

Crowded Belgium



Belgium's "Rovers" Work for Their Living.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

No country injured by the World war set about more earnestly to achieve reconstruction than Belgium, the one which suffered most cruelly and dramatically from the conflict. Though the damage done to the country through property destroyed, pillage and financial exactions by the Germans reached the tremendous sum of 30 billions of francs according to the estimate of the Belgium Comité Central Industriel, the people, with characteristic industry and thrift, took up the heavy task of reconstituting their country's industrial life as soon as the armistice had been signed. By the beginning of 1920 they had made such great strides that, with the exception of the steel and glass industries, production averaged three-quarters or more of pre-war production; the coal output had even reached 94 per cent and the refined sugar output 100 per cent.

But the post-war reaction which struck the United States and other countries in 1920 affected Belgium, too; and since the spring of that year Belgium has had its share of depression, closed and part-time factories and unemployment. The drought which affected many parts of the northern hemisphere has been felt in Belgium, with the result that harvests are less and food prices higher. Where the price index of living costs was 100 in 1914 it was 477 in October, 1920, and had reached only to 384 in August, 1921. But the adverse economic forces in operation since early in 1920 have caused suffering even in countries not involved in the World war; and to understand that Belgium, in spite of present trials, is in a fair way to outstrip the other war-torn countries in the return to normal, it is only necessary to consider conditions in the little kingdom before the war broke in upon it.

Its Population Is Dense.

The Belgium of today has an area less than one-fourth as great as Mississippi, and yet it has four times the population of that state. Twenty-two and a half countries like Belgium would be required to make a state like Texas, and if Texas were as densely populated as Belgium it would have as many people as the United States and Germany together now possess. If the entire United States had as many people to the square mile as Belgium—that is, continental United States, exclusive of Alaska—we would have more people here than there are in the entire world today. You could concentrate all the people of the seven seas and of all the continents here and still have room for enough more to repopulate the continent of Europe as it now stands.

It must follow from this that such a vast population, living within such narrow confines—7,579,000 souls within an area of 11,373 square miles—must be a frugal people, accustomed to self-denial, skilled in the art of economical living, and masters of the science of intensive industry; yet with all this density of population, with all the exactions of forced economy, they are a people who had so ordered their relations with one another and with their government that happiness and contentment seemed to dwell with them as with but few other peoples, and this in spite of diverse descent and diverse tongues.

Two Distinct Peoples.

Within Belgium's small territory—smaller in area than Massachusetts and Connecticut—there are nearly three million Flemings who cannot talk with their compatriot Walloons, and about as many Walloons who cannot hold converse with their countrymen Flemings. In their habits of mind and their methods of gaining a livelihood the two peoples differ as widely as the English and the French, and in their speech they are as different as the Germans and the Scandinavians; and yet there is a tie that has bound them together for generations, with never a fratricidal war in their modern history. That tie is the bond of religion, for they all subscribe to the doctrines of the Church of Rome with a heartiness that makes them one of the best-loved peoples of the Holy See.

Their tongues are Flemish and

French, and only 10 per cent of the people can speak both. The Flemish influence never crossed the Meuse river toward the east, and the Walloon influence reached but a short distance toward the west from that beautiful valley. The line of demarcation between the two peoples is rather sharply marked.

There is a physical difference between the Walloons of eastern Belgium and the Flemings of western Belgium, just as there is a difference of tongue and stock. The Walloons are of stouter build and greater stature, and are dark where the Flemings are fair, thus bespeaking the mingling of Spanish blood. On the other hand the Flemings are the more industrious of the two peoples, and their women are said to be able to prepare the best meals out of the fewest things of almost any race in the world.

Living was cheap in pre-war Belgium. The people had thoroughly mastered the art of intensive farming, and the land, before the great war descended upon the country with its heel of iron, blossomed with the milk and honey of plenty. Being contiguous to the North sea fishing grounds, it has always possessed a liberal supply of fish, which is a staple article of diet with the people.

If living was cheap in Belgium it was no cheaper than conditions called for, because wages certainly were low. Many lace-workers, making the exquisite laces that bear the Belgium mark, weaved from the rising to the setting of the sun for five dollars a week. It is said that the average wage of all the breadwinners of the country approximated only \$185 a year. The children work after they are twelve, and all hands in a working-man's family must keep busy in order that no mouth shall go hungry. Even at this it requires, even in normal times, the utmost frugality to make the buckle of income meet the tongue of outgo. So must the Belgian housewife be an excellent manager. The Belgian wage-earning classes eat but little animal food, and most of that is fish.

