy of the world would be immediately gained. But the reasoning of the diplomats has proved of no avail. The cry now falls upon deaf ears, because the world is just beginning to realize that the menace of the Slav is a gradually disappearing bogey. When the history of this war is written, it will be seen that the hour that the Kaiser had intended for the destruction of Russia proved in fact to be the hour in which she entered into her own among the modern nations of the world.

Ten years ago the misery and mortification of the disastrous war with Japan hung like a cloud over the whole of Russia. It was the privilege of the writer to be in Russia five times during the period embraced by that Russian national calamity. In Petersburg every form of civil and economic disorder was rampant. In the provinces riots and confusion of all sorts and descriptions abounded.

The Press of the world screamed aloud in letters six inches high, that the dissolution of the empire was at hand, that Russia would collapse ; and indeed nothing that could spell impending disaster was overlooked in the lurid reports of the observers in Russia. All over the land there were protest and unrest. Chaos and anarchy



## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

seemed the order of the day, and the outlook was gloomy indeed. As we look back now we can see that from that dismal period great good has come, for in the hour of gloom and disaster the ground was broken for the new and better Russia that just now is looming bigger and bigger before the world each day. Out of the darkness has come light, and from travail and agony has come the birth of a new spirit and a unity in Russia such as its centuries of history fail to record.

No doubt this seems effusive and exaggerated to English and American readers, who know of Russia only as a mysterious and traditional menace; but that this change is a definite and realized fact, no one who knew Russia ten years ago and sees it now can for a moment doubt. Perhaps the best means of illustrating the altered spirit in this war, and the spirit during and after the Russo-Japanese war, is by the narration of two incidents, pictures, as it were, of the heart of the Russian people ten years apart.

In January, 1905, after the fall of Port Arthur and the collapse of the Russian programme, rebellion against, and hostility towards, the Government were everywhere manifest. On the historic day of January 22, 1905, an army of peasants, bearing a monster petition, moved down the Nevsky Prospekt and on towards the Winter Palace to



## FIELD NOTES FROM

present their grievances to their monarch in person. They were met with machine guns and Cossacks, and in a few minutes the streets ran red with blood. For weeks there was martial law within this district, and by day and by night patrols of Cossacks could be seen riding up and down, patrolling the silent, snow-clad streets of Russia's greatest city. The Czar was threatened, and the Grand Duke Sergius was assassinated. Threats of all kinds of violence were openly made: many were carried out; and such a thing as unity in Russia was a dream.

Since those dreadful days a new leaven has been working throughout the whole empire, and slowly, subtly and unseen, the great forces of progress and new light have been working. This neither the Germans nor perhaps even the Russians themselves fully realized until the declaration of war with Germany, when overnight there crystallized a national spirit of unity such as few countries have ever seen. And on that day we have almost in the exact spot as the incident of January 22, 1905, another picture. Let the two be contrasted.

Before the Winter Palace, the great red home of the Czars, stretches an enormous semicircle, which forms one of the greatest arenas in Europe. This is what we see now: More than 100,000 people of all classes and of all ranks standing



## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

for hours in the blazing sun before the building within which is their monarch. Quietly and orderly they wait, without hysteria and with the patience so characteristic of their race. At last the Czar, moved by the magnitude of the demonstration, appears upon the balcony overlooking the square. Instantly the entire throng sinks upon its knees and with absolute spontaneity sings the deep-throated anthem of the Russian race. For perhaps the first time since Napoleon's invasion of Russia the people and their Czar were one, and the strength that unity spreads in a nation stirred throughout the empire, from the far fringes of the Pacific littoral to the German frontier.

The observer of a day might perhaps have said, "Ah, yes, 'tis ever so in war. But it will pass." Now the great thing, and the significant thing, is that the unity has not passed, but has grown steadily from that day. And its growth has not been at all of the spectacular kind, but of the deep and fundamental order which is expressed by millions and millions of humble individuals gladly giving their mite and making their sacrifices on the altar of the new nationalism that has swept the country.

Here in Petrograd one sees changes in sentiment that are almost incredible. The first night I arrived I wandered round to a favourite

## FIELD NOTES FROM

restaurant where on many previous visits I had taken my meals. The great dining-room was closed, and the brilliantly uniformed band that used to play was no more. The halls and corridors that ten years ago were filled with gay Russian officers were now abandoned. When I at last found the manager I asked him of the change. "Come with me," he said; "I will show you what the war means to us." Then he led me through a back corridor into the other bemirrored room where light and gaiety reigned of old till daylight. In the dim illumination of a few sprays of electric lights I recognized the former pleasure pavilion. All was dust and dirt, the hangings were gone and mirrors boarded up.

"What does it mean?" I asked curiously. The manager smiled, and turning out his palms deprecatingly answered, "War. It is because of the mobilization of our reservists. The morning after war was declared, comes here a policeman at eight in the morning and tells us that the Government occupies my dining-rooms at 8.30 for the mobilization of its troops. For many days they come here and take their arms and their uniforms. Now it is finished. They have all gone to the front—nine hundred from this room."

"But your business?" I asked. "It has



## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

been ruined. No doubt the Government paid you for your rooms?"

He turned sharply as he replied, "Paid? What for? It is our war, and each man must contribute what he can. We are all doing it, and gladly."

And this very same sort of business was going on, so he assured me, in ninety-five other halls and restaurants in Petrograd alone, and all done freely, gladly, and heartily.

"But how about the reservists themselves?" one naturally asks, as the mind brings back the stories of another mobilization ten years ago when the peasants were driven almost at the point of the bayonet into box cars for shipment to Manchuria. Ah! it's a different story now. From all Russia they have been hurrying eagerly to the colours without murmur and without regret. The women, from peasant to princess, send their husbands to the front, with tears to be sure, but with a willingness to serve that means national greatness in the years to come.

And with the striking of the hour has come other great changes in the method of doing things. From the lessons learned in years gone by has come experience. The war in Manchuria was entered into lightly, one might say even gaily, by the officers. How different in 1914! The day after the declaration of war, every vodka

## FIELD NOTES FROM

shop in the empire was closed by Imperial decree during the mobilization, and since then, the shut-down has been further extended for the duration of the war.

In a cold climate where the drinking of vodka and other strong drink was almost universal, the significance of this action is immense. From Siberia to the Baltic there is not a public house open, and, further, the order is enforced to the letter; and greater even than that, it is accepted patiently and without complaint by the entire population of the country. The result is that the army and the people are serious and sober as they face the task that has been imposed upon them. The day of rioting and dissipation at the front and in the capital is a thing of the past, and every man is taking up the responsibilities of the great struggle with a seriousness that one who has known Russia and the Russians before, can scarcely credit.

