

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT.

FROM RUSSIA.

Extract from a Letter Written by Miss Violetta Thurstan, at Lodz, to the National Union of Trained Nurses.

"I am writing this at 4.0 a.m., having just finished the dressings, and it is nearly time to begin again. This is an absolute inferno; I never imagined anything like it, even in my wildest dreams; the hospitals in the Crimea could not possibly have been worse. But it is nobody's fault; simply the result of circumstances.

"This was a girls' day school, and it is now crammed with wounded men, lying on stone floors, either on filthy mattresses or on straw, with no sheets and only one blanket each. There is no heating, as there is no coal; and it is frightfully cold. The men still have on their own shirts, which, though very dirty, cannot be washed. Water is very scarce, as it would be in a day-school. No laundry can be done. There is only one towel for each ward.

"This is just a manufacturing town, and it is being taxed beyond its power. Every public building has been made into a hospital, until the railway communications are opened up, when the wounded will be sent away; meantime, we are doing all we can, but there are not enough of us to care for them as we should like to do. There is plenty of meat, little bread, no butter and no milk, so it will be a very good thing when they can be moved.

"For a week we have been heavily bombarded, shells are bursting all round us, most of the windows are broken. A man and two children were lying dead in the road in front of us this afternoon, and a poor old woman was brought in with both legs shattered. The cannons stopped for a bit yesterday, but have now begun again with renewed force. We have had to move all our wounded from the top floor, on account of the shells. A shell burst in front of us in the street to-day, but neither of us were hurt. It is extraordinary how soon one gets used to it all.

"Now I am going to sleep, in spite of the cannons. I would not have missed this for anything, but I do wish we could do more for these poor men."

"P.S.—Later.

"I wrote this three days ago. Last night we were told to evacuate the hospital. We worked nearly all night and got everybody into the Red Cross wagons. We were nearly dead! A Polish lady came and carried us off to her house, where I have finished this. I have had a hot bath, in which I wallowed and could not get out, it was so lovely! We have not been able to have one since we came to Lodz.

"We now belong to the Flying Corps—that is, we are not stationary, but must be ready to go anywhere, do anything, at any hour, day or night,

where most wanted. It is very nice to belong to it.

"The cannons are still going on as if they never meant to stop."

THE FORTUNES OF WAR.

Miss Ffolliot, a British nurse, who has just returned from the scenes of the earlier fighting, has related a thrilling story to a representative of the *Morning Post*. She says:—

"The German authorities themselves arranged that we should look after British wounded in Mons, and for a long time they treated us with courtesy and respect. The German medical officer who regularly inspected our hospital used to go round with the nurses, shake hands with our English patients, and talk to them cheerily. Unfortunately, this officer left and a new doctor arrived, who made no concealment of his hatred for the English.

"At last one day he told us he had a train-load of German wounded coming in and we must clear out at once. He gave us only one hour in which to get our patients ready for removal, and, sure enough, within the hour the Germans came with ambulances and motor-cars to take them away.

"Our cases were mostly those of men who had been severely wounded. We fitted out our patients with clean clothes, and linen and some food and medical comforts—and that was the last we saw of them, all except one officer who had lost his arm.

"As our patients had been taken away from us and the Germans refused to allow us to have any more, it was useless for us to remain at Mons. Moreover, the attitude of the authorities was in marked contrast to the friendliness they had previously displayed. We, therefore, decided to leave if we possibly could.

ARRESTED.

"We succeeded in getting into communication with the American Minister in Brussels—Mr. Whitlock—and with great kindness Mr. Whitlock sent his secretary to invite us to accompany him to Brussels, where we might have passports to take us to England. The matron and Miss Hozier went with the secretary to the Hotel de Ville, when, to their great surprise, the Commandant said: 'The whole staff of this ambulance is arrested.'

"The representative of the American Embassy himself was detained for about an hour, when the Germans, realising their mistake, released him. We asked why we were arrested and the reply was: 'Because the English have arrested the staff of the German hospital at Dalston.' We knew that this was not true, and said so. Then he shifted his ground and said: 'It is because the English stopped a Red Cross ship which was coming to our assistance.'

"We were conveyed to the civil prison at Mons and locked up in cells. They wanted to separate

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