All Are Early at Work.

The day begins early for everybody in Belgium, and particularly with the wage-earners. More than half of Belgium's population lives outside the towns, and they are up at their work before the gray dawn is dispersed by the rising sun, and on clear mornings the lights of hundreds of cottages may be seen vying with the stars as they twinkle forth their message of households bestirring.

In the towns and cities the people are downtown almost as early as their neighbors across the English Channel are at breakfast. They get their midday meal around noon, and they go home for it, since remarkably low tramway fares make this possible. So it is that, instead of a mug of milk and a sandwich at some quick lunch, many a Belgian burgher shuts up shop at 12, goes home to his largest meal of the day, eats it leisurely, and returns downtown by 2 o'clock.

The Belgian government has always felt a keen interest in the welfare of the wage-earner and the man of small affairs, and has made it possible for them to buy homes on easy terms. The national savings bank is empowered to make loans to householders for buying or building homes, and to insure their lives, so that in the event of death, the family will not lose its equity in the place, and can use the insurance to wipe off the debt. Taxes were made exceedingly low on small property owned by those who tenant it.

The entire western portion of the country resembles one vast market garden. There are no fences marking the boundaries of the many small tracts, but rather little trenches that separate one farmer's place from the others. Tens of thousands of acres of the roughest kind of land have been converted into splendid trucking gardens by western Belgians. In 1839 there was a wild stretch of land west of the Scheldt river called the Pays de Waes, uncultivated and uninhabited. Today it is one of the most fertile sections of this remarkable country, supporting 500 people to the square mile, with truck farming as its principal industry.

BRILLE TYPE MOST POPULAR

Work of Schools for the Blind Is Simplified by Adoption of Uniform System.

DOTS TAKE PLACE OF LINES

Enables Blind to Receive Training Through Which They May Become Self-Supporting—Many Books Published.

New York.—The Braille system of embossed type has now been adopted by all schools for the blind in this country, and since 1919 no new book has been embossed in any other type. Dozens of embossed types for reading by the finger have been designed from time to time; the first practical one was devised in France 136 years ago by Valentin Haüy. Three systems retained popularity for many years, but as this made it necessary for the blind to learn three different types, the leading educators of the country decided to make one system universal, and unanimously decided on the Braille.

Much ingenuity, effort and money have been expended in devising these systems to enable the blind to read and receive training through which they may become self-supporting. All may be divided into two groups—those composed of lines and those composed of points. In general the line types, which came first, were limitations of characters that had survived as best adapted to reading by the eye.

The point types, the characters of which are merely different arrangements and numbers of similar points or dots, represent arbitrary systems justified both as being generally more tangible than the lines, and as being writable as well as readable by the blind themselves. The point systems have gradually driven out the line types, with the exception of the Moon type, which is so large and coarse that anybody having the least patience can learn to read with the finger.

Agreed on a Midway Type. The type adopted is called the Revised Braille, 1½, as the British have been using this type in two forms, one in full spelling and other highly contracted with many arbitrary abbreviations. As textbooks and literature should be models of good usage, the leading educators of the blind in this country agreed on a type between the two. This American grade is a simplified type and can be read by anyone who knows either type.

The music notations for the blind are now the same everywhere, as are the mathematical and the chemical notations wherever English is used. In this way duplication of scores and tables may be avoided through international exchange. Already 208 different books have been published in this uniform type.

The printing of embossed books for the blind began with the founding of the first school in this country in 1810. Books were made as funds were available until 1879, when congress granted the American Printing House for the Blind at Louisville an annual subsidy of \$10,000. This house at once became the greatest producer of its kind in the world, and continued to be such into the present century, when the number of blind pupils in the schools drawing upon this source for books had more than doubled.

The cost of production and the increase in demand eventually made the output of this house insufficient, and in the emergency several of the schools put up emergency printing presses and assisted one another. One endowed enterprise set about manufacturing writing appliances and table games for the blind and selling them at less than cost. In 1919, however, congress increased its grant to the American Printing House from \$10,000 to \$50,000, which made possible the enlargement and improvement of the plant and the increase in the number of books to each school.