Here in Petrograd, which we have always known as the gayest of capitals, all is quiet and earnest to a degree. The restaurants and cafés that in the old days were barely awake for business till midnight, and were running until daylight, are now closed promptly at eleven. In the face of Russia's greatest war there is no room left even in the capital city for the fashionable customs of peace. Dress clothes in the evening have almost vanished even from the hotels, for, as one man





A Russian Airship near the German Lines.





## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

told me, "No one thinks now of dress or appearances. Russia is taking her task too seriously for that." In the streets the splendid uniforms of the various regiments of the Russian army have given place to simple khaki tunics, with little and unobtrusive insignia of rank to distinguish the general from the youngest subaltern.

In London we should never have known that there was a great war on foot, but here one sees manifestations of it everywhere. Nearly all the great squares are filled with troops of the reserves, drilling and marching and counter-marching. Many of these have not even yet had uniforms issued, and in some of these companies every other man is clad in his ordinary suit, with only a belt and military cap to distinguish him from the peaceful citizen of yesterday. Long lines of carts bearing ammunition, with a soldier sitting on each wagon, file through the Nevsky Prospekt which but a month ago was one of the world's greatest avenues of pleasure. Yesterday I noticed a great siege train of artillery passing through the great area before the Winter Palace. Huge guns of position they were, freshly painted in their sombre coats of grey, and looking horribly evil as they were moved slowly from the arsenal to the station whence they are going to the front.

What a contrast it seemed! These silent, cynical-looking engines of destruction, that in

## FIELD NOTES FROM

another fortnight will be launching shells against a human wall, seemed strangely out of place as they slowly moved past the gilded gates of the giant edifice over which now floats the eagles of the Czar of all the Russias. Even now the streets are full of soldiers, clad in their campaign clothes, with set faces and determined eyes; and yet I am told that the mobilization is all but completed, and that what we see to-day is but a small fraction of the troops that swarmed in the streets a month ago. Truly, were the enemy to spend a day in Petrograd, or any other Russian city, he might well shudder at the tide that has been let loose, and tremble at the prospect of final conclusions with an empire of 170,000,000 people, that steadily, earnestly, and with set purpose, is putting its entire soul and its whole intelligence and thought into the struggle that is just now barely under way. No one who stays here long can doubt that Russia is in this war to win, aye, even if it takes ten years. The Germans have sown the whirlwind, and one recoils at the outcome that they must eventually face, when the arbitrament of the sword has reached its final conclusion.

That this war is a war of the people of Russia, and not one of any faction or party, is obvious to the most casual observer who takes the trouble to question people he meets, from cabdriver to



## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

noble. I have talked with many during the past week, and so far have heard no word of protest or dissent. With patient unanimity they accept the war, with all its sacrifices and ghastly losses. It is not known here definitely what price is being paid in the field, but that it is large goes without saying. Each day there is posted in the immense outer chamber of the offices of the General Staff a list of the casualties, and each day anxious inquirers for dear ones at the "front" assemble there.

I have seen dead and wounded in previous campaigns, and for weeks at Port Arthur watched the daily procession of stretcher-bearers going to the rear. Later, for three weeks in a field hospital in Manchuria I saw the dismal aftermath of war, and the patient acceptance of the fate of mangled limbs and shattered bodies that shell and shot had meted out. But in pathos and appeal to human sympathy, all this was nothing compared with the scene that one sees daily in the places throughout Russia where the list of the fallen is posted. Great crowds of women gather daily to scan these lists, and it is a heartrending sight to watch the faces of the tide going in and coming out. Peasant women with shawls over their heads jostle and crowd their sisters who have come in carriages. As they go in, one reads the great question in the haggard eyes of each, and as they come out the answer requires

## FIELD NOTES FROM

no interpretation. You see them with trembling hands turning over the huge sheets of the lists. Some who fail to read the name of husband, son, or sweetheart, turn away with sighs of relief; but hardly a minute passes that some poor soul does not receive the wound that spells a life of loneliness or an old age bereft of a son.

I paused but for a moment within this dismal chamber, where even gilded aides move softly and respectfully as in the presence of death. But in this brief moment two faces stand clearly in my memory. One, a peasant woman with shawl fallen about her shoulders, her face dead white, her eyes in barren vacancy staring into space as she reeled against the wall. No sob, no sound was there to indicate that the iron had entered into her soul; but the tragedy of a life still to be led, with none to share the responsibilities of poverty, was written in letters that none could fail to read. Like one walking in sleep, she moved slowly across the room, her eyes blind to the respectful sympathy that made a pathway towards the door; and thus she passed out and away to take up her burdens and her lonely life.

My eyes turned from her to another picture. In the antechamber is a small table where an orderly generally sits. Now he stands respectfully by while in his chair there sits a young woman. Her neatly-cut garments and smart fur collar speak of her better





Russian Infantry on the March.





## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

position in life. She, too, has made her offering on the altar of the nation's life. Too proud to show her feelings, she has almost without visible sign, read her fate within those ghastly columns, and has reached the door only to sink into the chair. I saw her but for an instant and turned hastily away, but the picture remains ineffaceable. With head resting on the blotter, and hands clasped tightly beneath her small white forehead, she sat ; deep, gasping sobs shaking her small girlish body through and through. And as she sobs her costly fur slips from her slender shoulders to the floor, and the great rough soldier, picking it up, gently places it about her neck. With an effort she stands up, speaks a courteous word to the gentle soldier, and then she too passes through the throng and is gone. Who is it she mourns, one wonders? Sweetheart or young husband, probably, who but a few short days ago left her in the prime and beauty of manhood and who to-day sleeps in a far-away grave, with hundreds of others of his race and kind.

And yet through it all one hears no murmur of complaint and no vain regrets. It is " their war," and cost what it may, and be the sacrifices never so great, they will give and continue to give. And in all this spirit one cannot but read the signs of a new future for Russia. For nothing can be truer than this—the greatness of a

## FIELD NOTES FROM THE RUSSIAN FRONT

nation's future is established in the direct ratio in which its units, humblest peasant and highest noble alike, are willing to make the supreme sacrifice for a national ideal. And when any people are united in such an ideal their triumph is assured.

Now one sees and feels the tragedy of it all, a pathetic chaos of blood and human misery ; but beyond and above, one feels the conviction growing that from it is to come a new and greater Russia, a nation united by storm and stress, a country whose new progressive spirit will utterly destroy the tradition of the Slav peril.



