

MEMORIES OF QUEENS.

QUEENS OF IMPERIAL LINEAGE, OLGA AND SOPHIA OF GREECE.

(Continued from page 181.)

You will remember that young Garibaldi, a grandson of the great Italian patriot, was a fellow traveller on our journey to Greece, in charge of Italian volunteers, the Cipriani, and the Phil-Hellenic Legions, and that I promised if his men were wounded and brought to the English Ambulance Hospital they should be tenderly cared for. Many a true word is spoken in jest.

The lovely Villa Militopoulo at the Piræus, thanks to Queen Olga, was transformed into a model hospital by our efforts before the disaster at Domokos, and when after the battle, the *Thessaly* brought a large contingent of wounded into harbour, many Italian volunteers were admitted to our hospital, thus we were able to redeem our promise. As luck would have it, Miss Jessie Parsons, the Sister-in-Charge, spoke Italian fluently—great good fortune indeed as we found that "patriots" required very delicate handling, and it was not until a beautiful *Salon* had been reserved for the Legions, and decorated with their national flag (which we were fortunate to secure from the warship *Sardinia* anchored in Phalarum Bay) that contentment was secured.

Queen Olga sent us lovely ikons and beautiful pictures of Christ and the Madonna for each ward and the theatre, as the Greeks were very devout, and found great comfort in kissing the Christ before retiring to sleep. The Italians kissed one another and saluted their flag.

This reminds me of a story which greatly amused the Queen.

One Italian patient had received a shot in the upper arm. The bullet remained implanted very superficially, and only required a snip to release it. This Damon had Pythias for ever beside him, who protested against this simple operation as "barbarous mutilation."

Mr. Murray, our very expert and most modest surgeon, consented that this compatriot should be present in the theatre to watch operations and restrain excessive vivisection! No sooner was the patient under the anæsthetic than one movement of the scalpel did the deed. Out popped the bullet and one swab sufficiently staunched the gore. A moment later and Mr. Murray found himself in the arms of the ardent patriot being warmly embraced, kissed on either cheek, and acclaimed as "a magician"!

Never shall I forget his furious blushes nor our difficulty in restraining our risible faculties; training however stood the test.

The bullet was, of course, proof positive of valour in battle, and as such was exhibited in triumph by the patient, and most carefully preserved under lock and key.

This story reminds me of another hero who received a bullet wound at Domokos, which passed through his arm and lung. He had his gory garments carefully dispatched to his family in Italy, as proof of his serious injuries: rather a ghastly parcel for devoted womenkind to inspect!

During this time Queen Olga paid one of her many visits to the Villa Militopoulo. She came alone, but brought gifts from the King, of cigarettes, fruit and

flowers. After visiting the Greek wounded, who were greatly attached to her, and conversed with her without any *gene*, she entered the *Salon* we had named "Italy," to thank the volunteers with gifts in her hands. She graciously offered cigarettes "from the King," which were excitedly refused. The Queen, at all times a most stately and dignified woman, appeared momentarily more majestic.

I gathered that these patients refused the King's gifts—"they had not come to fight for His Majesty, but for the Greek people." They would accept no gifts from a King. With superb dignity Queen Olga moved towards the open doors which I carefully closed behind her. In the corridor, her nostrils flicking and very pale, she turned and faced me. She spoke just two words with quiet, yet terrific force.

"Beastly anarchists."

I was thrilled.

Horror—not *fear*—of Nihilism was in her blood. A Romanoff, she was pursued by its spectre. A few years and all that was nearest and dearest to her was to be swept away by the knife of the assassin, and the forces of anarchy.

But this noble Queen continued her mission for the wounded, the sick, and starving refugees. She visited with the Crown Princess our improvised hospital at Chalcis in Eubœa, and later read with interest a short statement I wrote after visiting the romantic and pestilential prisons in that wondrous island, a report which I was confidentially assured secured some improvement in their arrangements.

Thus ships pass in the night!

Of recent years Queen Olga in her widow's weeds has been a constant visitor to England as the devoted friend and companion at Sandringham of her beloved sister-in-law, Queen Alexandra.

QUEEN SOPHIA OF GREECE.

Queen Sophia, consort of Constantine, is still alive, an exile from the classic land she was qualified under happier circumstances to have served with distinction. The words of living Royalties should be considered confidential—much of interest cannot therefore be told, but our association during the Græco-Turkish war was of a very cordial nature, and she seldom came to England before 1914, without sending for me to talk "nursing." I was received by her at Windsor Castle (and but for this visit I might never have seen many exquisite treasures of art in the private apartments), at Marlborough House, and at sea-side hotels, of which I have recollections of intimate conversations—not to be repeated. As a granddaughter of our great Queen Victoria, she was proud of her English blood, although naturally first and foremost an Imperial German Princess. Once she remarked "the finest human blend in the world is a combination of British and German blood," and then she laughed heartily, realising that she fulfilled such breeding. A call from Greece came for English nurses in 1921, the Greek Minister asked me to select them. Eight members of the Registered Nurses' Society journeyed to Athens and Syria. Queen Sophia showed them the same gracious consideration which endeared her to their colleagues twenty years before, when Crown Princess.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)