

forth their stomach contents to liquify their food, *e.g.*, sugar, and are constantly emptying their intestine, the evacuations containing disease germs and ova unaltered by any digestive process, it may be as long as four days after ingestion.

In Europe great numbers of flies are destroyed every autumn by a parasitic fungus (*Empusa Muscoe-Cohn*). Flies dead of this disease have swollen, whitish, dark-banded abdomens and may be seen adhering to window panes, etc., by means of fungoid outgrowths called rhizoids surrounded by a halo of spores."

(*To be continued.*)

EXPERIENCES IN THE BALKANS.

(*February 1915 to December 1920.*)

BY MISS ROUND.

I was accepted by Lady Paget for the Serbian Relief in October, but owing to a letter being mislaid, did not get away until February 1915. We crossed the Channel at night in absolute darkness and were all glad when Dieppe was safely reached. After careful examination of passports we were allowed to land. In Paris all was bustle and excitement, but we soon resumed the journey. At the Swiss French Frontier, the Doctor who was travelling with us, myself, and another Nursing Sister, was arrested as a spy. He had failed to get the latest passport, wore no Brassard and began to speak German. We two were sent on, and on arrival at Lausanne were met by the head of the Swiss Police and told to await orders. We were given an excellent lunch, and while enjoying it a telegram arrived saying that the Doctor was released and would follow by the next train. This caused us to lose our connection at Milan and delayed us some hours. On arrival at Brindisi we managed to get a boat for Salonica, but with the utmost difficulty got our stores on board, even then, when we arrived a big cheese had gone astray. This bit of the journey was most interesting as we went through the Corinth Canal. It was started in the time of the Emperor Nero and many attempts have been made to find a better position, but finally they decided to finish the original scheme, and it was completed three years before the war. It is four miles long and a small steam tug pilots the vessel through, the bottom of the boat being protected from the rocky sides by means of rafts, which expand and supplement the water. It takes about four hours to go through but saves at least three days' journey. On reaching Salonica a telegram was sent to Skoplje—Serbia, to say we should be arriving in 24 hours. We arrived on Tuesday—the telegram the following Saturday. At the hotel in Salonica we ordered a lunch basket for the train which was to include a chicken, some hard boiled eggs, butter, bread, etc. When it was opened at midday we found two eggs, about half a pound of butter and two very small loaves. So if you ever should travel that way, inspect your lunch basket.

At Skoplje no one could speak English; but after much difficulty we found out the Hospital and soon found ourselves in the midst of much work. No one knew of our coming, but we were soon fixed up. Next morning we were asked if we all three, Doctor and our two selves, would go at once to the second Reserve Hospital about 500 beds—we gladly went, but I shall

never forget the scene. First, not knowing a word of the language, and then the indescribable muddle, dirt and overcrowding. One doctor and one Serbian nurse were doing their best for over 1,000 patients. Men, women and children being all mixed up, although it was a military hospital. In one small ward, which should have held not more than 15 beds, there were over 40 patients, two in a bed, three in two beds together and about seventeen different diseases, besides surgical cases, which included typhus, typhoid, erysipelas, dysentery, diphtheria, small-pox, rheumatic fever, scarlet fever, measles, malignant malaria, blackwater fever, tetanus, pneumonia, tuberculosis and cancer. There was no bedpan, urinal, feedingcup, lamps, (no gas), only one small basin for washing purposes, no soap, candles, matches, no sheets or pillow cases, most of the patients had one blanket between them, and a man and his wife and perhaps one or two children would be sharing a bed. The bedding was covered with faeces and vomit, and almost alive.

In two beds were three patients, one dead probably some hours, quite cold and stiff, one dying and one a dysentery eating his food—bread, meat and some raw onions, a friend had brought him in. We managed to get one small ward empty by adding a few more patients to those already described and then picked out ten of those who stood a chance under better conditions. Got a supply of blankets, mattresses, sheets, bedpans and such like necessary articles and gave these patients a disinfectant bath, shaved them and put them in the clean ward. This brought us to about 9 p.m. when we returned to Headquarters. Again next day a similar process went on; on the fourth day after our arrival the typhus epidemic commenced, and it spread so rapidly that in less than a fortnight the whole town was infected. The outbreak in the first place was caused by some Austrian prisoners. These prisoners during the bombardment of Belgrade had been sent as far away from the scene of fighting as was possible. Just outside the town of Skoplje some barracks, artillery sheds, stables, etc., were empty. Into these were put the prisoners of war. The Serbs had so few men to spare and so little food that these prisoners were forgotten. There were about 5,000. Typhus began among them and quickly spread to the town. At that time the Serbian soldier's pay was about a half penny a day and his food allowance half a loaf of bread and two basins of soup, rarely meat or eggs. His family gets nothing; so one can see they had not much to spare for their prisoners. Lady Paget, when she, with the Medical Officers, saw what was going to happen, appealed to the Serbian Government for two large new buildings which were more or less in a state of completion. They were intended for a Military Academy. The request was immediately granted and they became the Typhus colony and went by the name of the 5th and 6th Reserved Hospitals. The buildings had no doors and few windows, but good sized rooms. The Officers' quarters were used for staff and the main building for the prisoners and soldiers. The other part became the Civil Hospital for men, women and children. Our staff consisted of two doctors, Lady Paget, myself and one other worker. We had nearly 1,000 patients by the end of the week. The awful conditions can never be fully described.

