

MEMORIES OF QUEENS.

QUEENS OF IMPERIAL LINEAGE, OLGA AND SOPHIA OF GREECE.

Those who have kept in touch with modern nursing history as recorded for close on forty years in the pages of this JOURNAL have minds well stored with events of intense interest, throughout the nursing world at home and abroad, and no one can qualify for a Lectureship on modern Nursing History without close study of the evolution of Nursing Organisation as recorded in the 73 volumes of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

The death of Queen Olga of Greece in a foreign land, an exile from her distracted native land, Russia, and from Hellas, the land of her heart, set memories of thirty years past astir. I took from its niche Volume LVIII of the B.J.N. containing the records of the year 1897, and found discreet reports of the National Greek Ambulance Fund of which I was Joint Hon. Secretary, and which through the *Daily Chronicle*, raised £10,000 for the succour of the Greek wounded in the Græco-Turkish war. I told you last month how, requisitioned by the Crown Princess Sophie, some 20 English nurses were soon at the seat of war, actively engaged in nursing the wounded and how I left London to superintend the Corps, sustained by the "Lovely Letter" from "Our Princess" to the Queen of the Hellenes. How well I remember the cheery send off the students of St. Thomas's and Guy's gave us, as together with Mr. J. C. Abbott and Mr. Murray of Guy's, the Orient Express bore us away upon our adventurous journey!

Dated "Athens, May 6th, 1897," the following letter briefly records what happened by the way:—

Athens, May 6th, 1897.

We have done so much since we said good-bye at Victoria that I must resist the temptation to give in detail the events of the past few days, as a mere sketch would fill pages. We got our first whiff of the Græco-Turkish War at Brindisi, where we found that we had as fellow travelling companions young Garibaldi and his corps of Italian volunteers, some English volunteers, twenty-one Russian Sisters of the Red Cross of Russia, ten nurses and two doctors from Denmark, and three Swedish nurses in charge of a Professor. The grandson of the great Italian patriot sat near us at meals, and is a fair-faced English-looking lad, with sincere

eyes, grave and simple in manner—evidently made of good stuff. We exchanged cards, and a promise on his side that the shattered remains of his corps should, if possible, be brought to the English Ambulance Hospital, and upon ours that his wounded should be most tenderly dealt with. At Patras, these brave fellows took train for Athens, amidst immense enthusiasm. The Nursing Corps were of course intensely interesting to us, the Ignat Russian Sisters, habited in fusty black, travelled second class with that appreciation of discomfort which is reserved in our day to the *religieuse*, and we parted with them at Corfu, where they awaited orders from Athens—a somewhat uncertain quantity. The Danes were a band of sturdy women, all solid, muscular and amiable, dressed in grey camelot, supposed to be uniform, but the bodice of each nurse

differed in cut and trimming, and thus showed the cloven hoof of lack of organisation. An amiable lady who bound her brows with the black velvet bands of our grandmothers, and thus coquetted with the *coiffure Grecque*, acted as *duenna*, but was again under the absolute dominion of two Professors—veritable sheep dogs—in whose presence the sedate Nursing corps looked neither to the left or to the right. The by-play behind the back of a youthful and good-looking correspondent of a New York paper, who having bestowed a posy of lovely roses upon the matron, proceeded to enter into conversation with the flower of the flock (a fair and very graceful maiden) amused us greatly. The correspondent talked "tall" with much *empressement*, the maiden smiled, and was about to enjoy the joke, when, lo and behold, she caught the irate eye and warning finger of the Professor, and she "closed up," much to the astonishment of the prattling youth. At Corfu—pearl of Ionian isles—we of course went ashore and drove round, along lanes, past bowers of roses; we saw all the sights, the



HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN OLGA,
Queen of the Hellenes.

King's gardens, the Venetian fort, and we rowed on the sapphire waters. Everywhere we met the two Professors, solemn, black-coated, red-crossed; but the little flock of grey doves, obedient and sedate, remained on deck demure, sewing little red crosses on to flannel bands, to adorn the stalwart arms of their medical masters.

I seated myself in their midst. "Can any of you speak English?" I enquired. Had they not sat there munched for six mortal hours, within a five minutes' row of one of the most exquisite spots on God's earth, and had I not met the Professors on the island, seated side by side in a luxurious carriage and pair, smoking monster pipes, and just feasting on all the sweetness and loveliness of this most exquisite isle; yet these grey women, here they sat on deck, hour after hour, just stitching, stitching, stitching. I should have liked to have taken their needles, and given

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