

The Women's Ward At Morganton

First Impression Bad, Very Bad

This series of articles was written by a young woman who was a patient at the State Hospital for a year and a half ending in December, 1940. She is a member of a prominent state family, was educated at Queens College, and was sent to the institution on the advice of doctors because of a nervous condition. Cultured, refined and sensitive, her experiences there and what she saw with her own eyes make a shocking story.

She is known to The News but her name, for patient reasons, is withheld. There are nine installments in her story, of which this is the first.

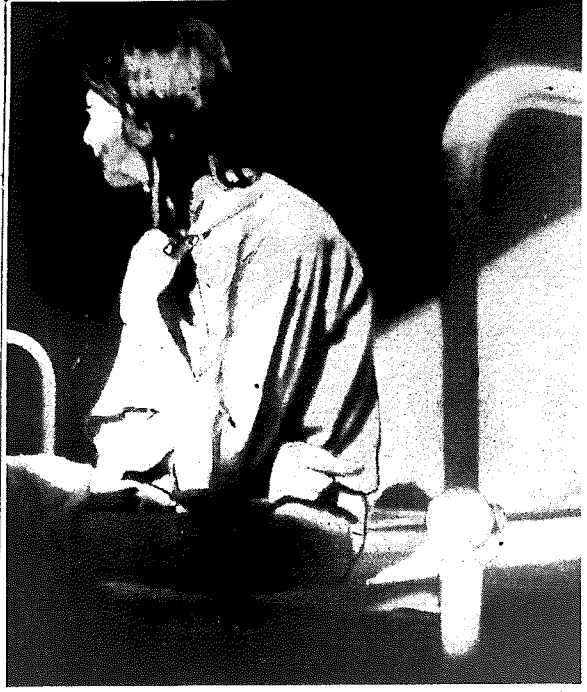
I entered the State Hospital at Morganton one Saturday afternoon in the summer of 1938. I was during the Summer of 1938. I was received at 1 o'clock that afternoon by a doctor and a nurse, neither of whom spoke to me then nor during the preliminary routine I went through before I was assigned to a ward.

The nurse, without ever addressing a word to me, escorted me to my ward, stripped me, and stayed in the room while I bathed. I asked about dinner, and she spoke for the first time. Dinner was over. "What was left," she said, "we gave to the dogs."

UNLICKY PIGS!
THEY GOT THE FOOD
I felt sorry for myself, at first, but when I saw the food, my sympathy was all for the dogs. Supper would be served at 5 o'clock. I was told, and in the meantime I could get my personal belongings in order and adjust myself to my surroundings.

I soon found that "getting my personal belongings in order" consisted merely of rolling all that I possessed in as tight a ball as I could make and cramming it in a small closet along with the clothes of 40 other patients.

"If this is the way our clothes are kept," I thought, "there's not much chance here of building up personal morale."
One of the patients said to me, "How lucky you are to get on this ward when you first enter the hospital. This is a front ward and one



A few hours before this picture was made the woman above had been neatly dressed, her hair waved. Then she became a patient. She has been bathed. She wears one of the "State's wrappers." Forlorn in appearance, if not in spirit too, she sits on a bed with no mattress, only a cotton pad.

of the best wards here. Just what you see the back wards? They were almost black. Dirty they had not been painted in years. In many places the plastering had fallen.

I saw how fortunate I was on my way to supper that night. I passed patients who were crowded together in dark, poorly ventilated halls and rooms, their beds swarming with vermin and jammed so close together that it was impossible for a patient to get out of bed without coming over the foot. One hall, on a long extension cord, served to light both a large hall and rows of rooms on either side. This was in the Center Building, and since that time this building has been improved.

But these conditions, and even worse, still exist in the back buildings. If patients who had no control over their regimen of elimination were held together like cattle, and the inhuman stench from their unclean bodies had so sickened me by the time I reached the dining room that I was gagging.

To this was added the equally repelling sights in the ante-room just outside the dining hall, where steel trays for patients who were too ill to come to the dining room had been stacked. The trays were alive with roaches and rats that had come to feast on the remains of food. Over these, we had to step and thread our way into the dining room.

