

“Chauffeurs” Describe Experiences In Serbia

Two Women Ambulance Drivers Give Interesting Account of their Work Among Siberians During Great Retreat Before the Teuton Invader.

By a Woman Red Cross Worker.

Just about eight months ago, when constant reports were reaching England about an approaching great Austro-German offensive against Serbia, two of us sailed from Southampton with one of the many Red Cross organizations. We had signed on as chauffeurs (ambulance drivers), and we were going, we hoped, to great things and all sorts of romantic adventures in picturesque patriotism. At least the voyage out did not disillusion us. There are many worse ways of putting away time than by a cruise in the Mediterranean in early September.

We were held up for a fortnight in Malta waiting for a boat, which seemed to be the position of about half the other people on the island as well. Being beginners at our professed trade we were naturally very keen and full of ardour. So, at the risk of a rubbing which I am quite sure we deserved, we went to the C. O. of the A.S.C. and pointed out to him in a conversational manner that he had many ambulances at his disposal. That we were going out to Serbia as ambulance drivers, that we had neither of us ever touched an ambulance in our lives, and finally, that we considered it would be an excellent thing if we were to practice on his. Well, man is sometimes merciful, and this one, though he began by saying very sorry—no unauthorised person—necessary to enlist in the A.S.C.—quite impossible, &c., ended by ordering two ambulances round for a trial run. The orderlies that were sent with us reported favorably, and we were detailed for driving wounded all the rest of the time we were at Malta. It was most interesting, and quite a different sort of driving from anything that we had been accustomed to. We drove between the landing-stages and the various hospitals. It was not very nice carrying the stretcher cases. However, calmly you drive, you cannot help jerking now and then, and Malta is full of steep hills and impossible corners. However, the men themselves were awfully nice about the trips and used to try their hardest not to notice the jerks and jumps, and sometimes I am ashamed to say, the clumsy changing of gears and so forth. In fact there used to be quite an amount of rivalry between the men who were driven by “the girl” and those who were entrusted to the more efficient if less novel A.S.C. drivers. We really were something of a novelty, because up till then, I believe, no other “who” of our description had ever been seen driving any car in Malta, let alone a real, live A.S.C. ambulance.

We left Malta very well pleased with ourselves, but the time was coming when we were to be relieved of all superfluous pride. The next stage of our career was Serbia—Serbia with its wonderful air-coloring, its hills and its sunsets, its red and white mountains, traffic-conquering mud. Our first driving experience was with a five-seater touring car and we were kept pretty busy for the first two days, taking the doctors and other officials about the roads, and to the various hospitals that had been in the country, but it had certainly been there long enough to have had its constitution thoroughly ruined, to have entirely lost all the spring elasticity of youth, and to have developed many little tricks and tempers that made it exceedingly difficult to deal with. We christened it Ichabod. Every few days poor dear Ichabod had to put in for repairs, and while he was away our energies were devoted to other channels. By this time we had realized that chauffeurs were mere mortals, and exceedingly unimportant mortals at that—in fact “odd-jobs” would have been a better name for us.

Then came the great rush of wounded. The Serbs were retreating fast, but still fighting; Belgrade had fallen, and the German-Austrian forces were advancing. Every day enormous trainloads of wounded and refugees came pouring into the town—hundreds and hundreds of them, and we were sent down with the car to bring them to the hospital. I shall never forget it as long as I live—the long train crammed full of suffering, the wounds, the rags, the dirt, and the only too evident marks of starvation and neglect. Then the unloading, some had died on the journey and some were dying. They were all taken out and laid on the platform in rows to wait their turns to be taken to the different hospitals—the dead and the dying, the conscious and the unconscious, all lying side by side. The dead were left there just as they were until someone had time to attend to them; and the dying—well, the dying were just left there too, poor devils. What was the use of moving them when they were past help and there were so many others to be moved who might still be helped? For reasons in practical philosophy the Serbs is a good master. This went on for a few days, and then we received orders to evacuate the town. We none of us wanted to, but as we were working under the Serbian Government there was no help for it, and go we must. Our charges had to be left behind. We had to do it; it was heart-breaking leaving the poor fellows with practically no one to look after them; and without knowing in the least how long it would be before the Germans came

