

December 12th 1917.

Copy.

Your Excellency,

the despiteful treatment to which I am continually exposed, compels me of addressing myself to Your Excellency, referring to the noble responsibility, the Royal British Government has undertaken by declaring her willingness to protect Austro-Hungarian subjects in this country.

How I came to English soil, I have described in my previous letters and as my status and personality are known to Your Good Offices, I dont have to enlarge on these points.

I beg Your Excellency, to draw Your full attention to this case, as same is a precedence-case.

As the regulations only permit me to write 23 lines to my native country and therefore a longer communication is impossible, I beg Your Excellency to submit to the Imperial Royal Foreign Office in Vienna the following text:

"Since February 1st 1917 with the exeption of about 2 weeks, I am an inmate of various Camp Hospitals at the expense of the British Government, but I am sorry to say, that I have received here the necessary treatment. My name has figured daily on the sick list, occasionally I have received drugs to calm my nerves or to make me sleep. This is about all I have ever received. I am exactly 24 months in England and have spent 19 months in different Hospitals.

The illness I am suffering from is Locomotor Ataxy and War-Disease, the latter called in my native language "Kriegspsychose". These were the two reasons, for which I was discharged from the Army during the war and it is mentioned in my discharge papers of the 6th Department at the Garrison Hospital, that according to the typical "War-Disease" I cannot be held responsible for my actions, if exposed to exertions or excitements in connections with the war.

One will certainly agree, that such a statement, made by Europe's well known specialists Professor Doctor Pilcz and Professor Doctor Finger, both Gentlemen of the Viennese University will have its value everywhere.

My discharge took place within 6 hours of the termination and I was declared as absolutely unfit for any military or civil service. Needless to say, that my disease rapidly progresses during my detention, as such an environment, with all its hardships and horrors demands more patience than to live a life amongst those, one loves.

Being discharged, medical advises were given to me to stay at every occasion, to live in a dry climate, to avoid the exposure of damp or humide air, especially every physical and mental exertion and every excitement.

Everybody, who claims to possess common sense, must know, that to live a life in an internment camp at the Isle of Man, known through its murderous climate is hardly a treatment for my incurable disease. If I don't pay, I have to work. (At this occasion I must draw the general attention to the question, whether or not a civilian can be forced to work, like to clean, to wash, to carry coals etc.) If I am in need of Medical Attendance my name is put on a shred of paper. Instead to live in a dry climate, I am exposed to wind, draft, bitter cold, etc. It is only natural, that my disease has increased to an alarming extent.

Lately I was transferred from the Camp Hospital to the Isolation Hospital in Camp 3, in order to undergo a special treatment. I have been 2 weeks in the "Isolation Hospital", but I have received no treatment for the following time. The Medical Officer in charge, Dr. Sugden, has warmly expressed his sympathy, but advised me not to undergo the necessary treatment, with reference to my "Hyper-Neurasthenia" of the "affected Central-Nerve-System". The said Gentleman also informed me, that he does not offer me the treatment in question and he has reported to Major Dickson, Sub-Commandant of Camp 3 that my case "is no case for the Isolation Hospital". These the very words, the Medical Officer has said to me, on December 10th 1917 at 11 20 a.m.

I could only undergo another treatment, which demands great care, as far as surroundings are concerned and as the wash-house, the W.C. are only attainable by crossing the open air in the "Isolation Hospital", this particular kind of treatment was, therefore, out of question at the said hospital.

At this occasion, I cannot help passing off remarks regard to the Isolation Hospital Block C., in which - believe - the majority of patients are Austro-Hungarian subjects. This particular Hospital is the rottenst of its kind in which one is forced to exist. The Rain falls through the ceilings, the wind blows continually through the wooden partitions, ect. There are no beds. One is simply forced to sleep on wood and straw. Applications for beds are simply refused. My illness does not permit me to sleep on boards. My application, to provide me with a hospital-bed at my own expenditure, was, however unsuccessful. I have been informed that even in British prisons, hospital-beds are reserved to convicts who are ill. As far as I remember, the unfortunate creatures interned on this Devil's Island have committed no other crime, than were born in a country, on which Great Britain has declared war.

