



Our Foreign Letter.

NURSING THE WOUNDED.

Athens, May 6th, 1897.

We have done so much since we said good-bye at Victoria that I must resist the temptation to give in detail the events of the past few days, as a mere sketch would fill pages. We got our first whiff of the Græco-Turkish War at Brindisi, where we found that we had as fellow travelling companions young Garibaldi and his corps of Italian volunteers, some English volunteers, twenty-one Russian Sisters of the Red Cross of Russia, ten nurses and two doctors from Denmark, and three Swedish nurses in charge of a Professor. The grandson of the great Italian patriot sat near us at meals, and is a fair-faced English-looking lad, with sincere eyes, grave and simple in manner—evidently made of good stuff. We exchanged cards, and a promise on his side that the shattered remains of his corps should, if possible, be brought to the English Ambulance Hospital, and upon ours that his wounded should be most tenderly dealt with. At Patras, these brave fellows took train for Athens, amidst immense enthusiasm. The Nursing Corps were of course intensely interesting to us, the Ignat Russian Sisters, habited in fusty black, travelled second-class with that appreciation of discomfort which is reserved in our day to the *religieuse*, and we parted with them at Corfu, where they awaited orders from Athens—a somewhat uncertain quantity. The Danes were a band of sturdy women, all solid, muscular and amiable, dressed in grey camelot, supposed to be uniform, but the bodice of each nurse differed in cut and trimming, and thus showed the cloven hoof of her lack of organisation. An amiable lady who bound her brows with the black velvet bands of our grandmothers, and thus coquetted with the *coiffure Græcque*, acted as *duenna*, but was again under the absolute dominion of two Professors—veritable sheep dogs—in whose presence the sedate Nursing Corps looked neither to the left nor to the right. The by-play behind the back of a youthful and good-looking correspondent of a New York paper, who having bestowed a posy of lovely roses upon the matron, proceeded to enter into conversation with the flower of the flock (a fair and very graceful maiden) amused us greatly. The correspondent talked “tall” with much *emprossement*, the maiden smiled, and was about to enjoy the joke, when lo and behold, she caught the irate eye and warning finger of the Professor, and she “closed up,” much to the astonishment of the prattling youth. At Corfu—pearl of Ionian isles—we of course went ashore and drove round, along lanes, past bowers of roses; we saw

all the sights, the King's gardens, the Venetian fort, and we rowed on the sapphire waters. Everywhere, we met the two Professors, solemn, black-coated, red-crossed; but the little flock of grey doves obedient and sedate, remained on deck demure, sewing little red crosses on to flannel bands, to adorn the stalwart arms of their medical masters.

I seated myself in their midst. “Can any of you speak English?” I inquired. Had they not sat there mum-chance for six mortal hours, within a five minutes' row of one of the most exquisite spots upon God's earth, and had I not met the Professors on the island, seated side by side in a luxurious carriage and pair, smoking monster pipes, and just feasting on all the sweetness and loveliness of this most exquisite isle; yet these grey women, here they sat on deck, hour after hour, just stitching, stitching, stitching. I should have liked to have taken their needles, and given them a good sharp prick to arouse their interest in the exquisite bit of world within their vision. However, these amiable ladies are now departing to work in the hospitals in Athens, and it is to be hoped that they may at least be permitted to visit the Acropolis in the full glare of the afternoon sun, if a moonlight visit is forbidden as too sentimental for women of their nation.

We arrived at Patras about three a.m., and by five a.m. landed on the busy quay already thronged with crowds of enthusiastic people. Garibaldi lands—claps and cheers. English volunteers land—more clapping, more cheers. An international conglomeration of male and female persons land, all wearing conspicuously the Red Cross—more claps, more cheers. Then came the foreign press—very gorgeous, not to say bellicose in appearance—Tyrolese hats, spats, artistic heather mixture hose, brown boots, riding breeches, pearl buttons, velveteen coats, more buttons, Byronian collars, scarlet ties, cut-away coats, cartridge belts, gauntlet gloves, daggers, revolvers and Kodaks, accompanied by a stout person in a blue jersey, with “Cook” embroidered in yellow and scarlet in immense letters across his ample chest.

Thus we land on Grecian soil, and with what a motley crowd we mingle. It is not yet six a.m.; so we cross the great square and deposit our packages at the Grand Hotel, where from the balcony an ever-varying scene of interest is to be viewed. We learn later that the big steamer at the end of the quay is to convey two thousand of the Ethnicke Hetairia to Epirus to join the Greek Army; and these men—fine fellows—sensibly dressed in a uniform of strong brown holland artistically crossed and re-crossed over shoulders and around the waist by cartridge belts, are being fêted and farewelled by an admiring crowd—some hundreds of men dressed in every costume under the sun, from the “ballet” skirt and rich embroideries of the national costume, to the cotton rags of the professional beggar. All at once immense excitement is evident in the seething mob, and someone exclaims. “Ah! a woman in the uniform of the Ethnicke Hetairia—it is Gleni—she is going to the war to encourage the men.”

In half a minute, I too was mingling with this extraordinary crowd, followed by the American journalist. Kodak in hand, we joined “Gleni,” congratulated her on her courage, mounted her on a cart, and placing her in position, proceeded to take snap-shots. The whole episode was too odd—Gleni,

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