

MISS SEILER PLAYS HARP FOR SOLDIERS

'Goes Very Near Firing Line to Entertain Boys

The first American girl ever permitted to be present at a war conference in France, Miss Mary Seiler, of 536 West One Hundred and Eleventh street, New York city, tells of "an exciting day along the front."

Over here, Miss Seiler is known as one of the most talented young American harpists. Over there she is playing before great audiences of American boys, with a Y. M. C. A. badge on her arm, and a gas mask at hand, ready for instant use. She had gone so near the firing line in her tour of the American camps that she has looked on while a battery of Indiana boys fired upon the boche.

Afraid? Not she! Miss Seiler calls the booming of the guns "the most glorious noise I ever heard." Even the music of her beloved harp doesn't come up to it, in her opinion, though the boys who have been listening to her play wouldn't agree with that. Here is what she says:

Has An Exciting Day.

"I'm sitting on a sunny hillside 'somewhere in France,' trying to write letters under the most distracting conditions. On one side of me a military funeral for some American soldiers is in progress. They've just finished playing the Chopin "Funeral March" and the procession is winding down the hill. On the next hillside some big guns are booming at the boche, and I can see the black smoke rising from the forest where the guns are concealed. The anti-aircraft guns are crackling every once in awhile. Altogether it is an exciting day along the front.

"We asked the Paris office to be sent as near the front line trenches as women are allowed to go. We got it! My experiences of the last four weeks are priceless. I never dreamed of playing for such audiences. The response you get simply sweeps you off your feet. And all the time I feel that I'm gaining more than I'm giving.

"There are men over here who have not seen an American girl for over a year. All they ask is just to stand around and look at you. How they love to tell you about letters from home, and to show you their photograph albums! About a thousand have told me that I look exactly like their wives or sisters or sweethearts. The good humor and wit of the soldiers is marvelous, even in moments of great peril.

Tonic to the French.

"I thought that when I got this near the front I would find a very tense and dramatic atmosphere. Not at all. There is an air of easy nonchalance about the way things are done, and the men show wonderful poise and confidence. The attitude of good cheer among the Americans is a wonderful tonic to the tired French.

"Perhaps the one outstanding trait of our boys is their curiosity. During shell fire or an air raid, they stand out in the open to watch the fight, and can hardly be induced to take shelter. They want to see everything.

"The girl who is traveling with me is Grace Kerns of New York city. She is a soprano soloist at St. Bartholomew's, and has one of the most glorious voices I have ever heard. I have my little Irish harp, with which I play her accompaniments, and harp solos. Most of our programs we give out doors, because it is impossible to get the crowds inside. Our audiences number from 200 to 3,000. We give two programs a day, motoring from our hotel or billet to the various camps. We usually have luncheon and dinner each day with the officers.

Too Few Entertainers.

"The canteen workers are doing a valuable work, and the entertainers are all too few. Our bookings have followed right behind Elsie Janis. Maximilian Foster and Clarence Budington Kelland, the writers, were among the Y. M. C. A. men who came over on our boat.

"The life over here simply cannot be described! It has to be lived. It is not at all what I expected. It is bigger in every way. The opportunities for service are infinite and the human dividends are simply enormous."

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An old fashioned taffy party for children was given by Mrs. D. T. Irvine Jr., and Mrs. Gould Senn Thursday night at the home of Mrs. Senn, 1928 Lake avenue South. There were 10 guests.

HARPIST



MISS MARY SEILER.