The most dangerous point lies in the dreadful unhygienic arrangements. It has to be remembered, that all

cases of infectious diseases are supposed to be treated in "Isolation Hospital". The Hospital, but especially the so-called store-room are nothing else than a hearth of filth and vermin. Blankets from patients, who suffer from tuberculosis are dried in the store-room, the paillasses for use are stored away instead being destroyed. Anybody coming from temporarily fever receives a blanket from the store-room; the next day same is returned to this particular room to be used again the next time as a sheet for patients suffering from incontinence of urine. It must not be forgotten that all our luggage is stored in the same room which contains also the library, dishes, towels, etc. The consequences of this criminal negligence can occur, I leave it to judge to the competent Authorities. There is no slightest disinfection in use, although there are patients suffering from open wounds of a certain skin-disease and other contagious diseases and one can hardly avoid to come into direct contact with objects and articles which must strongly be considered as "bacillus-carriers." The man who has erected this particular part, had surely not in his mind to build a hospital. But the man who has put it into use is Colonel King, late Assistant Director of the Medical Service at the Isle of Man (Western Command),

and although this man has been finally thrown out of his position, I would still like to charge this man for having made Sanitary arrangements with criminal tendencies against the conscience of a doctor. If the representative of the Royal Swedish Legation would take the great trouble and visit the particular part described above, my report will be confirmed in all its details.

One will certainly understand that all these blunders can hardly be considered as the right treatment for my illness. My nervous disease does not permit me any kind of treatment but all the same, everything is done to drive me away. I have not the slightest desire to end in an English workhouse and I must venture the question, whether or not our Government will show similar consideration towards subjects as the German Government has shown towards hers?

On December 10th 1917 at 3.p.m. I was retransferred to the Isolation Hospital to Camp 4. The transfer was carried out by A.N.C.O. of Camp 3, who has brought me first to the camp Hospital, for medical examination. I have no opportunity to see a doctor or anybody else and I cannot go into the compound. As far as I know from my previous office work, prisoners received into a Camp from the Isolation Hospital must be examined first by the Medical Officer concerned.

As I have not been examined, I reported myself ill in writing to the Subcommandant of Camp 4 and took the liberty to inform him, that I am in urgent need of medical help.

To-day I went to the Hospital and asked for the due treatment, but the doctor in charge, Dr. Templetown, read my report to me, that I have refused treatment in the Detention Hospital. If such a report has been made upon me, I must call it a confounded lie!! How can I refuse a treatment, which was never offered to me??! But- if same would have been offered to me, I would certainly have to refuse as my state of health and the accommodations do not permit such a kind of treatment. I have then asked Dr. Templetown to undergo another treatment, which I am very anxious to do. Dr. Templetown has promised me in this direction. Later in the afternoon, a box of pills, (a patent medicine) has been given to me and a bottle of medicine. I am only referring to a certain treatment, which was - so I have been informed - already given in similar cases to inmates of this Camp and as the Medical Authorities are aware of my case and do "not" offer me the similar treatment, a report on this criminal negligence is not necessary. But I believe, for claims after the war, the attitude of the authorities is an attendance to an invalid.

Dr. Templetown is, therefore, of opinion, that a few pills and a mixture of medicin, are the right kind of treatment to prevent a further increase of locomotor ataxia and nervous disease. The symptoms of my disease are, affected central nerve system, continually suffering from weakness and headache, lightning pains in my legs, great pains in my back. Absolutely blindness in twilight and temporarily shivering. Against these typical symptoms I receive a few pills. I like to know, where Dr Templetown made his examination, which qualified him as a doctor in medical science.

If a neutral person would inquire into these matters, the competent authorities would answer: "Such a lie, everything has been done for this man, he was always in hospital with good food, a nice bed to sleep in, the doctor say daily. We are trying to give him the best treatment we could, he was always treated with more consideration than anybody else, even with courtesy, but this man has shown himself as a nuisance everywhere". This would be about the report upon me. But if a neutral person of medical science would find out what I have "not" received and the patent medicine, insufficient to cure the doctors' disease, he would put his hands to his head and cry: "How is such a thing possible"! I remember a french "bon mot" from the court-martial at Rennes:

le revers de la médaille C'est éternary la canaille.

