

them a good sharp prick to arouse their interest in the exquisite bit of world within their vision. However, these amiable ladies are now departing to work in the hospitals in Athens, and it is to be hoped that they may at least be permitted to visit the Acropolis in the full glare of the afternoon sun, if a moonlight visit is forbidden as too sentimental for women of their vocation.

We arrived at Patras about three a.m., and by five a.m. landed on the busy quay already thronged with crowds of enthusiastic people. Garibaldi lands—claps and cheers. English volunteers land—more clapping, more cheers. An international conglomeration of male and female persons land, all wearing conspicuously the Red Cross—more claps, more cheers. Then came the foreign press—very gorgeous not to say bellicose in appearance—Tyrolese hats, spats, artistic heather mixture hose, brown boots, riding breeches, pearl buttons, velveteen coats, more buttons, Byronian collars, scarlet ties, cut-away coats, cartridge belts, gauntlet gloves, daggers, revolvers and Kodaks, accompanied by a stout person in a blue jersey, with "Cook" embroidered in yellow and scarlet in immense letters across his ample chest.

Thus we land on Grecian soil, and with what a motley crowd we mingle. It is not yet six a.m.; so we cross the great square and deposit our packages at the Grand Hotel, where from the balcony an ever-varying scene of interest is to be viewed. We learn later that the big steamer at the end of the quay is to convey two thousand of the Ethnicke Hetairia to Epirus to join the Greek army; and these men—fine fellows—sensibly dressed in a uniform of strong brown holland artistically crossed and recessed over shoulders and around the waist by cartridge belts, are being fêted and farewelled by an admiring crowd—some hundreds of men dressed in every costume under the sun, from the "ballet" skirt and rich embroideries of the national costume, to the cotton rags of the professional beggar. All at once immense excitement is evident in the seething mob, and someone exclaims "Ah! a woman in the uniform of the Ethnicke Hetairia—it is Elene—she is going to the war to encourage the men."

In half a minute, I too was mingling with this extraordinary crowd, followed by the American journalist. Kodak in hand we joined "Elene," congratulated her on her courage, mounted her on a cart, and placing her in position, proceeded to take snap-shots. The whole episode was unique—Elene slight and graceful, with a charmingly refined face, eyes translucent, expressive, tender, a firm chin and graceful carriage, much enjoyed the scene. Her husband at once unbound her thickly-plaited hair, and Elene—very much a woman in spite of her garments—produced a little comb from her trousers pocket, and handing it to her lord and master, stood patiently until he had combed out her beautiful long auburn hair—soft and glistening—which fell in a wavy shower to her belted waist. Then she bowed with oriental grace, kissed me on the cheek, and gave me her blessing—(we were the only two women present) two by no means typical types of East and West—and said good-bye.

We arrived in Athens in the evening, to find quite a flock of "robin redbreasts" (our nurses) on the steps of the Hotel D'Angleterre to greet us, the Crown Princess having sent one with the kindest forethought to tell me that "all the nurses were safe and well." I found Nurses Farnsworth, Flanagan, Stollard and Curtis located most comfortably in the Crown Princess's Ward of the *Ecole Militaire*—used temporarily as a hospital for the wounded. Nurses Fawkes, Leeds, Fox, and Davidson, are now working in the Military Hospital proper in Athens. Nurses Carter, Davies and Tillott are up in Epirus at Karavassara, near Arta, and Nurse Warriner is working at Volo, where she has remained through all the panics there—Turks or no Turks.

The seven nurses who left London on April 27th, we found in Athens, waiting for orders; so we sent Nurses Hill,

Johnson, Skerman, and Coombs up to Volo last night with Mr. Osborne; to bring down the wounded from Velestino, and to-day we have requisitioned a steamer from the Government, and sent nurses Whiteford and Walker with Mr. Moffatt to Lamia, where we hear there is no ambulance hospital of any sort, and to which place the wounded are being removed for transport from Pharsala. Their departure was most exciting. First procuring the steamer, then provisioning the ship—baskets full of rolls and tinned food, chickens, eggs, fruit, and wine—to say nothing of brandy, oranges, and tobacco for the poor patients. These little arrangements were quite novel and amusing; then we bought the nurses shady mushroom hats, put a band of blue and scarlet ribbon round them to match their uniform; and sent them on board with ample surgical and medical stores of every description, and in the highest of spirits at the prospect of active service. Here, people sit and wait, and chatter and smoke, and drink coffee—everyone gesticulates and makes suggestions, but does nothing. So we thought the best thing to do was first to charter steamers, and send up doctors and nurses, and stores, to attend to the injured men, and remove them from the front by steamer to Athens—all quite easily done by a little forethought, prompt action, and audacity. Now we are setting to work to get ready a hospital of fifty beds at the Piræus to receive our patients when they come. It is quite a little raid in its way, as there are nurses and doctors in great numbers of all nationalities, all sitting in the vestibule of this hotel waiting for patients, and bewailing their inability to decoy *les blessés Grecques*.

Yesterday we took a carriage, drove through the Piræus, and discovered a lovely house by the way, fronted by marble terraces and gardens down to the sea wall, just the place for our hospital. Then we bombarded the Mayor and the Prefect (amiable, but official persons); and found that the house belonged to the Queen of the Hellenes. We returned to Athens; proffered our request for the house as a hospital for the wounded; interviewed Premier, Council, Grand Marshal, and numerous lesser luminaries; and after four-and-twenty hours' importunity, have just received a letter granting the Queen's consent to our possession. So we hoist the British flag and fumigate to-morrow, carbolise and scrub on Saturday, and intend to be ready in forty-eight hours for the reception of patients. So good-bye until next week, when I will send you further news of our intensely interesting work.

ETHEL G. FENWICK.

The morning after arrival in Athens, the Crown Princess Sophie (later Queen Sophia of Greece, the wife of the ill-fated Constantine) sent for me to her simple Palace. Daughter of Frederick the Noble of Germany, and our own Princess Royal, she inherited benevolent and intellectual qualities of a high order, and much beauty and grace of person. As she appointed me Inspector of Nursing in her various Military wards, I came into intimate association with her, and greatly admired her spirit and character and devotion to the needy and those she loved. My first duty after notifying my arrival to our British Legation, staffed by delightful people at that time, was to present the "Lovely Letter" at the King's Palace (though what I longed to do was to climb to the summit of the Acropolis and see visions).

What I did was to make my way under shimmering silver-leaved pepper trees to the gates of the Palace, guarded by gorgeous Evzones, such beautiful picturesque persons, whose exquisite white-kilted skirts shot out from their tiny belted waists with the true ballerina flair! The "Letter" was handed in under cover to the Grand Marshal, Count Massala.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)