

Cross Society *imagined* there were no women fitted for the work. For she knew better.

Arrived at Belgrade she found few if any trained nurses in the hospitals, and in Sofia the same thing intensified—"hopeless under-manning—many of the best surgeons being at the front—and in the case of the nurses, a general lack of training and of experience," and having secured the friendship of Dr. Kiranoff, highly placed in the medical service, by an impromptu speech in German for "the women of England" at a dinner given in honour of Mr. Noel Buxton, M.P., she cabled home to the Corps for the members, provisionally selected, to start at once for Sofia. Meanwhile, at Jamboli, she took the opportunity of studying further the working of emergency hospitals. In one large building were 200 beds occupied by 250 patients lying three in two beds placed close together. The staff consisted of one surgeon and five nurses, and at nine o'clock one night there arrived a further convoy of bullock waggons, bringing 300 additional wounded from Lule Burgas. Mrs. Stobart writes: "Indescribable were my feelings as these men—a dozen at a time—streamed into the little surgery to have their wounds dressed, and I saw the Herculean task of those five overworked, but calm and heroic sisters, and of the surgeon who was in the operating theatre—realizing as I did that at home hundreds of skilled and disciplined nurses, who had offered their services, had been told that there was no work "fitted for women" in the Balkans.

"Shirts and trousers were frequently glued with clotted blood to the wounds, and had to be wrenched or cut away. With 300 patients outside urgently needing to be tended, in addition to the 250 already in the wards, delicate handling was impossible. Collargol, with which in our

own hospital we later, at the request of the Bulgarian doctors, experimented, with marvellous effect, had not apparently yet been introduced. . . . Only the stretcher-bound and those for whom walking was impossible were retained, and laid on mattresses on the floor, wherever spare corners could be found. I could not discover when, if ever, those devoted women and that surgeon slept, but they were calm and philosophical, as though the conditions were not at all abnormal."

Of Mrs. Stobart's reception by Bulgaria's Queen, who herself took a foremost part in the nursing; and the adventures of the Corps on its

seven days' trek in springless bullock waggons, "*in theory* covered with hay or straw, but *in practice* the oxen invariably ate the bedding by day, with the connivance of the drivers, who could not otherwise get enough fodder for their starving cattle," we must refer the reader to the book itself.

By the courtesy of the publishers we are able to produce the picture of Mrs. Stobart's waggon with its driver, Pietro, "a splendid fellow, typically Bulgarian, dignified, silent, always courteous and obliging." Without bedding, often more than short of food, the Corps determinedly pushed on to its destination. "Many more people," as Mrs. Stobart casually remarks, "die



PIETRO WITH MY BULLOCK WAGGON.

from over-feeding than from lack of food. We quickly adjusted our standard of requirements to circumstances, and were therefore quite content."

Of the hospitals organised, and the sufferings relieved by the little band of women who refused to be fettered by the callous decisions of the British Red Cross Society, much might be written, but space forbids. As a contemporary justly points out, Mrs. Stobart has put the War Office and the British Red Cross Society on its defence, and we think it will find it difficult to put forward one which can be justified.

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