A DAY WITH THE GENERAL STAFF

A DAY WITH THE GENERAL STAFF



## CHAPTER II

### A DAY WITH THE GENERAL STAFF

RUSSIAN HEADQUARTERS,

*October 11, 1914.*

THERE is no romance about modern war. The picturesque features, which formerly were so much beloved of the journalist and so valuable to him as copy, are rapidly disappearing. The headquarters of a great army during important actions is supposed to be a place alive with galloping aides and vibrant with excitement. One likes to picture the commanding General haggard and worn, leaning over his map-strewn table; while muddy aides within, and panting horses without, await his bidding, to accompaniment of the roar of cannon and the crackle of musketry. But these days are entirely of the past. War is now a huge business enterprise, and the presiding genius is no more apt to go to the firing line, than the chairman of a railway company is likely to put on blue overalls and take his place on an engine.

## FIELD NOTES FROM

Here in Russia, under the command of a single individual, there is assembled the largest army that has ever been mustered in the field of war, and one beside which the Persian expedition into Greece conducted by Xerxes fades to a mere reconnaissance. All the huge and complicated mechanism of this gigantic organization centres in one secluded spot on the plains of Western Russia. It is a lovely country, and but for the variation of architecture and the difference in the population, one might easily imagine oneself in Western Canada. In a grove of poplar and small pine, a number of switches connecting with the main line of a certain railway have been laid, and here in railway carriages, living, quietly and peacefully, the group of a hundred or more men who compose the General Staff. A few panting automobiles dashing here and there, and a couple of hundred Cossacks, are apparently the only additions to the ordinary life of the village which is the nearest regular station on the railway.

Beyond, and hundreds of miles from this scene of tranquillity, extends the enormous chain of the Russian front, every point of which is connected with this train of carriages by the telegraph. Here, detached and with minds free from the hurly-burly and confusion of the struggle, the brains of the army are able to command a per-



## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

spective of the whole theatre of war which a nearer position might utterly destroy.

The small group of correspondents whom the General Staff have permitted to join the army, were first taken to this rather remarkable headquarters. Here we were received by the Chief of Staff, who met us in his saloon carriage, and for half an hour pointed out what was expected of the journalists and what was forbidden. The point of view expressed is a perfectly simple one. The value of publicity and the approval of public opinion is not in the least overlooked, but it is perhaps considered to be a prospective one. The danger, however, of the functions of the Press is a very real one, and the results, if unfavourable, are immediate. Here in Russia they are grappling with the most serious problem in their history. An unwise word or the revealing of a critical situation, even if involuntarily and by induction, might result in the most disastrous consequences. In modern war, where the wireless and the telegraph play such important parts, it takes only a few hours from the handing in of a journalist's message until it may be in the hands of the enemy for his guidance, and perhaps help, though this is the last thing that the writer imagined when he wrote his dispatch. Where so much hinges on the outcome, and millions of lives are at stake, there

## FIELD NOTES FROM

is no margin for the war correspondent ; and it is perhaps safe to say that this will be the last war where even such an innocuous party as ours will be allowed to move about the field of operations.

The Chief of Staff, whose name is not to be mentioned in our letters, although it is perfectly well known both in Petrograd and England, outlined to us exactly what we could do and why we could not do more. For the present, at least, we are not going to run any risk of being shot by German expert riflemen. His reasons for the policy enforced, though disappointing to us, were none the less convincing in their logic. The gentleman who gave us this little talk, impressed me as one of the ablest soldiers intellectually that I have ever met. Keen, shrewd, restrained, and well-poised, he strikes one as quite the ideal of a strategist and organizer. How much he has had to do with the planning of the campaign I cannot say, but that he has been the centre of the web of strategy and reorganization is the generally-expressed opinion in Russia. In any event, if ever I saw a man who impressed me as being quite able to do this kind of work effectively and efficiently, it is this Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Army.

After he had talked to us we were presented to the Grand Duke, who, under the Czar, is in



## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

supreme command of all the armies of Russia. He is a huge man of certainly 6 ft. 4 in., and impresses one greatly by his absolute lack of affectation and his simplicity. He spoke rapidly to us in much the same vein as his lieutenant, and as he did so one got the impression of a shyness and diffidence which was entirely pleasing. His dress and mien were as simple as that of any of his numerous aides. His expression was that of a serious, sober man giving his entire thought and effort to a task the importance of which he thoroughly realized. This, then, is the supreme head of an army which is nearly ten times the size of the Grand Army that Napoleon led across the Niemen a little over a hundred years ago.

After meeting these two interesting individuals, we were taken over to the Staff dining-room, in one of the dining-carriages that has been snatched from the *de luxe* service of the Imperial railways to serve as a restaurant for the officers of the Staff, and entertained to luncheon, and later to dinner. The carriage itself was formerly on the line between the Russian frontier and Petrograd, and was attached to the Nord Express, the train we used to travel by from Berlin to the Russian capital. Now, all the signs of tourist travel are gone, and the walls are hung everywhere with war maps and general orders of the

## FIELD NOTES FROM

Staff; while the tables where the travelling public used casually to dine are now crowded three times a day with officers of every arm of the service, each intent on hurrying through his meal and taking up the task that absorbs every waking hour.

Perhaps the most significant thing here is the simplicity in which all are living. The show and dash and display that one often imagines as pertaining to the Headquarters of a Staff are here entirely absent. I have already spoken of the absence of display in the uniforms of great officers. There are three Grand Dukes in the party, and all but the Generalissimo himself live exactly like the rest of the Staff, wandering into the dining-carriage for their meals and mixing equally with lieutenants and general, neither exacting nor receiving any more recognition than officers of inferior rank.

Though Russia is an autocracy, there is more social and civil equality in it than in any country I know, and the greatest men in position are the most democratic in action. As long as one does not meddle in politics, one can do exactly what one pleases without the slightest objection from any one else. The nobility are far more democratic than American millionaires, and are received, here at least, with far less ostentation than is exacted by the *nouveaux riches* of Eng-



## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

land and America from their subordinates. The fare is simple, and the order forbidding strong drink is applied to these Staff officers with the same emphasis as to the peasant or to the cab-driver of Petrograd. Vodka, champagne, and the liqueurs that have always been so dear to the heart of the Russian gentleman, have utterly disappeared, and the Grand Duke himself permits on his own table nothing stronger than claret or white wine. When the men at the very top of the organization deny themselves the refreshment of alcohol, it is perfectly obvious that no one else in the army is getting any; and I think it may be taken as a positive fact that there was never a more clear-headed or more sober army in the field than that which is now facing the hordes of the Teutons at this present moment.