Spreading Knowledge. In a report on the work to educate the blind and distribute books among them, Edgar E. Allen, director of the Perkins Institute and Massachusetts School for the Blind, writes:

"Most schools are glad to circulate their embossed books beyond their own pupils and do so as far as they can. But the reading hunger of the blind outside of institutions is chiefly satisfied by circulating libraries located here and there throughout the country. Libraries and schools interested have collected much literature, and some authors have been induced to meet the cost of publishing a book or two in Braille.

"By far the largest number of blind and partly blind pupils in the United States, as elsewhere, attend the residential schools commonly called institutions. There are now 45 such schools, with a total attendance of about 5,000. The day-school movement started in Chicago considered all its pupils blind, and taught them as such for years until in a few cities certain of the semi-blind were segregated and taught as semi-sighted pupils, chiefly through the eye instead of the fingers.

"The movement for such segregation is scientifically correct, and represents a great educational advance in the proper methods of reaching children not suffering from blindness but from seriously defective eyesight."

PARTING WITH HIS PENNIES

Youngster's Quotation Had Much Truth, but Was Hardly Appropriate to the Occasion.

William's grandfather was a wise but eccentric old man who was always expressing his disapproval of the present generation by quoting some proverb or well-known phrase. In consequence of this William had a great many of the old man's sayings at his tongue's end.

On Children's day in Sunday school William was chosen as the representative of his class to carry up to the pulpit the birthday box containing the contributions made by the children on their respective birthdays. Each class representative had to recite a Bible verse as he delivered the box to the superintendent. But poor William, as he passed up the aisle, became frightened at the crowd and forgot his verse.

However, as he approached the superintendent he knew he must say something, so he bravely sang out one of his grandfather's pet phrases, "A fool and his money are soon parted."—Exchange.

Wanted There Badly.

"Thomas Hardy," said an English lecturer, "is a serious enough individual today, but there was a time in London when he was the gayest of the gay."

"At a bohemian club one evening Hardy rang up one after another 30 or 40 of the most distinguished people in town—dukes, bishops, actor-managers, society queens, stage beauties and so on. He told all these people to call up 625 Chiswick at once.

"You're wanted there badly," he explained to them, and the celebrities all thanked him hurriedly and rang off.

"Well, when Hardy got through his telephoning we looked up 625 Chiswick in the telephone directory. It was Wormwood Scrubs prison!"

Giant Spring.

Not far from the town of Twin Falls, in Idaho, is a spring that runs a big electrical plant. It is called the Thousand Spring, and there is nothing like it to be found anywhere else in the world. What a tremendous spring it is may be judged from the fact that it delivers almost 1,000 cubic feet of water a second—enough water to supply all the needs of the city of New York! It flows out of a lava cliff at a considerable height, like the waterfall of a stream, and furnishes power which, converted into electricity, is distributed for lighting and other purposes over an extensive area.—Philadelphia Ledger.

His Wit Rewarded.

An honest rustic went into the shop of a Quaker to buy a hat, for which 15 shillings were demanded. He offered 12.

"As I live," said the Quaker, "I cannot afford to sell it to thee at that price."

"As you live!" exclaimed the countryman. "Then live more moderately and be hanged to you."

"Friend," said the Quaker, "I have sold hats for 20 years, and my 'As I live' trick has never been found out till now; thou shalt have the hat for nothing."—Boston Transcript.

Out.

"I can truly say, madam," began the educated-looking prisoner, "that I shall actually regret the day my sentence expires and I leave these walls."

"Ah," breathed the sympathetic visitor, "I had heard this was a model prison, but I never dreamed that it instilled such gratitude and depth of feeling in its inmates. And how much longer does your sentence run, my poor man?"

"Life, madam."—American Legion Weekly.

Literal Construction.

Stranger—Are the waiters here attentive to you, miss.

Pretty Cashier—Sir-r-r.

Stranger—Oh, no offense, miss—no offense, I assure you. I was merely carrying out the instructions printed on the bill of fare: "Please report any inattention of the waiters to the cashier." I thought if they were inattentive to you, I would report them, that's all.—Boston Transcript.

Sad Case.

Mrs. Jones (sobbing)—The was company collector was around today and got his money.

Jones—Well, that's good. What's the matter? Why weep over a paid bill?

Mrs. Jones—Oh, my dear, boo hoo—oh, dear! You see, he was held up just outside and came back and—oh, dear—collected it all over again.—New York Sun.

Bobby's Idea of It.

