When King Peter Rode Triumphant Into Belgrade After Defeat of Enemy

Exercised Ancient Privilege of His House Because of Absence of the Clergy—Shells Still Flying Over City as People Greeted Servian Army With Showers of Flowers—Wife of Minister of Commerce Writes Describing Scene.

(New York Evening Post)

So King Peter himself became priest, and the great cathedral was filled with the sobbing of his people.

Everybody knows the story of the deliverance of Belgrade: how the little Serbian army fell back for strategic reasons as the Austrians entered the city, but finally, after seventeen days of fighting without rest (for the Serbian army has had no reserves since the Turkish war), knit its forces together, and drove the Austrians headlong out of the capital.

King Peter rode at the head of his army. Shrapnel from the Austrian guns was still bursting over the city. But the people were too much overjoyed to mind. They lined the sidewalks and threw flowers as the troops passed. The soldiers marched in close formation; the sprays clung to them, and they became a moving flower garden. The scream of an occasional shell was drowned in the cheers.

They are emotional people, these Serbians. And something told them that, even with death and desolation all about them, they had reason to be elated. A few hours before, the Austrians had been established in Belgrade, confident that they were there to stay for months, if not for years. Now they were fleeing headlong over the River Save, their commissariat jammed at the bridge, their fighting men in a rout.

King as Priest

So King Peter rode through the streets of the capital with his army, and came to the cathedral. The great church was locked, because the priests had left the city on errands of mercy. But a soldier went through a window and undid the portals. The King and his officers and some of the soldiers and as many of the people as could get in crowded into the cathedral. And, lacking some one to say mass, the King became a priest—which is an ancient function of kings—and, as he knelt, the officers and soldiers and people knelt. There was a vast silence for a moment; and then, in every part of the church, a sobbing.

This account is a free translation of a woman's letter, in Serbian, received in this city a few days ago by Miss Helen Losanich, who is here with Mme. Slavko Grouitch to interest Americans in helping her countrymen back to their devastated farms. Mme. Grouitch is an American by birth; but Miss Losanich is a Serbian, with the black hair and burning black eyes of the Slavs, and boasting twenty years perhaps. Her sister, Mme. Marincovitch, is wife of the Serbian Minister of Commerce and Agriculture. It was Mme. Marincovich who had written the letter.

"I've just had this letter from my sister in Serbia," cried Miss Losanich, when a friend called; and she waved in one hand a dozen sheets closely written in a script that resembled Russian. "I've hardly had time to read it, myself. But we will sit down and translate it into English, if you say.

Took Many Hostages.

"She says here that, when the Austrians had to leave Belgrade, they took 1,200 people as hostages—non-combatants, you know. When they came into the city first, they gave assurances that all non-combatants would be safe; but for the last few days before they left, no non-combatant could walk on the street without being taken up as a hostage.

"Just imagine, it says here that they even took a little boy. He can fight when he is older, they say. You know the Turks used to do that. They came and took our boys of nine and ten years, and trained them as soldiers in their janissaries; and when they had forgotten their own country, they sent them back to fight against it. It is terrible, isn't it!

"The Austrians took the furniture from our people's houses and carried it across the River Save to the Similn. They behaved frightfully, my sister says; brought all kinds of people with them, including women from the very lowest class; broke into the houses and stole the ladies toilettes. One lady with many beautiful dresses found them all cut to ribbons when she got back to Belgrade.

"The Austrians brought lots of tea and crackers and conserves with them Some soldiers had taken a lady's evening gown and pinned strawberries from strawberry jam all over it in appropriate places, and laid the gown out for the lady to see."

A merry smile illuminated Miss Losanich's face as she read this part of the letter.

"Our brother," she went on, "entered Belgrade with the army. He came back to Nish on leave about Christmas, the Servian Christmas, which is about thirteen days later than yours. Nish is the temporary capital; and my sister is there. He told them all about Belgrade. He had been to his house; the whole house was upset. drawers forced, old letters opened and thrown on the floor, papers strewn about, King Peter's picture (autographed by the King) thrown on the floor, and King Ferdinand's picture stamped on.

"Brother went to a private sanitarium that our uncle has in Belgrade. The Austrians had seized this, and had begun making it over for a hospital. They wanted the Bulgarian Red Cross installed. They had brought quantities of biscuits and tea and conserves. But they had to leave in such a hurry, they couldn't take the things with them. 'And now,' my sister says, 'we are eating them!'

Rifled Wardrobes.

"Across the street four of our cousins live—young men. They are all at the front now"—Miss Losanich laughed outright as she read this part—"their house was entered and all their clothes taken; dress suits, smoking jackets, linen, and all those things. It makes me laugh; it's naughty, I know. But they used to go out a good deal. I have seen them in those clothes so often. One of them wanted to marry me. He used to go out a great deal"—this with another merry peal of laughter.