WHAT THE RUSSIANS ARE DOING  
IN THEIR HOSPITALS

WHAT THE RESISTANCE ARE DOING  
IN THE HOSPITALS



CHAPTER III

WHAT THE RUSSIANS ARE DOING IN  
THEIR HOSPITALS

ROVNO, RUSSIA,

*October 12, 1914.*

NOT the least interesting aspect of the war here is the manner and efficiency with which the Russians are taking care of their wounded. Probably no greater or more sudden strain was ever thrown upon the medical department of an army, than fell to the Russians immediately after operations began against Austria. Not only were they called upon to look after their own stricken, but to as great an extent they were obliged to care for and treat the tens of thousands of the enemy's wounded that fell into their hands. Here at Rovno is one of the big hospital bases, and here for weeks could be seen the great multitude of the wounded that is the price of victories gained as well as of defeats. Eight huge barracks have been remodelled into hospitals, in addition to

## FIELD NOTES FROM

one large establishment operated by the Red Cross of Russia. The management of hospitals in time of war is always significant of the general efficiency of any army in its organization, and often one finds this branch of the service far less prepared to exercise its important functions than the other portions of an army in the field.

The most significant aspect to me was the obvious democracy of the whole management. But for our guide's statement to us from time to time, it would have been impossible to tell when we were in the officers' wards and when in those of the private soldiers. All have the same equipment in beds, blankets, etc., and all are apparently treated exactly the same by the Sisters of Mercy who nurse them.

Each one of these huge establishments that we visited was as complete in equipment, though not perhaps so luxurious, as a city hospital. Operating rooms, pharmacies, rooms for the X-ray apparatus, and, in fact, all the auxiliaries of the modern plant were in evidence. That the work done by these hospitals is effective is best indicated by the percentage of deaths resulting from wounds after the hospitals have been reached. In one hospital I was informed by the doctor in charge that more than 2,600 patients had been received, and of these there had been only forty-





Russian Wounded at a Base Hospital in Poland.





## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

two deaths. In another of smaller size, 300 patients had been accepted from the front and eighteen deaths had been recorded. This evidence indicates pretty clearly that the modern rifle bullet, unless it kills outright, inflicts a wound from which the soldier has more than a fair chance of recovering completely.

As one wanders about these limitless wards of the stricken, one is increasingly impressed with what the human being can stand and yet, with modern medical treatment, recover from. So delicate is the human body that it seems incredible that it can stand such dreadful usage and still recuperate and eventually be as good as new. One man that we saw had been shot through the head. The wound was clean and in two weeks he was nearly well, and obligingly walked about the room and smiled cheerfully to prove to us that he was a perfectly "good" man once more. Others shot through the stomach, bladder, lungs, and, in fact, almost all parts which were considered vital twenty years ago, were recovering as easily as though to be shot were a part of the ordinary man's day of work.

Here among the wounded were a number of Austrians and Germans who had been captured, and in each case they seemed cheerful and well satisfied with their treatment. One young German, who told me he belonged to the 25th Regi-

## FIELD NOTES FROM

ment of the German line and came from Pilsen, was very enthusiastic in praise of the Russians for their kindness. His regiment in a certain operation, he informed me, had been kept in an exposed position after all ammunition was exhausted, and had finally been dislodged by a Russian assault, and while retiring he was shot through the bladder. He was picked up within a few minutes by the Russian first-aid, received immediate treatment, and is now on the high road to recovery. He seemed secretly relieved to be safely out of the firing line, and his only anxiety was to communicate his situation to friends at home. An Austrian soldier spoke in much the same strain.

One rather interesting case was that of one of the Austrian doctors who were captured in the fighting around Lemberg. He was at once taken to the hospital and installed there as a surgeon and placed on a salary and footing identical with his Russian colleagues. In no case does one hear of any complaint as to cruelty, or even roughness, on the field of battle. The faces of the men and their general condition and fare make it unnecessary to inquire as to their treatment while in the hospital itself. Thousands of men have been received from the hospital trains in this town alone ; but already, scarcely a month after the first flood of war's effects



## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

struck them, the hospitals are manifestly becoming sparsely populated. Thousands have recovered entirely, and others have improved sufficiently to return to their homes, while more have been sent into the interior of Russia and widely distributed for further treatment. With the experience of the first weeks of the war to stiffen them up, each of these organizations is now a perfectly trained medical institution, and it is clear that when the next great battle comes, the wounded will receive even more adequate and successful treatment than the first batch got.

The Red Cross hospital here is in charge of one of the Grand Duchesses, the sister of the Czar, who every day ministers in person to the wants of the wounded, private and officer alike. And here as in the General Staff all is absolutely democratic. The Grand Duchess dresses exactly like her more humble sisters, and performs all the tasks that the others do. In fact not one soldier in ten knows that he has met the sister of the Czar in the kindly attendant who has waited on him each day. It is this aspect of simplicity and democracy among the high-born that is most significant for strangers.

One feature which impresses one strongly in going through the hospitals is the comparatively rare cases of amputations that are necessary, and the few cripples that are left to drag out

## FIELD NOTES FROM

their lives in misery. The modern bullet usually either kills, or makes a wound from which ultimate complete recovery is quite possible. With the exception of shell wounds, and cases where treatment has not been available till too late and blood-poisoning has set in, there is small need for amputation.