The clerical guest was invited to ask the blessing, and the little boy of the house listened nicely until "Amen" was pronounced. Then he said to the minister:

"You say your prayers at dinner time so you won't have to say 'em when you go to bed, don't you?"—Boston Transcript.

Important Omission.

Young lady (telephoning)—Oh, doctor, I forgot to ask about that eye medicine you gave me.

Doctor—Well?

Young Lady—Do I drop it in my eyes before or after meals?—Cornell Widow.

New Form.

Percy—How would you—aw—like to own—aw—a little puppy, Miss Dorely? Miss D.—This is so sudden, Mr. Chapingham.—Detroit News.

NOT ALL GLOOM IN RUSSIA

Traveler Writes of Christmas in Moscow That Reminded Her of American Celebrations.

As far as the fairy stories and the simpler, sweeter things in child life go, I found evidence, on a trip I made one snowy Christmas day to a school outside of Moscow, that they are by no means destroyed. I had received an invitation to the Christmas festivities of the school—a gay-colored card designed by the children themselves and signed by the twelve-year-old president of the school soviet. The head of an American manufacturing plant, in Moscow then on business, and a number of relief workers had also been invited, and together we walked five miles out into the country to this school—now the scene of hilarious activity. The manufacturer was immediately pressed into service to help decorate the large Christmas tree that some of the older boys had cut down. The decorations, almost all of them made by the children, were bright bits of things that had been carefully hoarded for the occasion.

When I looked up at the American business man, beaming from the top of his stepladder as the children handed up their tinsel, somehow the scene did not appear very different from scenes that were being enacted that day in many an American home. After dinner there was a play called "The Kingdom of Frost," which told about what happens to a child when he runs away from his parents. It was a highly moral play. The music had been composed by a boy of eleven, the son of a brilliant violinist, and the paper costumes had been made very beautifully indeed by the children. The violinist himself was in the audience, and after the great dance of snowflakes that ended the play he was urged to perform. He asked the children what they wanted to hear. The vote was for "something sad from Tchaikowsky." The violinist objected. He made a little speech, in which he pointed out that this was not an occasion for sad music. They should choose something festive. The children applauded his speech politely and repeated their request. He played Tchaikowsky—"Children of Moscow," by Anna J. Haines in Asia Magazine.

Wolves "Rushed" Train.

Wolves attacked a train in Bosnia it had just been learned. A train from Dubica for Agram was traveling slowly soon after leaving the station on account of the snow when it was attacked by a large pack of wolves who were maddened by hunger. The animals jumped on the engine and into the coaches, howling desperately. The frightened passengers barricaded and defended themselves with rifles and revolvers. Many wolves were run over and killed, and finally the train, putting on speed, succeeded in getting away from the pack. It arrived at Agram covered with bloodstains and pieces of wolves' flesh.

Christmas After New Year's.

The soviet Russian government has introduced the European calendar, but the church insists upon the old Russian calendar. The result is that the great holidays at the end of the year are celebrated twice. New Year's is observed with great pomp after the European calendar, and Christmas follows the old calendar, so that now in Russia Christmas comes after New Year's.

The state participates in this order, so that athletic Bolshevism on our January 5 closed all its offices for the ecclesiastical Christmas based upon the czarist calendar.

Careless Nurse.

A fashionable nurse insisted that the maids in her employ should afford as much consideration to her children as to any one else in the household.

On one occasion a youngster approached his mother with this announcement:

"My piece of bread and butter has dropped on the buttered side."

Whereupon the mother summoned her thus:

"Charles, you will please to remember that you are to butter Clara's bread on the right side."

Hail Men With "Pep."

"Men with 'pep' rush in where angels fear to tread." Even "in the piping times of peace" they cast "modest stillness and humility" to the fourth remove and "let their action imitate the tigers." They advance upon our civilization like an army with banners. "Brashness" we used to call it, with affectionate contempt and tender pity; "pep" we hail it now, and laud it with loud hosannas.—Henry Ford's Dearborn Independent.

Postponed Repentance.

There was a man out in Wisconsin who went to a revival meeting and was pressed to repent. He wavered for a time and finally arose and said, "Friends, I want to repent and tell how bad I have been, but I don't do it when the grand jury is in session."

"The Lord will forgive," the revivalist shouted.

"Probably he will," answered the sinner, "but he ain't on that grand jury."—Boston Transcript.