In the Hague Agreement, made between England and Germany, it is laid down, that prisoners of war, who are suffering from "barbed wire disease" are available for a transfer to a neutral country. The war-disease I am suffering from is worse than any state of barbed wire disease, because it is on a toxicological basis. May I ask: Are the unfortunate subjects of Austria-Hungary less precious to their Government than German subjects to Germany? Or - are Austro-Hungarians immunified against particular diseases?

Taking the fact, that I served as an officer at the front and that I have lost my health whilst engaged on duty, does not my case deserve all possible consideration?

It is very remarkable, that every country insists to fight for Christianity, justice, freedom and humanity and that every Government's official stumbles over the first example which is given to him. I understand, charity begins at home and to torment an invalid prisoner like in times of the war is an absolute necessity to gain victory!

But a prisoner is no more an enemy - he is a poor and defenceless creature! Not a very long time ago, a member of the House of Lords did pride himself much upon the treatment of

prisoners in British hands and has pathetically shouted out: "To treat the prisoner with all consideration, must be the pride of our nation!" I would like to intern his Lordship for a fortnight in Camp 4 at Knockaloe Camp. It would surely enlarge his horizon and open his eyes, as far as it concerns the honour of British officials!

I must point out very distinctly, that I do "not" receive the treatment for my disease I ought to have, I am exposed to the utmost hypocrisy in the full sense of this word and everything is done to handicap me as prisoner as much as possible.

But I am neither a convict nor a prisoner. I have been brought into this country by highway robbery. I have never lived in England, I was never captured as a fighting soldier, I was never engaged in anykind of "war business" after my discharge took place. I was simply a harmless passenger on board a neutral steamer, travelling outside British waters, on my way to the United States, leaving the belligerent countries behind me. I, therefore, must strongly protest to be placed in a line with effective members of the fighting forces. or those subjects, whose attention was to strengthen the Army ect."

I appeal to Your Excellency for an exact transmission of the above text to the Imperial and Royal Foreign Office, with my respectful request, that the Imperial and Royal Government of Austria-Hungary will see her way of having me released from this torture, which either will drive me crazy or bring me into the grave. The war is in its fourth year and during all this time, the attitude of the responsible officials has shown, that they rather let us die like scabby dogs, before giving a man the chance to protect his health and life.

The Imperial and Royal Government of Austria-Hungary certainly recollect the services I rendered to my homeland and will find a certain way for immediate reprisals.

Your Excellency,

I bear the fulliest persuasion, Your Excellency will not miss to stand up against the obvious hypocrisy and covardice, to which I am purposely exposed. I hope, that Your Excellency will force the competent authorities, that opportunity will be given to me to treat my case in the best way.

Having been myself a member of the Imperial and Royal Legation Mission at the Imperial and Royal Embassy in a foreign country, in which capacity opportunity was given to me to protect a Swedish Officer envoyé in an official

admission to a royal court, I beg to state, that I have not forgotten certain rules due in these circles and if I am allowed to say, may I venture, that a little measure of good faith and courtesy are essential elements, wherever people of a certain society come into contact, without which, civilised world would go to pieces.

I trustfully hope, that I have not unduly imposed on Your Excellency's valuable time and I most respectfully beg to express my sincerest hope, that by justifying the confidence the Imperial and Royal Government of Austria-Hungary has placed into Your Excellency, the steps Your Excellency will take in the proposed directions, will lay the basis for the redemption of my physical and mental sufferings, described in the above report.

I beg to accept my sincerest thanks in anticipation of the human help Your Excellency will grant to me and beg to remain,

Your Excellency's

obedient servant

Arthur Gruenhut

Lieutenant Imp. and Roy. 3rd Rgt of Lancers and Officer
of the Imp. Roy. V.M.C.

Your Excellency

Count Wrangel

Swedish minister plenipotentiary to H.M. Court at St.
James's Palace, London, W.1.