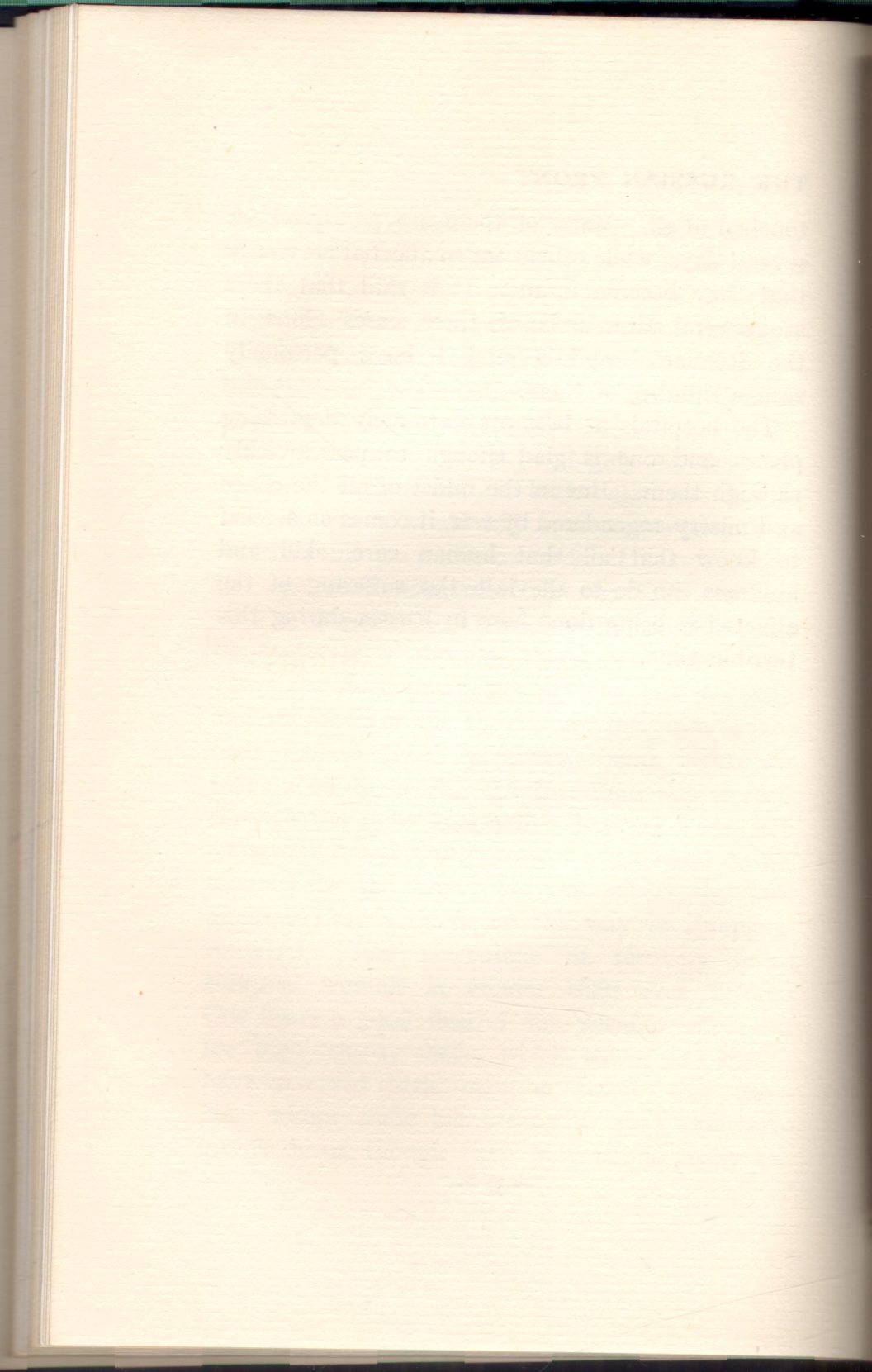
The Russian soldier is not highly nervous, and hence I believe he is little apt to die of wounds which would kill a more sensitive man merely from the nervous shock. I have in mind the case of a man who was struck in the face with a fragment of an exploding shell. From his eyebrows to the ears there was nothing left. There remained practically nothing but the skull and the back of the throat, yet this unfortunate man actually lived for twelve hours before he succumbed to death. Another man was pierced through the right lung with a bayonet which left an aperture sufficiently large for the hand to be inserted to the wrist; yet this soldier, by last accounts, was actually on the way to complete recovery. The percentage of recovery from shrapnel wounds is greater than ever before. One hears a good deal of the peculiar effect of the high-velocity shells, which, as far as I know, have received little mention before this war. Men whom these big projectiles pass near are struck down, though they may not actually be



## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

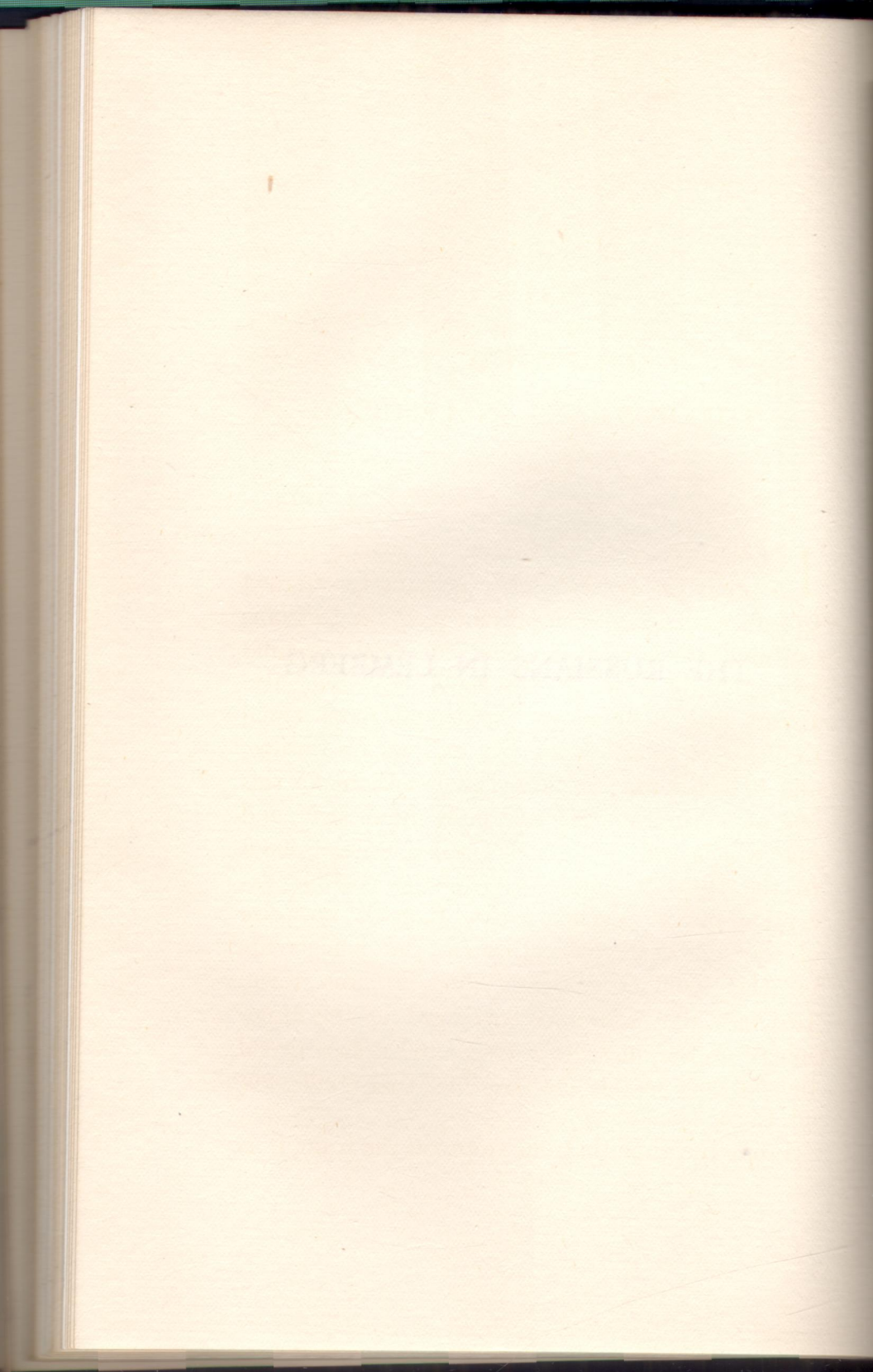
touched at all. Many of them are paralysed for several days, while others are so affected nervously that they become insane. It is said that there are several thousands of these cases alone in the Russian hospitals, and I have personally seen a number of them.