Unlucky Coincidence.

And here's one about the Quaker whose patriotism got the better of his religious scruples and who went to war. Crawling through No Man's land he spied a husky German. Raising his rifle to his shoulder, he shouted:

"Friend, 'tis most unfortunate for thee, but the standeth just where I am going to shoot."

And blazed away.—American Legion Weekly.

HAD TO HAVE THE PASSWORD

Without It, Nobody, Commanding Officer or Any One Else, Could Pass That Sentry.

After the preliminary challenge the sentry had ordered the commanding officer to advance with the counter-signal. But unfortunately the latter had forgotten it.

"Come, come, sentry," said the C. O., somewhat testily, "you know me, don't you?"

"Yes, sir, but I've got to have the password."

"You obey all orders of the commanding officer, do you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why not let me pass at once?"

"Because, sir, the corporal gave me strict orders not to let any one, man, woman or child, pass this post unless they say 'Saratoga,' and if you can't do it you'll have to go around some other way."—The Leatherneck.

Success.

The Sunday school teacher was doing his best to inculcate lessons of altruism, and had taken as his example the case of two little boys, one of whom was always ready to grab, while the second was willing to share everything.

"Now, children," he finished impressively, "which of these two boys will grow up into the successful and respected man?"

And as one voice the class answered:

"The guy that gits!"—American Legion Weekly.

MELCHOR--Druggist

The Old Reliable
Tel. South 807 4826 So. 24th St.

PEOPLES DRUG STORE

Prompt Service
111 So. 14th St. Jack. 1446

Cleaning and Pressing

Call Market 3366
Prices Cheap Work Guaranteed
J. D. HINES
Tailor Cleaner Hatter
5132 So. 24th St. Market 3366

Finkenstein's

Groceries
Meats

Best Goods at Lowest Prices

26th & Blondo Sts. Web. 1902

We Sell SKINNER'S

the highest grade Macaroni, Spaghetti, Egg Noodles and other Macaroni Products.

EMERSON'S LAUNDRY

The Laundry That Suits All
1301 No. 24th St. Web. 0820

Eagle Cafe

Lake and 27th Street

SPECIAL CHICKEN DINNER SUNDAYS AND THURSDAYS

Phone Webster 3247

Chas. Hemphill Prop.

The Burdette Grocery

T. G. KELLOGG, Prop.

Full line of Groceries and Meats

Quick Sales and Small Profits Our Method

2216 No. 24th St. Web. 0515

We Sell SKINNER'S

the highest grade Macaroni, Spaghetti, Egg Noodles and other Macaroni Products.

Allen Jones, Res. Phone W. 204

JONES & CO. FUNERAL PARLOR

2314 North 24th St. Web. 1100
Lady Attendant

C. J. Carlson SHOES

1514 N. 24th St.
"Same Location 31 Years"
(Cor. Alley)

Liberty Drug Company

B. Robinson, Mgr.
Webster 0386.
1904 N. 24th St.
FREE DELIVERY

We Have a Complete Line of

FLOWER, GRASS AND GARDEN Seeds

Bulbs, Hardy Perennials, Poultry Supplies

Fresh cut flowers always on hand

Stewart's Seed Store

119 N. 16th St. Opp. Post Office
Phone Douglas 977

Lambert, Shotwell & Shotwell ATTORNEYS

Omaha National Bank Bldg.

Phone AT lantic 5104
Notary Public in Office and Counsellor

N. W. WARE

Attorney at Law
Practicing in Both State and Federal Courts
111 South 14th St. Omaha, Neb.

Phones—Office Web. 5036—Res. Web. 5106

From Early Morn Until Late at Night

"Taxi at Your Service"

NORTH END EXPRESS CO.

A. F. ALLEN, Prop.

Trucks for Either Light or Heavy Hauling

We Haul Anything, Anywhere
2010 N. 24th St. Omaha, Neb.

A. F. PEOPLES

PAINTING PAPERHANGING AND DECORATING

Estimates Furnished Free. All Work Guaranteed.

Full Line of Wall Paper and Sherwin-Williams Paints and Varnishes.

2419 Lake St. Webster 6366

Dressmaking, Hats Cleaned & Blocked

FRANK BARNES, Tailor

CLEANING AND PRESSING
All Styles of Caps Made.

Web. 3964.—1322 No. 24th St., Omaha.

The Western Funeral Home