



Our Foreign Letter.

NURSING THE WOUNDED.

Athens, May 20th, 1897.

ONE is always hoping to find time to write at length of the intensely interesting events of daily life in connection with the Græco-Turkish war, but every night finds ones energies at so low an ebb, that power of description is an absolute impossibility. Yesterday and to-day, the steamers have arrived at the Piræus laden with men wounded in the battle at Domoko, and all the hospitals, public and private, are crowded to overflowing with shattered soldiers. At our Chalcis hospital, nearly one hundred wounded have been admitted during the past twenty-four hours, and at the Piræus hospital we are full to overflowing, several extra beds having been tucked in, while the slight cases are accommodated for the time being on mattresses in cosy corners. It is strange how many true words are spoken in jest, and it will be remembered that in a former letter I told how on the outward journey we had met and made the acquaintance of young Garibaldi, the grandson of the hero of Italian liberty, and how we had offered to care for the wounded of the Cipriani and Phil-Hellenic Legions. To-day, as fate would have it, the *Thessaly* brought down from Domoko a large contingent of wounded Italian volunteers, who were all brought to our Piræus hospital, many of whom are very seriously injured; so that we shall now be able to redeem our promise of caring for these brave men. I am told by an eye witness that, in one trench alone, where 150 Garibaldians were fighting, of course well to the front, upwards of 60 were wounded and 10 killed; indeed the battle of Domoko has been the most deadly engagement of the war, and all wounds which we have seen have been received in front. Captain Baltazzi, the courageous Captain of the Phil-Hellenic Legion died from a bullet wound in the abdomen, and is deeply grieved for by all his men. One of our patients who was struck by a bullet which first passed through the left arm, and then through the lung, has had his gory garments carefully preserved, and despatched to his family, as proof positive of his serious injuries, rather a ghastly parcel for devoted womankind to inspect.

During the past week, some of our nurses have been deputed to new spheres of work. Miss Jessie Parson has been appointed Sister-in-Charge at the Piræus Hospital, with Sisters Hill, Walker and Johnstone to help her. Miss Nesbit has been appointed Sister-in-Charge at the Chalcis Hospital, with Sisters Fawkes, Curtis, Warriner, Winder and Whiteford working with her. Sisters Waller and

Moody started off alone in the most plucky manner for Karavassera in Epirus to help, and if needs be replace, the Sisters who have been working night and day near Arta for the past five weeks, and in the terrible stress for accommodation have even given up their beds to the wounded men.

In Athens, the work of caring for the sick in wards organised by the Crown Princess is ever increasing, and from one ward of twenty-eight beds, the numbers have been increased to 100, so that I have to-day, at Her Royal Highness' request requisitioned four more nurses through the *Daily Chronicle* National Fund to be sent from London, to help with the overpowering amount of work. Miss Beatrice Farnsworth has been appointed Head Sister of the *Ecole Militaire*, and the Crown Princess has done me the honour to request me to act as inspector of her wards, so that the nursing organisation may be as complete as possible.

To-morrow, I leave by steamer for Chalcis, so shall be at close quarters with the Turks who are now at Lamia, to see the arrangements completed at our hospital there, but shall return to Athens the following day, as it is essential to have a permanent official at the capital, to deal with letters, telegrams, commissariat, and so forth.

The Queen of the Hellenes has during the past week sent some beautiful pictures of Christ and the Madonna for each ward, and one for the operating theatre at Piræus. The Greeks are a very devout nation, and find great comfort in kissing the Christ before retiring to sleep.

Visitors we have in endless numbers, and every day gifts of lovely flowers are brought to decorate the wards—everything is arranged as much like an English hospital as possible, and the Greek doctors who superintend the transport of the wounded by steamer from the seat of war, instead of showing any jealousy, of which not a little was exhibited in the early days of the war, have expressed the wish "to bring us all their serious cases as they are so well cared for and happy."

I cannot speak too highly of the general behaviour of all our nurses; they are showing an admirable spirit, and meet every difficulty with good temper. Times off duty are few and far between, and very long hours of work are the rule, but in spite of it all they are bright and happy, and by their untiring devotion to duty, their skill and their uniform appearance, are becoming quite a proverb in Greece for general excellence. I have little doubt that the Athenian doctors having once become accustomed to trained nurses will speedily insist upon the inauguration of training schools of their own; and indeed, the Grecian ladies have both the hearts and the heads to become most efficient and sympathetic nurses of the sick.

The sacrifice of life, and the horrors and suffering of this war, will never be known. It is enough that the time is near at hand, when in attempting to estimate their losses—husbands, fathers, brothers, sons will be met no more, and the homeless, the fatherless and the widow will abound in the land. Now, the last flicker of excitement for a hopeless cause sustains the people in their undying hatred of oppression and horror of the relentless Turk, but soon the heel of hideous oppression may stifle their cry for Liberty. Europe must see to it, that the sword which strikes for human right under the flag of the Cross is not overcome by the scimitar

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)