The hospitals at best are extremely depressing places, and one is glad enough to pass quickly through them. But in the midst of all the chaos and misery engendered by war, it comes as a relief to know that all that human care, skill and kindness can do to alleviate the suffering of the afflicted is being done here in Russia during this terrible time.





THE RUSSIANS IN LEMBERG





## CHAPTER IV

### THE RUSSIANS IN LEMBERG

LEMBERG, GALICIA,  
*October 14, 1914.*

LEMBERG is so off the line of general travel, that the general public perhaps have failed to realize what a very important prize the Russians captured when they defeated the Austrians and triumphantly entered this most beautiful city. Broad streets, numerous parks, and shops equal to those of most of the big capitals of Europe, and half a dozen big first-class hotels, make this one of the most attractive cities in Austria, and one which will doubtlessly prove a great asset to the Russian Empire. With the possible exception of the Belgian cities, there is no prize of war taken by any other of the belligerents in this conflict so far, equal to this town. Just now the whole city is steeped in the atmosphere of war, and every street and corner reveal the presence of the ghastly cloud that trails over all Europe.

From the time that one steps off the train, it is

## FIELD NOTES FROM

impossible to forget for a moment that one is in the zone of active operations. The huge Imperial station, over whose main portal is emblazoned the name of Franz Joseph, is entirely in charge of the military. The instant one arrives, one is greeted by the Russian police with requests for information as to one's business here, and if some good evidence is not presented forthwith one never gets out of the station at all. In fact I do not think any person without a military permit can either get in or out of this place at present. The station itself is a huge structure, and is now filled with soldiers.

We arrived at three in the morning. The great waiting-room was packed with sleeping soldiers, while the dim light revealed the various baggage-rooms crammed with scores of coated figures sleeping beside their stacked rifles. The first-class dining-room is a hospital, and filled to the doors with stretchers and cots on which the wounded are waiting to be transferred from one train to another, or else to be removed to one of the local hospitals in the town. From the second-class waiting-room all benches have been removed, and there only remains one big table, used for hurried operations that cannot be delayed. At every door and in every passage sentries stand with fixed bayonets, and he would be a clever correspondent indeed who ever got





“Times” Correspondents’ Car in Difficulties : Austrian Prisoners help to Rescue Car.





## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

half-way through this edifice without being arrested, not to mention the difficulties that would await him without.

There is just one spot in all the building that is not used now for military purposes, the palatial room reserved for His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary when he deigns to visit his city of Lemberg. The Colonel in charge of the station kindly showed us this apartment, and the incongruity of it all made one shudder a little. On the track before it stood a Red Cross train which had just brought wounded in from the front. The whole platform was alive with soldiers. We stepped out of this chaos of human activities into a darkened room. An obliging orderly switched on some electric lights, and we found ourselves in a suite equal in every way to the Emperor's private apartments in his own palace. Heavy carpets, richly tapestried walls, daintily concealed electric lights, and rich and heavy furniture, completed as luxurious an apartment as any potentate could desire. A hundred feet away beyond the partition lay the soiled and dingy figures of the wounded—the men who pay the price of empire.

Every street in the town is dotted with Russian soldiers, while Cossacks on their shaggy little ponies are riding about in every direction. Transport carts, wagons bearing wounded prisoners,

## FIELD NOTES FROM

strings of cattle driven by Cossacks, and in fact every other form of military activity, abound.

The people of the place seem little disturbed by the hordes that have suddenly come to dwell among them, and every one seems to be taking the Russian occupation quite easily. There is little doubt that the incoming army has been in excellent restraint from the day it entered; and even the factions of the community most opposed to the Russian sway, admit grudgingly that the army has behaved extremely well, and that the troops have at all times been under perfect control. Considering that the Russians entered this town after desperate fighting that took place only a few miles away, it speaks very well for their restraint, in the first flush of victory after heavy losses, that their entrance was marked by no abuses of any sort whatsoever. From all the people that I have talked with I hear the same story. Even without this it is perfectly obvious, from the friendly way in which troops and population fraternize in the streets, that there has been no cause of complaint here.

There is, however, a good deal of sympathy for the Austrian prisoners, and I witnessed a scene this afternoon which made this quite clear. Down the street came a handful of Cossacks driving before them a flock of weary Austrian prisoners,





Austrian Prisoners by the Railway.





## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

perhaps three hundred in all. The Cossacks were riding among them in all directions, like cow-punchers herding cattle. Crowds of the inhabitants ran alongside, handing the sadly haggard, blue-clad Austrians apples and bits of bread; I saw also one well-dressed man, in a bowler hat, shove himself under the very nose of a Cossack pony and dump the entire contents of a well-filled and monogramed cigar-case into the hands of the outstretched soldiers. Women from windows threw down bread and bits of food, which the Austrians struggled for as hens scramble for a few crumbs thrown them by their feeder.

The Austrians strike one as a very sad and gloomy-looking lot. Most of the men look sickly and delicate, and nearly all the prisoners and wounded look weakly and undersized. It is hard to believe that any of those that I have seen have had any heart or interest in the present campaign. It is certain that many of them do not care at all for their cause, if indeed they know anything of what the war is about. One thing that impresses one very curiously, is the considerable number of Red Cross Austrian prisoners to be seen about the town. None of these appear to be under any restraint, and you see them walking about the streets saluting the Russian officers as respectfully as they would their own; and they

