

end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918 in this country. February, 1918, saw her again in Serbia, attached to the organisation of the Scottish Women's Hospitals for the Yugo-Slavs. Fighting was continuous, but there was no rapid movement until September, when the Austrian and Bulgarian fronts began to collapse. The mobile hospital, where Miss Willis worked, followed the Yugo-Slav division until it vacated Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, where the grim tragedy which precipitated the world war took place four years previously.

Here, however, Sister Willis's story does not end: it really only begins. She and Sister Stone were invited by the Serbian Government to join Dr. MacPhail in Belgrade, where an effort was being made to save young children from all the consequences of the disorganisation which war had entailed.

Arriving in Belgrade in January, 1919, the two English nurses found the place almost destitute of furniture. Food was very scarce, and very dear. Exorbitant prices were, in fact, demanded for every article. The medical departments were in a bad state, and a great deal of disease prevailed with which there were few to deal. The material was also most defective. The Serbians, appreciating the difficulties, were very grateful for what was done by those who studied their ways and did not hurt their susceptibilities, but many can see that a change is coming over the people, that a reaction is setting in; that the Serbians are inclined to say more firmly, "Leave us alone."

"There has been much misrepresentation by those who have spent only a few weeks in the country," said Sister Willis. "The Serbians have many habits and customs which must be described as primitive. The defective sanitary arrangements produce conditions which favour lice, and very unfavourable impressions are thus obtained. But, in better surroundings and in the hospitals, the Serbians show that they love cleanliness.

"Our work with them," continued Sister Willis, "has had most encouraging results. We acquired a hut that had been used by the Austrians, and there we set up thirty-two beds. We established gradually a large out-patient department, through which several thousands received treatment. We had all our own operations to carry out, there being no English doctors. Dr. MacPhail, I may say, is acting directly under the Serbian Government. She is the medical head for all children's affairs. What animates us is the conviction that the saving of the younger children is the most important task of all. The lives, alas! of the older inhabitants are already spoiled. Soldiers coming home from the war find their children crippled with tuberculosis, their women dead. From one cause or another whole families have been wiped out. I know of one case where a poor girl was compelled to see her mother hanged, two brothers were killed, and when the father came back and found his remaining child suffering from hysteria he dropped down dead.

"Dr. MacPhail, I may add, started the hospital in Belgrade with a sum of only £25 and a box of Aspirin, which she got from an English friend. At

the end of May such progress had been made that it was possible to open a convalescent hospital in the country in a pavilion built before the war as a summer school. Here are thirty beds, occupied by the less serious or convalescent cases. Thus it has been possible to reduce the number of patients in the Belgrade hospital to nineteen acute cases. Do not forget that we have had 100 operations in six months, and have about forty new out-patients every week. What strikes the Serbians who visit our institutions is the cleanliness and happiness of the children.

"We have the support of Major Hanau and the Supreme Economic Council in Belgrade, but we need additional assistance. A great work, rich in example, can be done for young Serbia. We are rescuing the children; we are showing the people what kindness and scientific treatment can do; we are encouraging them to help themselves; and we are thus building, amidst the greatest wreckage of war, institutions which may be of lasting benefit to the whole nation."

MANCHESTER WRECKERS AND COLLEGE KULTUR.

We note that, voiced by Major Hurst, M.P. (Moss Side), the "Manchester wreckers" claim, in the *Daily Dispatch* (Manchester) that the "Manchester Group have taken the lead in furthering so just and generous a cause," as self-government for nurses in a Registration Act. Nothing is more untrue. This "Manchester Group," of M.P.'s have co-operated with the representative of the College of Nursing, Ltd., to "wreck" the self-governing Nurses' Bill in the House of Commons, and the College Bill they support as introduced into the House of Lords by substituting the word "person" for "nurse," makes it possible to have a Nursing Council—the Governing Body for the nursing profession—without one nurse upon it. We shall carefully watch the "Manchester Group" of wreckers when the Government Bill is before the House. Of one thing these College supporters may be sure, and that is that thousands of self-respecting nurses will stand out of any Government scheme altogether, if any attempt is made to compel them to submit to the control of the old time anti-registration protagonists grouped on the College Council, or to sign away their personal liberty by subscribing to the College Serf Clause, to be de-registered by hospital matrons without appeal, as every nurse member of the College agrees in writing to be under its autocratic memorandum! Manchester Members are, in Parliamentary parlance, merely "talking through their hats" in mentioning the word "democratic" in connection with College camouflage.

We pioneer State Registrationists have no use for College *Kultur*!

WORD FOR THE WEEK.

"It is better far to go out with honour than to survive with shame."—*Captain Norman Leslie.*

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