



Belemedick, on the Bagdad R.R.

May 8, 1919.

Dear Family,

You'd laugh if you could see me now. I'm lying on a pile of boxes within two feet of the roof of a box car, stranded near the mouth of the big tunnel thru the Taurus Mts., near Bosanti. It just seems as if I'd been living in a fairy-tale this last week, & now it's getting even more interesting than fairy tales. I've got started writing all about it, this letter will be a regular book, but you don't need to read it all.

First I'll tell you where I am, & next how it happened. A British "tommy", who was just telling all about his experiences in Palestine, says the little village near us is Belemedick, and that we are near the big tunnel the Germans built thru the Taurus. But you won't find these places on the maps as they were all built within the last four years. The Germans just finished the tunnel & the railway to Aleppo & had run two trains thru when the armistice was signed and the British took it over. So now we are in a narrow gorge with mountains on all four sides, & no way out except by the tunnel or a climb over the top, which isn't any cinch, as all four of them are snow capped & one of them in the clouds. This is how it happened. A party of us were en route to Aleppo and this morning the British R.T.C. at this station decided there were too many cars on the train, so cut it in two, leaving three of our baggage cars here. Sr. Lambert who is in charge of our little party therefore told Snyder & me to stay with the cars & threw off blankets & food for a few days, & ~~told us to stay with the cars.~~ Our car has not more than three square feet of floor space, so we are sleeping on top the boxes. The "tommy" told us we would be lucky if we got out of here before three days. The next train comes thru on the 10th but may not be able to take us along. So we are hoboes for the present & are going to have a grand time climbing one of these snow capped mountains.



2 The last time I wrote home I expected to go to the Caucasus, but the Commissioners decided that although the need there was great, it was unwise to send reinforcements. So instead of the Caucasus, I climbed on a tractor and drove it with a plow to a farm at the end of the Gulf of Smed. It was an all day trip, & quite exciting, as the road took us over fords and thru funny little towns, where the tractor was a sort of circus parade. A native mechanic went along, and the Turkish government sent a Turk soldier, too, as guard. We plowed a few days, sleeping at Smed with an Armenian family. It was lots of fun & even the Turkish soldier had a good time. He would help run the plow while I ran the tractor, or else amuse himself shooting at fish in a brook. Then one evening I had a telegram from Derindje saying I was to leave for Aleppo, so a truck came for me + took me back to the warehouses. We left Derindje Saturday night a little after midnight - 13 of us - in two box cars marked "Hommes 40". I don't see how 40 men ever slept in one car. Only four of us were men, so it was quite a mathematical problem to provide sleeping quarters, but it was finally solved with curtains. We had cots & all the discomforts of home. Besides the two sleeping cars there were four baggage cars, a kitchen car and a flat car with the delouser on it, which we used as a sort of observation car. I could write a whole chapter on "Seeing Turkey from a Delouser". It was lots of fun. When we woke, Sunday morning, the train was passing thru big melbony plantations where they produce silk. Then we passed Beledchek, the "Belokoma" of the Byzantines. The country is beautiful. I never saw so many wild flowers. There are just millions of red poppies everywhere - wild yellow roses & hundreds of things none of us knew. At Estachehir the train stopped three hours, so we did the town. Saw a couple of mosques, and watched some men carving meerschaum - this is the center of the meerschaum district. Later in the evening we passed thru the region where the Phrygians used to live - and saw lots of their old cave dwellings cut right out of the rock. Monday morning we were going thru a flat country - on top the Anatolian plateau, and saw our first mirages. Lakes seemed to be ahead of us all the time, but we couldn't get to them... At Konia I think the Britishers put one over on us. They



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said we couldn't go on for two days, so we had to hang around till Wednesday. From something one of them said we think they were so rejoiced to see some American girls that they kept us there. They certainly stuck to the girls. The first evening they had a party - had an Italian orchestra, eats, etc. An Italian troops had landed about a thousand Italians at Derindje a few weeks ago, & they are all in Konia now, so their commander was at the party, & came to dinner in our box car the next day. For supper we had chicken and English officers. We did some sightseeing here, too. Konia is the same as Iconium in the Bible. It is a queer old city. A few of us went thru the mosque of the Derivishes - the one here is the head of the Derivishes, it was wonderful - beautiful rugs & inlaid work, old tombs, etc. We all had to take our shoes off outside but we didn't care how many holes we had in our stockings. The Armenian who was our guide told us all his experiences, showed us a street paved with stone taken from an Armenian church the Turks destroyed, prisons where he had been kept, told us how he escaped, etc. We went thru the bazaar & got a few souvenirs. I found an old brass pestle in a junk shop - perhaps old Geber used it when he was a chemist around here. Two of our fellows "pinched" carburetors from wrecked German cars here for souvenirs. You see German trucks & war material wrecked all around.