rest of our stay in Serbia as nothing more than scavengers, pure and simple. Our time was spent among trenches and cesspools. We built incinerators of soda for hospital dressings and burnable refuse; we dug pits for unburnable rubbish, kitchen garbage, etc., and canals for dirty water. And every morning, when we came out we found the incinerators choked with tins, glass, and all sorts of waste, the pits filled with beautiful dry, burnable rubbish, and the drains blocked by all sorts of kitchen refuse. Moreover, they killed all manner of beasts before our eyes and left the entrails lying about for us to clean up; and they also had a pleasant habit of amputating gangrenous limbs in the hospital and chucking them out any old where.

We had the Germans over us first. Then they went on and left the Austrians in possession of the town, and we had an Austrian guard over us, then a Hungarian one, and then a Bosnian one. Each lot that came seemed to hate the Germans just a little more than the last one, and even the Germans themselves were not entirely free from disaffection. All the men seemed heartily sick of the war, and I never found any evidence of the hatred of England, except in one or two isolated cases, and they were mostly amongst the officers. In fact on two different occasions I was told (once by a German non-commissioned officer who was in charge of a batch of Russian prisoners, and once by a German lieutenant), with a furtive look over the shoulder and almost with bated breath, that this was “a damnable war and the Kaiser mad, quite mad.”

You learn a great deal in Serbia; principally that you can carry a lot more than you ever thought you could; secondly, that most things you always hitherto considered as necessities of life are only luxuries after all; and thirdly, that conventional countries (like ourselves) are frightfully out of proportion. Lastly, perhaps, that absolutely nothing matters. By this time we had not much vain self-satisfaction left, and instead of being too big for our boots we were quite a decent fit mentally and much too small physically, as we were reduced to wearing army boots size 7. But we had learnt that if motor-driving falls it is easy to be quite a good scavenger once you make up your mind to be one.

AUTO SLEEPINESS.

Frequently when there is an accident, where the car runs off the road, hits an obstruction or is upset, the driver or some other occupant of the car or the reporter says that “the steering gear gave way.” Yet it is safe to venture that it is not the real reason for the accident. What often happens is that the driver goes to sleep. In a report of an accident last fall the driver frankly said he went to sleep, and the next thing he knew he was under the car, which was thrown against the abutment. The soporific effect of driving an auto at night for several hours is really responsible for more accidents than defective construction. The constant vibration of the steering wheel, the continuous noise of the machine and the drone of the wind have the same effect, as does the buzz of an electric fan on most folk. Before the driver realizes it he is getting drowsy. The wheel is held more and more loosely. Gradually the car takes the line of least resistance, aided by the slackening (but not totally abandoned) control of the driver. The next thing he knows he is off the road. Sometimes the driver escapes, together with the occupants of the car, oftentimes the dereliction results in injury or death. If more drivers realized the danger of not keeping awake there would be fewer accidents. At least, this is the opinion of an experienced driver—Indianapolis News.

PRES. HAUGHTON ON THE WARPATH

Thinks Umpire Wrongly Banned Maranville — Rushes for the Train to Interview Pres. Tener.

New York, May 29.—Pres. Haughton of the Braves is on the warpath. After seeing umpire Mal Eason make what he considers an outrageous decision, and then attempt to cover it up by putting Maranville out of the game recently, he made up his mind to go to the front, and find out, if he could, if such things are to go on in definitely.

Pres. Haughton was himself upon the spot and saw the whole thing. Immediately after the game, he called Pres. Tener on the long-distance telephone and said he wanted to see him in the New York office at 9 tomorrow morning. Haughton then had barely time to catch the 5:34 train out of Boston and he came in light marching order, too, and will meet Tener promptly at nine in the morning. None of those present at the game as spectators could make out why Maranville had been banned. Eason has of late gotten to be about as arbitrary as Klem, who may be tamed down considerably, for Haughton saw some of his work in the West. While on his way back home he had an interview with the president of the league, which is likely to have quite an effect.

