

# GERMANS FIRE LIQUID THAT BLINDS VICTIMS

## *Many Killed at Armentieres by New Poison—Especially Fatal to Women.*

HAZEBROUCK, France, Aug. 9. — British medical officers are trying to determine the nature of the new poison used, it is believed for the first time, by the Germans on the French town of Armentières. The poison bears a certain resemblance to the gas which temporarily blinded a large number of British troops a fortnight ago, but its effects are infinitely more serious.

A number of persons taken from Armentières are in a grave condition. Many have died in hospitals at Hazebrouck, Aire-on-the-Lys and particularly at St. Pol-on-the-Ternoise, where most of the victims were taken.

The first time the new poison was observed it coincided with the firing into the town of a hail of small shells of a calibre insufficient to break the paving. These contained neither powder nor gas, but a colorless liquid which spread over the soil, in the streets and in the courtyards and gardens. Where the shells burst traces of the noxious liquid were found hours afterward.

As the liquid evaporates it produces a heavy gas which penetrates from room to room and descends into cellars. It is tenacious in character and seems to take more victims among women than men, penetrating their hair. The fumes of tobacco seem to act as an antidote in the case of men.

The odor is variously described as resembling that of acetylene, mignonette or pungent mustard. The effects are not immediate. Some inhabitants of Armentières who inhaled the emanations in the forenoon returned home without experiencing any ill effects and took luncheon, but five or six hours later they were obliged to take to bed and their condition became rapidly worse.

The victims at first were affected in the bronchial tubes, then their eyes swelled and eventually they lost their sight. These symptoms were accompanied by a feeling of burning inside and an incessant cough and fever. The skin turned an earthy color and in several cases death followed rapidly. Occasionally, in addition to the symptoms mentioned, the victims were affected by terrible hallucinations and delirious laughter.

**The New York Times**

Copyright © The New York Times  
Originally published August 10, 1917