The human stomach is so organized that, as a rule, it will overcome any unpleasant experience if the owner is sufficiently hungry and has the desire to eat, and if palatable food is offered. And I was very hungry. But it would have taken more than the greasy fatback, white gravy, mush, thick slices of soggy bread, and filthy aprons of the patients who waited on the tables to lure me into eating. It was three days before I could, by rushing through these horrible wards with my eyes half closed, even make a pretense of partaking of the food.

OVER MONEY FROM HOME
CARRIED HIM THROUGH
Had it not been for the fact that my family sent me money so that I could buy food at the State store (and from the faithful colored Bessie who was allowed to peddle her wares on the ward) I might never have had the physical stamina to get well. Even at the store, one could not purchase very wholesome food. There were canned meats, relish spreads, crackers, and a little fruit, always overripe or underripe.

But this was better than the custard, which was much, oatmeal, soup, fatback and beans. Besides, it was not uncommon to find practices, flies and worms cooked in the food. Occasionally we had beef, which was cooked almost to a dry crisp, and which must have come from a questionable part of the cow. Sometimes there was "Blue John" milk. On the hospital farm are raised many fresh vegetables, chickens, and hogs, but rarely did any of these delicacies find their way to the patients' tables. They were for the stewards' dining room. Practically the only green vegetable served was cabbage, which had evidently been cooked for hours. The patients were given eggs once a year, at Easter, unless for some unusual reason a doctor ordered them for a certain patient; and on Easter morning there was great excitement and expectation among the ill-timers when they realized that this was "egg day." The only part of the hog that we ever saw was the fatback. I was in the hospital for one year before we were served fish. Fresh fruits were never served. We were given dried prunes but after I found worms in them, I voluntarily resigned my claim in favor of the oranges.

(Continued tomorrow)

Spain to FARC:

Sergeant In Spanish Civil War Learning To Fight U. S. Style

FORT BRAAG——A sergeant in the famed International Brigade in Spain's Civil War is now a rookie private at the Plattsburgh Artillery Replacement Center here.

But Pvt. Alex Todorovich, who got his baptism of fire as a Spanish Loyalist on the Ebro River, shrugged his shoulders today and said he expected he still has a "long way to go."

"I'm as peaceful as any man," he said, "but I know Italians who live under Mussolini and who can't meet in the streets and talk about the things free men think about."

"And my own people, the Serbs, have had to beat off aggression since their history began."

"America is now in pretty much the same fight as my people, and I, have been. I'm ready to get back in it."

Todorovich is preparing "to get back in it" as a cannoner. It was in the Winter of 1936 that Todorovich, then a newspaper boy in Cleveland, O., de-

veloped an urge to get places where news was being made. He arrived in France on the U. S. S. Roosevelt and joined units being formed for the trip down the war-torn peninsula.

His group hiked twelve hours steadily through the Pyrenees Mountains, evading French gendarmes who did not want to see them officially, and stumbled into a Spanish outpost in the early morning. Todorovich became a driver of a truck.

Enemy aviation struck at their 150-truck caravan on mid-night and Todorovich says the chief casualty of the raid, symbolically, was a dove, which the men found on the grass, slashed across the breast.

SERGEANT IN A YEAR
Todorovich had become a sergeant when the famous Loyalist offensive got underway along the Ebro a year later. His orders were to help "salvage" supplies from bomb-wrecked Torton. Todorovich had his truck down by the river, next to a high wall, and he and his two

helpers climbed aloft to load more easily.

They came in full exposure of a machine-gun nest 200 feet across the river. Shortly they came down hurriedly and did not wait to see whether the enemy would further use them for an artillery target.

An order to disband the International Brigade came in September, 1938. Todorovich left Spain as he had come, through the Pyrenees. Many ex-Loyalists, as combatants, had trouble getting through France, a still-neutral country, and Todorovich counts himself lucky to have reached America Oct. 10, 1938.

Weather Reunion

UNION, N. C.—A varied weather program was on in Union early this morning. It snowed, sizzled and rained. A cold wind blew, and quickly out came the sunshine. Just like that.

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1. To help produce things needed to win the War.
2. To help conserve time, energy, foods, and materials.
3. To make an even greater contribution to health and happiness in the home.
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