

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT.

FROM WARSAW.

Letter from Miss Violetta Thurstan to the Hon. Secretary of the National Union of Trained Nurses.

Warsaw, December 9th, 1914.

I have had the most exciting time I have ever had in my life. I must tell you about it. In the last letter I wrote to you from Lodz—of course I don't know whether you ever got it—I told you that we had had orders to evacuate the hospital, that we had got all our wounded out, and that a Polish lady had carried off all three of us—the Princess, Miss G., and myself—to her house for a rest and a bath. I enjoyed that bath more than any I have ever had. We were all simply eaten up with insects. I was looking forward to a night in bed for a change. We sat down to supper about 9.30, and had just begun when the Prince arrived and said we must depart in five minutes. So we had to leave our supper and very quickly pack our things. His entrance was very dramatic. He is very tall and handsome, and has a face like an eagle. We rushed to our hotel, to find that our motor car had been taken for some wounded. We heard the Germans would be in in less than an hour. The cannons had stopped, but rifles were going on all the time. We thought we might as well enjoy ourselves, so we ordered coffee and cakes. They were very short of food, but there was still coffee, and we got some sort of cake. We waited till we could get a vehicle, and finally got into a Red Cross wagon, the sort that holds three wounded men lying down—six of us with the Prince, and a doctor and a dresser. Shells were coming at the rate of ten a minute. There were aeroplanes just over us dropping bombs every minute. We got out without anyone being hurt. I never enjoyed anything so much in my life. . . . I can't describe what it was like, but it was splendid. . . . You would have enjoyed it too. . . . I wish you had been there. We got safely back to Warsaw. We belong to the Flying Column, and may be ordered anywhere. Russian Sisters do very interesting things. There are some that ride about on the battle field and give first aid. . . .

BRITISH NURSES IN SERBIA.

The special correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, Mr. Z. D. Ferriman, contributes to our contemporary an interesting letter from Kragujevatz, Serbia, in which place the barracks on the outskirts were converted into a temporary hospital, now dismantled.

In this hospital Mrs. Barlow, Miss O'Brien, Mrs. Hartney, Miss McEwan, and Miss Mann began work at the beginning of September, having gone out with Mme. Grouitch.

The nurses testify both to the extraordinary capacity for recovery of the Serbian soldiers, and also to their charm as patients. "They get well under the most amazing circumstances,"

said Mrs. Barlow, "in fact, when they ought not to, according to the canons of nursing," and Miss O'Brien added "I cannot find words to express my admiration for them, both as patients and men. They are simply charming, so grateful for the least attention. And their physical condition is simply ideal. I never saw wounds heal so rapidly."

This proves that good work can be done in primitive surroundings, for Mr. Ferriman reports: "Anything more unlike the environment in a hospital at home than their surroundings it is impossible to conceive. Primitive is too mild a term for it. But these ladies make light of difficulties and discomforts, and do not spare themselves in their efforts to secure a measure of comfort for those committed to their charge."

Cotton wool, bandages, adhesive plaster, gauze, and chloral ethyl, all ran short, and "You may imagine what that means," said Miss O'Brien, "when we have had as many as a thousand patients, with a staff of two surgeons and five nurses. We managed to make room by placing two beds alongside each other, the double bed holding three patients. The Serbian surgeons are clever, and work very hard. Everybody about us is so willing that it is a pleasure to face difficulties."

Mrs. Barlow added that they were getting Austrian wounded as well as Serbian. "Eleven," she related "came in last night. I was able to talk to them in German, and they said they were glad to be prisoners. Altogether some 2,000 patients have passed through the hospital and there have been remarkably few deaths—not more than 50 I think—and very few amputations. We have had many cases of wounds from dum-dum, and explosive, bullets, which are worse. There is no mistaking the diagnosis of such wounds."

A day later Mr. Ferriman writes:—"The English nurses have gone. I called at the hospital this morning and found it dismantled. There is some uncertainty as to where the ladies are. I am told that they have been transferred to a hospital at Nish. They may have proceeded to Skopia (Uskub), where Lady Paget's ambulance is installed. I hope so, for there they will find better quarters and adequate equipment. They have encountered and overcome difficulties here with such an indomitable spirit that one is proud to think they are one's countrywomen. Their disappearance is part of a general movement. The wounded are being sent further away from the front. Cases which are too serious to be removed are being concentrated in a single hospital here. To-day there is almost a continuous procession of them borne on stretchers through the streets. Happily the weather has turned cold and sunny. The number of wounded who can fend for themselves is rather appalling. Every few paces one meets with men hobbling on crutches or with bandaged arms and head."

There is no glamour about the aftermath of war. It takes its toll with relentless cruelty of the bravest and best.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)