

The National Greek Ambulance Fund.

DURING the past week, Her Majesty the Queen of Greece has twice honoured the *Daily Chronicle* Hospital at Chalcis with a visit. On Saturday, the Queen and the Crown Princess, attended by Count Massala and the Lady-in-Waiting, paid a long visit to the Hospital. Her Majesty showed the greatest interest in the patients, and spoke to each of them, promising those whose families are now refugees, and who are without news of them, to make enquiries for them. The Queen has since sent pictures for the wards, and cigarettes for the patients. Her Majesty expressed her warm approval of the arrangements of the Hospital.

"Daily Chronicle" Hospital,
Chalcis, Eubœa.

When it became apparent, after the retreat from Volo, that further fighting between the Greeks and the Turks must necessarily take place further south, the need of ambulance hospitals near the front became evident. Dr. Abbott therefore proceeded to Chalcis—with Sisters Nesbit, Fawkes, and Lees—to prospect. Fortunately, for those so soon to be wounded at Velestino and Domoko, they found, upon arrival, that the National School Buildings were being used as shelter for refugees, and that they were admirably suited, with slight adaptation, for a surgical hospital of 100 beds. Having provided for the care of the refugees elsewhere, Dr. Abbott and the Sisters set to work to prepare the house for the reception of wounded soldiers, and shopping in this somewhat important and primitive capital of the island of Eubœa was not devoid of amusement. It seems somewhat odd to the habitués of Maple's to tramp from shop to shop, picking up a few yards of longcloth (made in Manchester) here and a few more there—in the end buying up, to make fifty pairs of sheets, the entire stock-in-trade of various flourishing linendrapers. Blankets, procured in the same distracting manner, were also soon at a premium, and many interesting customs of the country were thus discovered.

In Athens—and, indeed, in Greece generally—each branch of manufacture is largely home-made, and the different trades are usually confined to the different quarters of a town. Here, for instance, in one street live the mattress-makers, through the open doors and windows of whose shops the master and his men are to be seen busily at work; you walk in and give an order, and there and then before your eyes the work is begun. This is interesting, but when

one arrives at the shop of a tinsmith who has never seen a kettle, or of a carpenter who has never heard of a trencher, then one's inventive faculties are called into play. Luckily for the future comfort of the patients at Chalcis, Sister Nesbit wields the power of the pencil, and the results of her talent are abundantly evident in all the useful appliances and convenient items of furniture which the local craftsmen have produced from her sketches. The wards are furnished in the simplest and most useful manner, with military beds, natty locker stools, with rail for towel, and sensible cupboards for linen and dressings. The large lobby entrances in each block, into which all the wards open, are respectively used as an operating theatre and as a dining-room. They are airy and well-lighted, and very convenient for either purpose, and as visitors come every day at four o'clock and have to pass through this hall, they appear intensely interested in watching the nursing staff at afternoon tea.

The first week's preparation of the Chalcis Hospital of course included prolonged fumigation and scrubbing, and thorough cleansing of the house; an enormous fund of patience being required to accomplish this feat. Next came the furnishing, a terribly difficult process, and, just as the first fifty beds were ready, news came of the battles of Velestino and Gribovo, and of the rapid retreat of the Greeks, the wounded being hastily conveyed to the coast and literally packed on the small and comfortless steamers by which they were to be conveyed to the base at Athens. Chalcis, which is exquisitely situated at the very narrowest point of the Euripos Channel, which can be spanned by a drawbridge, and through which all steamers going north or south must pass, proved a delightful resting-place for many men wounded in the two last battles of the war. Wednesday, May 19th, witnessed the passage of three steamers, carrying in all 800 wounded men and thousands of refugees. Our medical staff and Sisters describe the scenes on board these boats as heartrending; even the holds being packed with wounded right up into the bows; the decks literally crammed with poor homeless people—surrounded by all that remained to them of worldly goods—children, goats, fowls, bedding, and pans, jammed together. The majority of the animals, tied by the feet, were attached to some convenient article of furniture; grief and destitution were written plainly on the furrowed and sad-eyed faces of the whole miserable crowd.

In the saloons, wounded officers were placed with little attempt at comfort, but the holds, in which there was no light, contained hundreds of wounded men, the dead, dying, and suffering

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)