On Wednesday we got off again & reached Eregli in the afternoon - took a walk thru the town - had a soda - the first in Turkey. Eregli is the ancient Herakleia, whatever that is. Leaving Eregli we had a wonderful trip up into the Taurus range. They put two engines on and kept going up grade till we were nearly a mile above sea level, at Ulukushla. That is where the units for Sivas and Caesarea get off to strike off across the country by trucks. From there a few of us rode on the delouser and passed thru the most wonderful kind of scenery by moonlight - great snow covered mountains ahead of us, and thru canyons and great gorges where we almost had to straddle the river below us. I don't see

how they ever put the tracks where they did. In some places the cliffs actually hung over the rails. Some spots were worth coming to Turkey for. We all think we are fortunate to be here, especially now when conditions are so unusual. It is lots more interesting traveling this way - sort of camp-like, than it would be if we had all sorts of comforts. As it is we have fine beds and good meals. An Armenian is with us as cook, and we think we are traveling "de luxe" even if it is in box cars. We don't forget that we are here for relief work, & not for a good time, & are anxious to get into the real work, but believe in making good use of our traveling, too. Practically every unit is in the field now & we are among the last to leave Serindje. It has been an enormous job to get the various units off as fast as they did. A boat was at Serindje when we left to take a unit to Trebizond, & the Sivas & Caesarea units left probably a few days after we did. Well, you just can't help enjoying this whole trip, even if it is relief work. I wouldn't have missed last night's ride for anything, and they say that the next three hrs. ride is the best yet - three enormous canyons. This morning two others & myself rode on the "cowcatcher" of the locomotive thru the tunnels & canyons between Boganti & here. We spent the night at Boganti. The valley we are in now is so narrow that the sun set at four o'clock. Tomorrow Sayder & I are going to climb one of the peaks & get some snow & take some pictures. The Brits here said they would lend us a gun, as there are bear & wild dogs here. We are only a few miles from the Cilician Gates - the great pass thru the Taurus to Tarsus. The armies of Xerxes & Darius & Alexander all passed thru here, and they say many big battles were fought here to defend the pass.

One of the most interesting things about our stay



in Turkey has ban the foreign armies here. The British are all awfully friendly & will do anything for us. They make a great time even over some of the old crabs who are with us. The "Tommys" like to tell about their battles, and one today certainly fed us up on the Palestine campaign under Allenby. It was awfully interesting and funny to the way he told it. Here at this little town are a lot of Hindoo troops. The funniest looking soldiers I've seen are the Britishers who wear cork helmets and short khaki BVD's. When you see an officer with his Sam Brown belt and all, on, & then the lower half, you think he forgot a very essential part of his uniform. At Konia the station troops and some Highlander were very interesting. This morning we saw troops from Baluchistan. Somebody had a wedding around here this P.M. & it looked like part of Barnum & Bailey. I suppose they were Gypsies or something funny. There are so many camels & funny people around it feels like a circus tent most of the time. I can't get up an inspiration to write any more - I've sort of all expired over wonderful scenes. It's too dark to continue. Oh I forgot to say I'd received six letters at once - one from Dad written to Mad. Ave Hotel Albert, & one from the family to Mad. Ave. It is a red letter day when a letter comes, believe me. I'm certainly was glad to get them, & hope to get more soon. I'll look them over and answer them if they need "special" answering - later. I'm glad Mrs. Heady is working on



Mother + hope she has that arm working O.K. soon. Hope
also that Stuart's eyes are O.K. I'll enclose another
picture or two. If you get them I'll send a lot, so let
me know.

Snyder is getting supper for us two hoboes + I've a
cardie now so here goes till supper is ready. We had
"bully beef" + canned corn, bread + butter + coffee for
dinner - cooked over a little fire in the rains. There is
a regular chorus of frogs + crickets from the Tschakyt
River near us, ~~that~~ we will have an orchestra with our meal.
Supper is served, so bye bye. Love to all - Mother, Dad,
Stuart + Marion - Sam - to Alameda, and all the
rest. Love is love.

Stanley.