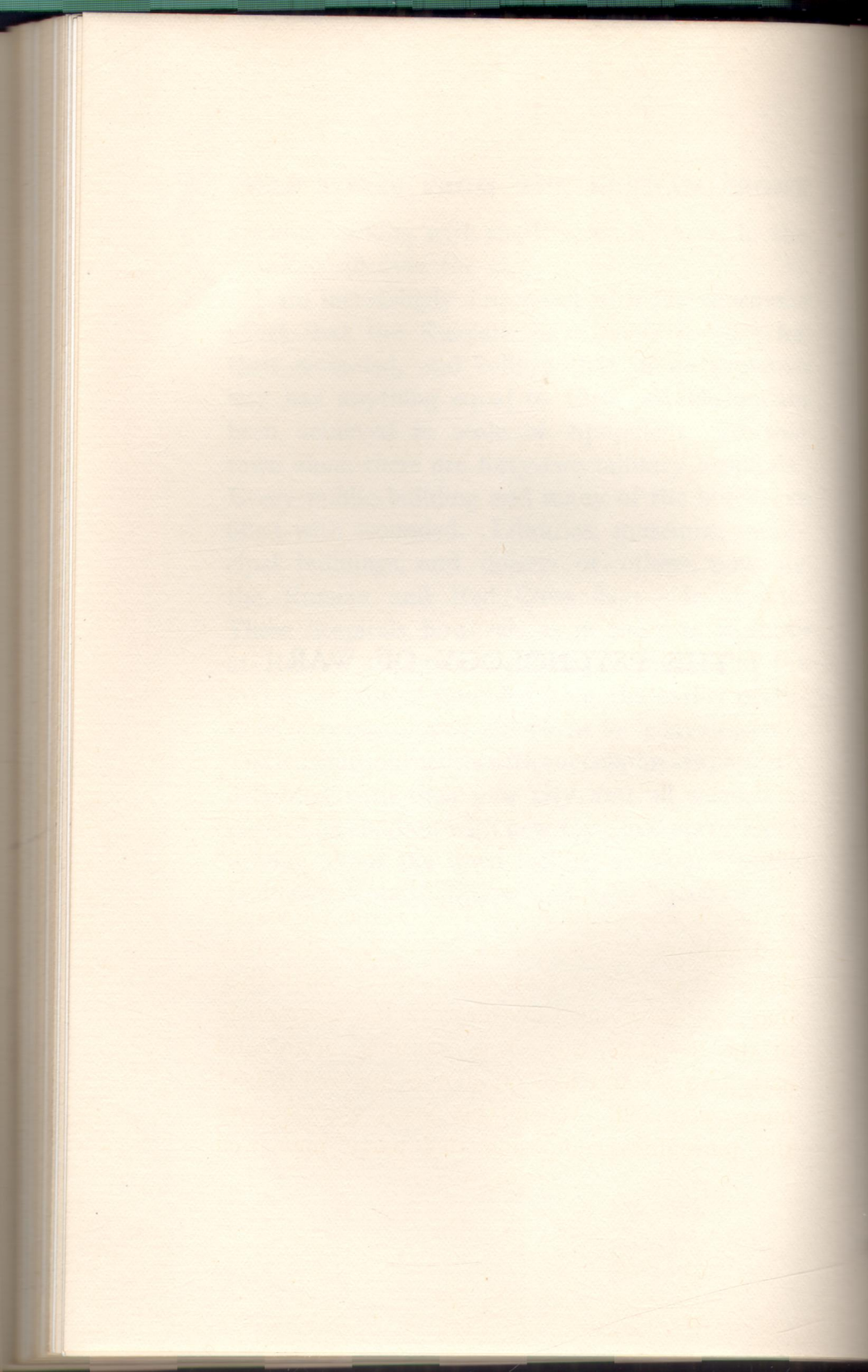
## FIELD NOTES FROM THE RUSSIAN FRONT

are also working with the Russian surgeons in the hospitals all over the city.

I am increasingly impressed with the enormous effort that the Russians have made to care for their wounded, and believe that in no previous war has anything equal to their establishments been achieved in scale or equipment. In this town alone there are forty-two military hospitals. Every public building and many of the hotels are filled with wounded. Libraries, museums, municipal buildings, and dozens of others, now fly the Russian and Red Cross flags side by side. These hospitals, however, as in the case of those at Rovno, are gradually being emptied, and the first great crop of wounded from the earlier operations is being moved elsewhere for convalescence. The Russian journalists with our column are perfectly delighted with their new city, and all seemed as pleased as children with new toys, and spent a day driving about the town looking at "our" public buildings, "our" station, and "our" parks.



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WAR





## CHAPTER V

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WAR

LEMBERG, GALICIA,

*October 15, 1914.*

AS a preliminary to seeing actual war itself, we are being given an excellent opportunity to study its effects. Possibly the Russian authorities hope that if they show us enough of the human wrecks that war has created, we shall lose our present strong desire to get to the front and that we shall all go peacefully home and forget that we ever asked to be led to the firing line. The one phase of the hideous game that all who have ever experienced it try to avoid, is the aftermath of it all, and this is the particular and only aspect that we are seeing now day after day. In any event, be the motives what they may, we are living these days in the atmosphere of the hospitals, and every morning, bright and early, we go and look at a new one and inspect more wounded. When this great war is over the journalists composing this party may well

## FIELD NOTES FROM

consider themselves something of experts on military hospitals and wounded soldiers.

The incongruity of the whole game of war strikes one particularly in the hospitals. In the army we have two classes of men, both extremely clever. The one devotes its time exclusively to devising ways and means of shattering and annihilating its fellow-men ; and the other, with equal diligence, plans and studies how it may save the victims that the first class has provided for its attention and expert services. Everywhere we see the two classes mingling—the soldier and the doctor. The man who destroys and the man who repairs. The general comes to the hospital and admires the doctor, and the latter, when free, goes to the front and congratulates the soldier.

On the road the same curious aspect of these two classes presents itself. One passes a battery, for instance, moving into action. Here it goes clinking and clanking to the front with its eight dangerous-looking guns with the neat leather caps over the iron lips ; the whole reminds one of the dangerous dog that is muzzled lest it bite the unfortunate stranger who encroaches on its presence. With the guns go the long string of caissons, each loaded with its death-dealing shrapnel cartridges that the careful inventor has designed in the hope that each may realize





A Russian Grave in Galicia.





## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

its theoretical efficiency, and destroy dozens of human lives. Even the fragments of the shell, it is anticipated, will kill and mangle at least a few soldiers. The men that minister to the wants of the iron monster are all trained and drilled with the one aim to make their charge as murderous as possible. We see the battery pass, its every feature pregnant with intended death and destruction, its every attendant eagerly anxious to make its mission successful in the highest degree.

Just behind comes a Red Cross train, wagon after wagon. Each is loaded to the breaking point with chests of medicine, surgeons' implements, cots, tents for the field hospitals, and operating tables for the wounded. Here are men whose sole object is to save and repair. Perhaps this very day, perhaps in an hour, the guns will be in action. By nightfall in some wood yonder there may be hundreds of the enemy dead and mangled. The guns are now silent after a successful action. The gunners, the day's work done, are sitting about in their positions chatting merrily, or playing about with each other like overgrown boys. Their shelling has been successful and their officers have congratulated them on their excellent practice. It has been a good day for them.