"Mme. Grouitch's house was undisturbed; and ours. We used to know the Austrian attache before the war. He was rather a nice fellow. Played tennis with us a great deal, and so on. He came into Belgrade with his army, and he came around to our house. The servants recognized him, because, you see, they knew him. The servants had stayed behind. He seemed to think he would like to make my sister's house his quarters; but after he had thought about it a while, he went away.

"She says that she would like to go back to Belgrade; but the railroad has been destroyed—a big viaduct of stone at Ralya, about 17 kilometres from Belgrade; and they have to go from Ralya to Belgrade by carriage. There are so many wagons of the commissariat on the road—so many carriages have been seized by the government—it is impossible for private citizens to get through.

"A gibbet was put up in the square after the Austrians came into the city and a man was hanged the first morning, in spite of the fact that the Austrians had promised safety to the non-combatants. Dr. Edward Ryan, the head of the American Red Cross in Belgrade, protested, and the gibbet was taken down. But my sister says that eighteen more people were hanged in the fortress down by the Save—she hears—where they wouln't be seen.

Refused to Light City.

"Mr. Bisserce, a Belgian, is director of the electric lighting plant in Belgrade. He is a nice man, and, being a Belgian, he does not like the Austrians. He wouldn't light the town until they made him; and he wouldn't give them a map of the system at all. He was bound in ropes and taken away as a hostage; and they haven't heard from him since.

"The most touching thing was the entrance of King Peter——" whereupon Miss Losanich told the story related above.

"Rubbish, straw and dead horses were strewn through all the streets when the king and the army came in. The shooting was still going on. There was a jam of commissariat wagons at the bridge—you know there is a bridge across the Save. The Austrians could not get across fast enough, there was so much confusion—too many wanting to get over at one time. The Servian artillery was shooting at them all the time. Presently the middle of the bridge went down. The men and the horses and the carriages and the wagons all went down together. They were pinned down by the masses of stone; but there were so many of them that they filled up the river and stuck up above the water. It was so bad that our people couldn't clear it up—so there is an awful odor all over the town.

"She says that the Austrians brought 17,000 wounded, thinking that they were going to stay for months—and perhaps forever. They turned over quantities of them to Dr. Ryan at the American Red Cross Hospital.

"Gen. Franck, the Austrian commander, made a remark—and he must have made it to Dr. Ryan, although my sister doesn't say so. Gen. Franck said: "If the Russians had fought the way the Servians have, there wouldn't be an Austrian soldier left!"

"That's a good deal for the head of the Austrians to say isn't it? We always expected victory; but even the most optimistic of us were surprised at what our peasant soldiers did.

"In the flight, the Austrians could not take care of their wounded, she says, and sent them back to Belgrade, many of them, as prisoners. Many must have died during the flight, too, for they got a jolting that wounded men can't stand.

"Our brother, who was a professor of chemistry, is a sergeant now in charge of two German Krupp guns, which were captured from Turkey in the other war. He is at Banovo Brdo, a residence section outside Belgrade, on a hill. All the villas have been destroyed by the Austrian artillery fire.

"And," continued Miss Losanich, "she says that the boys sent by the Americans were received in Nish and distributed to the poor children for Christmas and that the feeling of cordiality toward the Americans is growing fast."

SOCIALIST CONGRESSMAN URGES UNEMPLOYED TO MARCH ON WASHINGTON.

MEYER LONDON ADDRESSING the UNEMPLOYED in NEW YORK CITY—

Meyer London, socialist Representative elect, of New York, urged the enlistment for a march on Washington of one hundred thousand unemployed wage earners, recruited from the ranks of socialists in and about New York, when he was the principal speaker at a "conference" on unemployment in Union Square, New York. Nearly two thousand persons attended the meeting. During his speech London was interrupted by a questioner, who demanded what course Mr. London intended to pursue after he had taken his seat in Congress. "All I can hope to do is to present in Congress our point of view," responded Mr. London. "But you'll get down there," persisted the heckler, "and you'll do the same as all of them do; you will vote with the capitalistic members of Congress, and then you'll be the same as they are." "Let him alone! I'll take care of him," urged Mr. London when five stalwart men threatened to remove the questioner. "I'll vote with a republican, a democrat, a progressive or even a Mormon or a prohibitionist when he's right," he continued. "We are going ahead and you should know it. Haven't we ever seen a one-time President stealing our platform? But he's welcome to it, even if they do call it progressive."

WILL RESUME HEARING OF EMPRESS CASE TODAY

Montreal, Feb. 17.—Ash Wednesday being a legal holiday in the province of Quebec, the courts were closed today.

The hearing of the C. P. R. company's $3,000,000 suit against the steamship Storstad in connection with the sinking of the Empress of Ireland on May 29 last, in the St. Lawrence river, will be resumed tomorrow morning.

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