

**WITH A FLYING  
COLUMN OF THE  
RUSSIAN RED  
CROSS.**

MISS VIOLETTA  
THURSTAN.

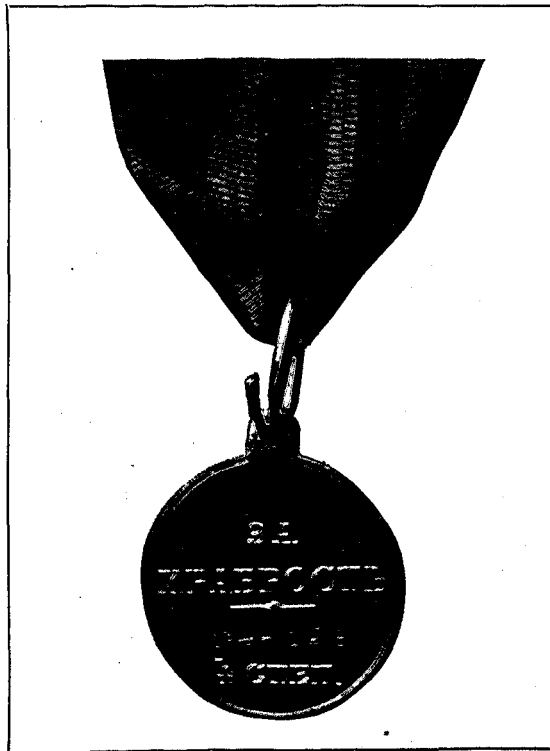
"What made you think of going to Russia?" I asked the question of Miss Violetta Thurstan who, in the practical, if severe, uniform of a Russian Red Cross Sister, sat by an English fireside, looking a little frail after her recent experiences but as delighted to have had her place, both east and west, in helping to alleviate the misery and suffering in this terrible war, as she was when she called at the office of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, in August last, to report that she had been chosen to superintend a party of nurses being sent out to Belgium by the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

Miss Thurstan's experiences in Belgium have already been related in this journal. She was one of the party who, through the good offices of the American consul, were permitted to return home *via* Cologne and Copenhagen, instead of being imprisoned until the end of the war.

In reply to my question, she said: "When we got to Copenhagen, there was a rush for newspapers, and amongst other things I read a long account from Russia, in which the awful distress in Poland was described, the sickness, and the sufferings of the refugees. Poland was called the Belgium of Russia, and I thought that, as



MISS VIOLETTA THURSTAN.



THE ORDER OF ST. GEORGE FOR VALOUR.

I had been turned out of Belgium, perhaps I was intended to go to Poland."

"And how did you get there?"

"I had an invitation while in Copenhagen to meet Prince Gustav of Denmark—a nephew of the Empress Marie Feodorovna of Russia, and sat next to him at dinner. He promised me an introduction to Her Majesty, who is the head of the Red Cross in Russia, and was as good as his word. When Miss Greg and I, and two other trained nurses, arrived in Petrograd, we were summoned to the Empress's Palace, and received by Her Majesty in her boudoir, when she was most gracious and charming."

Miss Thurstan is an excellent linguist, and finding herself very handicapped without a knowledge of Russian, she spent every spare minute in studying this difficult language, going about with a note-book in her pocket, and jotting down new words which she heard each day.

She and her companions were soon sent to Warsaw. They previously received much kindness from the British Colony in Petrograd, who presented them with sheepskins.

For a short time she worked in a Red Cross Hospital, designed for 500 beds, but which had speedily to accommodate 1,000; and patients were lying all down the corridors. The Matron of the hospital was Sister Ivanoff, who was an excellent organiser. She had had two years' training, and had also worked in the Russo-

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