In their quiet hour of complacent rejoicings over a good day's work, the Red Cross men

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who came just behind them on the road to-day are over in the wood or field, picking up the wounded of the enemy that their brothers with the guns have just laid low. The hospital tents have been erected, the operating tables have been polished, and the surgeon, now in white apron and with rolled-up sleeves, is doing his best to repair the wastage of the morning. Perhaps a particular shell has fallen well in the fight—so well that the officer in charge of the battery has rubbed his hands gleefully at the excellence of his ranging. No doubt at this very moment he is relating to his pals in the mess how he dropped one in the very angle of a trench, which he picked out with his high-power binoculars, and is describing the confusion created. At the same moment a tired surgeon and two haggard, white-faced, blood-stained nurses are probing for the shell fragments that have lodged in some torn and lacerated human body.

When the work is all over, no doubt the surgeon meets the battery commander, and listens appreciatively to the tale of the effective artillery fire of the morning skirmish; while in his turn the man of the guns attends sympathetically to the tale of the Red Cross man who describes how by a delicate operation he has saved a man with a shrapnel ball in his brain. Each congratulates the other, and both go to bed rejoicing in a suc-





Austrian Grave in the Trenches (Galicia).





## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

cessful day's work. Truly war is a strange game, and the psychology that it breeds puzzles one not a little.

The hospital that we visited this morning is without doubt the best military establishment that I have ever been through. It was complete to the last detail, clean as a new pin, and would have done credit to any up-to-date city as a municipal institution. I talked with many of the wounded, and all seemed as contented as possible under the unfortunate conditions. But even taken at best, military hospitals are dismal places. Here we see, in hundreds and thousands, the men who pay the price of war. It is dreadful to contemplate the responsibility of the individuals who have precipitated this terrible disaster. Surely if the statesmen of Germany who so blithely entered into this war could see the suffering that their mistakes in diplomacy have scattered all over Europe, their nights would be sleepless or troubled for many years to come.

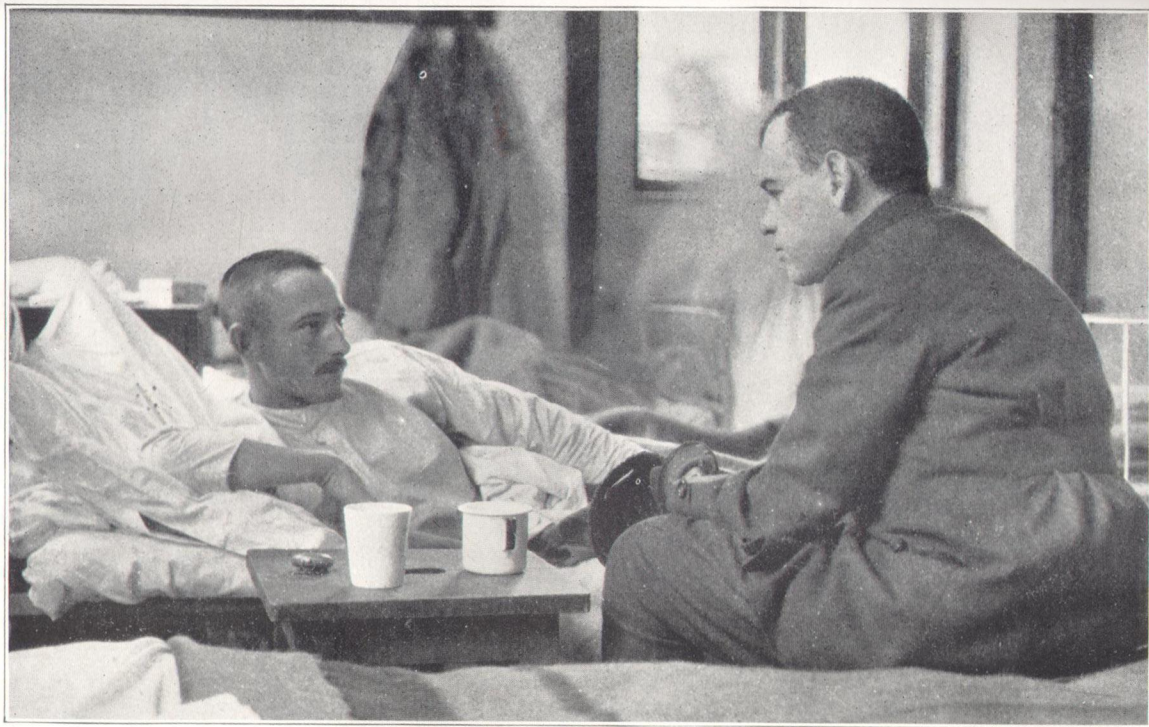
I am daily more and more impressed with the complacency with which the Russian soldiers accept their lot. There is no doubt that they have been deeply stirred by this war, and though they bemoan the misery that it has brought, nearly all seem to accept it as something that had to happen. It is certain that they hate the Germans and are fighting not unwillingly, but

## FIELD NOTES FROM

the case of the Austrians is quite different.

This morning I talked with a young Austrian reservist who has been lying now for weeks with a desperate wound through the body. I asked him if the war was popular in his country. He told me his pathetic story with tears in his eyes. He was a carpenter living near Prague. On the 25th of July he was called to the colours without even knowing what the war was about, and caring less when he did learn. "I left my wife and children weeks ago," he said, "without any warning. They had no money. Since then I have not heard a word from them, and have no idea what has happened to them or how they are managing to live at all without me. Why is it? I am an innocent man. I have no dislike of the Russians. They are a very friendly people. Yet we are still called away from our families and sent over here to attack men whom we have nothing whatever against. All the men in my regiment who came as reservists feel as I do about it, that is, all that are left. Many have been killed. We were sent forward after being told by our officers that we were marching against a thousand Russians, and we found fifteen thousand instead of one. I was shot through the back as we were withdrawing. After I fell into the hands of the Russians, everything was easy for me. I am quite satisfied here. They are very kind and





Stanley Washburn talking with a wounded Austrian.





## THE RUSSIAN FRONT

the nurses are very good to us. But always and always I am worrying about my wife and my children. Not a word since I left. How can they live with nothing?" And as he spoke, his brown eyes filled, and turning his face to the wall he wept softly. In Austria to-day there are thousands of similar cases, and every one of the forty-two hospitals here are filled with the same type of prisoner.

The longer I remain in this town the more impressed am I with the order and peace that prevail. Every one is off the streets by ten, and the bulk of the population seems perfectly indifferent to the change of masters. Even the Austrians here are not particularly hostile to Russia, and one of the anomalies of the situation is that the new regime has retained many Austrian policemen to preserve order in the town, pending the arrival of officials who will eventually come from Russia to take their places.