The affair of today, which culminated in the retirement of Maranville came about in this way: Fletcher was on second with one out when McKechnie hit a grounder which Rudolph fielded, throwing the ball to Smith to get Fletcher at third. The play was well executed all through and Smith looked to have had Fletcher or out by a yard. Eason called the runner safe. Smith, Rudolph and Fletcher gave Eason quite a game of talk, but he took no action against them. Then “the Rabbit” said something. “You got there into your position,” said Eason to Maranville. “You stay right where you are,” said Evers. “We are going to play in close on the next batter and you are in the right position where you are,” which was quite the proper play with a runner on third, which they wanted to choke at the plate. “Get out there into your position,” came back Eason to “The Rabbit,” pointing to the deeper position at short. “Stay right where you are,” ordered Evers. Maranville stood where he was, looking like a “limp” as he described himself, and saying “nary a word.” “All right, get out of the game,” said Eason, and “the Rabbit” moved over to the hutch. Right here in where it is figured, Mr. Eason overplayed his game. Certainly he had no right to direct the players on a ball team where they shall place themselves in the field to play for a batter. Haughton proposes that his men shall behave themselves, but he also proposes that the umpires shall not put his club altogether to the bad by their own poor work and seeming persecution. He is over, therefore, to tell the president of the league what he thinks and why he thinks as he does. He will take some of his men to Pres. Tener’s office in the morning, and a lot of things will be threshed out.

BELGIUM AS BUFFER STATE NECESSARY TO PEACE OF EUROPE

Noted Belgian Author and Diplomat Points Out What Victory for Germany would Mean to World.

Tokyo, May 4.—(Correspondence of The Associated Press.)—In an introduction which he contributed to a book entitled Belgium and the European War, which has just been published by Count della Faille Felverhem, the Belgian minister to Japan, Premier Count Okuma declares his judgment that the peace of Europe and the whole world demands that Belgium be made in the future more firmly than ever a buffer state. The work of Count della Faille is a review of the situation in Belgium since the entrance of German troops at the outbreak of the war. The author discusses in detail the evidence concerning the question of the violation of Belgian neutrality and alleged German acts of cruelty and reaches the conclusion that the proof of German cruelty is as overwhelming as is certain the violation of Belgian neutrality.

“The existence of Belgium as a buffer state is indispensable to the peace of the world,” wrote Count Okuma in his preface to the volume. The occupation of this buffer state today by the Germans, he declared, was not only in opposition to the stipulation of the treaty of 1839 but it is inadmissible from the standpoint of justice and contrary to the principles of the preservation of the peace of Europe. “To make Belgium what she was before, namely, to make her a buffer state on a more solid basis, is very necessary not only for the peace of Europe but also for the peace of the whole world.”

He added: “Besides it is a work of justice. We cannot help admiring Belgium where, from the King down to the simplest citizen, all, in this terrible struggle, are fighting with such desperation for the future of the state and for justice and that at the risk of their lives and with no thought of themselves. We have no doubt whatever, that the final victory will be on the side of justice and that the loyalty will be crowned with success.” In the conclusion of his volume Count della Faille makes a reference to Japan and the Far East. He declares Germany victorious “would mean the whole of Europe submissive to its rule; the acquisition of a large colonial possession at the expense of vanquished England and France. Nothing would resist the German will. America would speak in vain of the Monroe Doctrine and Japan would speak in vain of her special rights in China. What would Japan do before a German solidly reinstalled at Tsingtau, perhaps at Hongkong instead of the French. To uphold her special rights and keep Port Arthur and Korea Japan would find herself confronted with much bloodier war than that of Manchuria. She would have the choice of coming to an arrangement with Germany or rushing into the most terrible of disasters.”

Count della Faille hopped the first train out of Boston and will be on hand for the pow-wow.

Advertisement for McCormick's Sodas featuring an illustration of a woman and a child with a soda box.

Large advertisement for Ford Motor Company featuring the headline "Free gasoline for thirty-three hundred miles—the Ford owner's saving in one year" and a list of Ford models.

Advertisement for Cravenette Regd. tobacco featuring an illustration of a man in a suit and a pipe.

Large advertisement for POLO BLOCK TOBACCO featuring the headline "A PERFECT SMOKE for your PET PIPE" and an illustration of a hand holding a pipe.