

WOMEN UNDER FIRE.

HEROIC DEVOTION TO DUTY.

The bombardment of Antwerp, although its fall was known to be imminent, was absolutely ruthless, and hospitals, wounded, doctors and nurses all had experience of its horrors. One thing stands out, the splendid courage of our British women, medical and nursing; to this all reports bear witness, so that is the silver lining to a very black cloud. The German guns smashed through the forts and fired the stately city, and the scenes of flight the day before they entered on the 9th inst. were almost indescribable. The *Times* correspondent writes:—

THE ENGLISH COLONY HOSPITAL.

"On Thursday evening there cannot have been more than a few hundred people except the wounded left in the city, chiefly nurses and doctors in hospitals and including no soldiers.

"In walking through the city I found the English Colony Hospital in great distress. Only 16 patients, all Belgian soldiers, were there, but these were looked after by Nurse Ward and Nurse Freshfield, with the assistance of one old man, known as "Scotty," who proved himself a hero. The other nurses had been allowed to depart, and Nurses Ward and Freshfield and "Scotty" had carried all the patients downstairs from the upper wards to the protection of the lower floor. At great personal risk both nurses went alternately through the bombarded streets to the Red Cross and military hospitals, begging for help in removing the patients to other hospitals, but they could get no help. At 6 o'clock on Thursday evening I saw them finally get their patients to safety, and too great praise cannot be given them for their devotion." We have since been informed these nurses managed, by almost superhuman efforts, to get their patients on a barge, and thus away.

THE BRITISH FIELD HOSPITAL.

Mr. Arthur Ruhl, an American gentleman, describes in the *Times* the removal of the British Field Hospital, of which Miss Theresa Bryan was Matron, who showed admirable courage, refusing when the British wounded had been removed, to leave the Belgians until she had seen them in safety.

"In the thick of the bombardment the wounded were carried out to motor-omnibuses waiting in the street—the Boulevard Léopold—some partly dressed, some merely wrapped in blankets. . .

"Nearly two hours must have been spent in getting the wounded dressed and into the omnibuses; meanwhile shells were crashing into the pavement along the Boulevard Léopold, one burst in the court at the rear of the hospital, another blew off a cornice not more than 50 yards away, and all this time those who had been the first to be moved into the street had to wait. . . Nothing could have been more admirable than the behaviour of the entire *personnel* under these trying conditions—very literally under fire. Every

one seemed to feel it necessary to explain that he or she was leaving only because ordered to do so, and nurses and orderlies worked about the omnibuses, making their helpless soldiers as comfortable as possible, and as cheerful and unconcerned as if German shells were no more than summer rain. I had seen some men that morning in the trenches, and their coolness under a fire they were helpless to answer was superb. . . These nurses had not even trenches to shelter them, and it took a rather unforeseen and difficult kind of courage to leave a fairly safe masonry building, go out into the open street, and sit smiling and helpful on the top of a motor-omnibus during a wait of half an hour or so, any second of which might be one's last.

"In a neighbouring street, the Rue Nerviens, in the Franco-Belge Hospital, were two English ladies, a Miss Cole and her sister. . . They were keeping as calm and smiling as possible to subdue as best they could the fears of the Belgian wounded, who were ready to jump out of bed, whatever their condition, rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. Theirs, too, was a difficult task—to wait with a ward full of wounded and more or less panicky men, in a deserted city into which shells were still crashing, for the tramp of German soldiers and the knock on the street door which meant that they were prisoners."

WOMEN'S NATIONAL SERVICE LEAGUE HOSPITAL.

Mrs. St. Clair Stobart, of the Women's National Service League, and her fine band of medical women and nurses, had a most exciting time. Their hospital corps which went to Antwerp on September 22nd, was working in a concert hall at Burchem, in the direct line of shell fire from the south, and close to a large ammunition depot. Dr. Florence Stoney, who acted as medical superintendent, and who with the staff has arrived in England, has given to the press a most graphic account of the terrible twenty-four hours under fire, and she speaks with much gratitude of the help given by an English colour-sergeant, T. Cunningham, of Chatham, who behaved splendidly in spite of a bad wound in the head. "Not one of the staff of women doctors, nurses, and orderlies lost her head."

Mrs. St. Clair Stobart described the escape in the *Daily Mail*—

"We arranged, if a bombardment began, to remove our wounded into the cellars—three dirty little caves under our kitchen. At midnight on Wednesday the bombardment began. We were roused by a rushing, fluttering sound through the air that seemed to go burr—bump.

"One shot came into the house next to us and ripped the roof clean off. The house on the other side received another shot which went through the middle of it. It caught fire. Another shot made a hole 6 ft. deep near the main door of our hospital. Another fell in the road just outside; another thirty yards away, and another ten yards beyond. They might have been firing at the hospital.

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