

Miss K. is much older than any of the others, and has a long thin red nose, which is a great affliction to her, but which she wouldn't powder "not if it was ever so." She worked as Matron or something in a Church of England Settlement in the East End of London before she came, and is much too intense for the stolid wenches here. She is anxious to help them in their spiritual difficulties, and none of them have any. They are much more concerned with the question of what there is for dinner than worried with any problems of the spirit. She is bitterly disappointed with the life here, poor dear. She came out hoping to devote herself mentally, morally and physically to the "martyred Serbs," as she calls them, and then, instead of being in the wards as she expected, she is put on to cleaning the Sisters' tents and making the doctors' beds. She gets very irritable over it, and then begs our pardon for "complaining," which she thinks very wrong. I am sure that it is really because she isn't strong and can't quite manage the work and the severe climate, though I am sure she would rather die than own it, for she is a plucky old thing.

My work isn't at all hard. It is a bit trying first thing in the morning when you get nearly frost-bitten down in the garage, which is open on three sides to the weather. There are great compensations, though, in being down there early, for the mountains stand out stark and blue against the faint primrose dawn, and there is just one little moment when the world seems to be holding its breath, till the old red sun gets up and the bustle of the day begins.

My car is a cranky old thing called "Alice," and she has one peculiarly aggravating habit—she is a very bad starter. Once she gets going she is all right, and there is one advantage in this weather that after you have wound away at her

hard for ten minutes without the slightest result, you do at least get partially thawed.

Mirko, the Serb sergeant in the garage, is an old dear. He was in Canada for about six months before the war and speaks quite comprehensible English. He is going to teach me the names of Alice's springs and all her internal organs in Serbian, which is a truly appalling prospect. It was a great shock to find everyone here talking Serbian quite glibly. In my abyssmal ignorance I don't even know the alphabet. My main duties are to look after Alice, take the family washing

down to the laundry every morning and evening, fetch patients from the train sanitaire from the front, which stops at Nordrovo station at 10 every morning, fetch the mail from Silberovo on the rare occasions when there is any and go to Dessa (our nearest shopping town, 15 miles away) once a week with the Commandant. There are a few long trips, rightly regarded as joy-rides, which have to be undertaken on occasions, but these are generally done by my seniors and not by the likes of me—at any rate till I know the roads better. I love going down to the laundry. It is a little encampment on the shore of the lake consisting of a couple of tents and a rough branched shelter where the women wash under the supervision of two English order-

lies. The lake is my daily joy. It is nearly always blue, but a different blue every morning. The first day I went it was a childlike, innocent sort of plain blue, yesterday when there was a wind it was a deep, angry indigo flecked with white; this morning it was shimmering opal. The hills beyond are not friendly, they are steep and bare and austere, and the whole scene is very lonely. The camp is quite out of sight in a fold of the hill, and there is never a boat to be seen on the lake, or a cottage or hut of any sort within sight.



TWO MACEDONIAN WASHERWOMEN.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)