

Vanity Fair; March, 1919
The Watchers on the Rhine

Sketches by George Wright



The young man on the right is addressing himself to the female of the species in language which she does not understand, but the tone of which sounds thoroughly natural and familiar to her. "These here suds, Gretchen, are, honest to Gawd, the lowest imitation of beer I ever gargled. If you want the real stuff you gotta go to Milwaukee or St. Louis. This boche beer is like everything else in this God forsaken boche country:—it's fake, impure and transparent!"

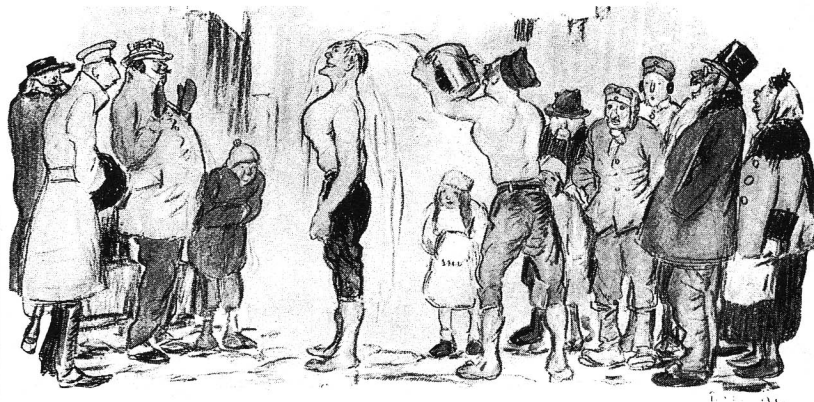
REPORTS from the American sector in occupied German territory seem to be unanimous in their agreement that watching on the Rhine is about as dull a pastime as any young American could very well have forced upon him. It is one thing to chase Germans out of France, and quite another thing to have to live among them after they have been chased and chastened. There is no place, after all, like the good old U. S. A. If we may believe our soldiers,—and they ought to know,—we have, right here, better drinks and better smokes, and—well,—it would be an insult to our own fair girls even to suggest a comparison.



Nothing doing in fraternization—or sororisation either. After the midinettes of Paris and the bright eyed girls of Northern France, the Rhine maidens, it seems, have but little charm for young men of experience and good taste



Even the cigars in Coblenz are thoroughly boche. It is not safe to light them without putting on a gas mask first, and—well,—in brief, it would actually take a boche to smoke one and still live



In the principal city of the British sector, the troops wash in Cologne water,—they even drink it—but in Coblenz the Yankees use common, or Rhine, water to the consternation of the natives—the "dear German people"—who have never seen water so extensively used for this purpose before