On going among the prisoners many were dead, some dying and many wildly delirious and others just infected. The dead were removed and buried, and the others bathed in strong disinfectants followed by a second bath, shaved and put in hospital. Some of this work was done by the two doctors helped by the few Austrians who were unaffected. It was impossible to really nurse them those first few weeks. We could just see that the dead were treated reverently and the delirious ones hunted from the hills around and brought back by the Serbian sentries and the rest fed. One often worked 16 hours with very little rest. The civilians used to be brought up in gharries, stripped and left outside the hospital, especially at night. On going out with one's lantern one would stumble over something, only to find out that it was a human being. Their clothes had been taken home, that is why it spread at such a rate. In less than a fortnight one doctor contracted it, then Lady Paget, and then my helper, and I was alone. An earnest appeal was made to another unit, and also two sisters from the surgical hospital volunteered. An urgent appeal was issued in England and very soon another unit of 14 was on its way out. They arrived in April and another of 19 by the end of the month. But at once burning all the clothing of every house infected, also all the bedding and getting everyone to assist in whitewashing and cleaning their own houses or helping others, by the end of April the epidemic began to cease. It was usual for nearly three weeks to send in lists of 50 dead daily, then it quickly lessened until for three days we had none. The authorities could not believe it and came to see what we had done with them and ended up by saying "well they must have got out of the mortuary." They did believe in the end. We became the centre of typhus work and many hundreds of cases came from the outlying villages. Serbia lost nearly as many lives in this short time as she did in all the rest of the war. All the staff quite recovered.

Following the typhus there was a very serious epidemic of malignant malaria and dysentery. Strong men became delirious, had several rigors with temperatures from 103 to 106 and died in less than four hours. We used to give intra-muscular injections immediately on admission, sometimes as much as 40 grs. and if no response, 40 grs. more were injected and this continued until grs. 200 had been given. This was for some time the only treatment that seemed effectual. The after effects were rather bad, but once they responded, a good tonic, plenty of extra milk and food seemed to act quickly. The spleen was usually very enlarged and tender, and a good deal of constipation and vomiting. The dysentery was treated with Tanicacid cum oopii washouts, and the famous Italian Doctor Castellani's powders. Emetine was not often used. On the whole they did well. These two epidemics lessened by the beginning of July, and it was then proposed that the unit should return to England; but the Crown Prince (now King) who was acting for King Peter begged us to stay as he felt that Serbia's troubles had only just commenced. In August rumours began to thicken that Germany, who had now persuaded Bulgaria to join her, was preparing for a tremendous attack on Belgrade. We all know too well what happened. Greece was cut off and Bulgaria began from that frontier, and the Germans again bombarded Belgrade.

We were in a critical position. A meeting was called and each member was told how serious it was, and if we wished to go home to say so; no one could be blamed; everyone naturally begged to stay. The menfolk were then consulted, and they said that as a medical unit we ought to stay and they thought the nursing sisters should be allowed to remain. What a cheer went up when the result was known. We all wrote home, begging our people not to worry and to go on praying for Serbia, peace and us. The beginning of October the fighting came very near. More than half Serbia was in the enemies' hands. Our Hospitals were full, over 2,000 patients, and we were a staff of 55, including doctors. Of course we had some good orderlies. The Austrian prisoners who had recovered from typhus begged to stop and work, and how well they worked. They were most loyal to us, when they heard that Nish had fallen, then Leskovatz from that side and Kumanoo from the Greek side, we knew Skoplje was ours only for a short time, and the third week in October the big guns were not more than 20 miles away. The Hospital was on the main road for the Albanian mountains, and so past us the Serbian army began to retreat. Day and night we could not sleep for the noise of the big guns, artillery and machine guns, and then the tramp, tramp of the civil population. Mothers with babies, old people, household goods, and many boys, just too young for the army. They knew what their fate would be if they were captured. And then finally the soldiers. The last three or four days as they passed through we fed them, reclothed some, and a large number who were slightly wounded, but could walk, were bathed, their wounds dressed, warm clothes given, and in many cases sticks or crutches. Each man so treated was given some hot milk, tea or coffee, cocoa or soup. Biscuits, bread, tea, sugar and meat lozenges to suck in case they could not get water. It was a pitiable sight, specially when the big guns began to retreat, to save them from capture. Finally one morning shells began to fall into the town. We saw the Serbians making a rear-guard stand to cover the retreating army. The Hospital was only three miles from the actual fighting line, on the hill side. The windows were covered with mattresses and everything done for the patients already in. It was the ones pouring in that took all our attention. Two operating theatres were going incessantly and the patients just put anywhere, even under beds already occupied. The first shell fell about 10-30 a.m. and the town surrendered at 4-30 p.m. By this time we had many German and Bulgarian patients in both officers and men. We were too busy to wonder what would happen to ourselves. A good deal of our stores had been put out of sight, and all stimulants buried under incinerators. Our ambulance had actually been right through the firing line, picking up wounded from both sides. This made a great impression on the Germans and Bulgars.

The town was put under the Bulgars as they had actually taken it, so when the Bulgarian commandant came along the Serbian Flag was sadly lowered and presented to him; however he generously handed it back, along with the Union Jack. How glad we were of this kindly act. We of course had to run up the Bulgarian flag but the other two were in safekeeping, only waiting for deliverance. We remained working as prisoners of war, under

the Bulgarian Red Cross. Food was scarce and water almost nil, we had about half a pint per patient, for every purpose. There was no milk, no eggs, very little meat or bread and no vegetables. The patients who could eat ordinary food had one meal a day, at 5 p.m. and just a drink of tea or soup in the morning. The others about quarter of a pint of condensed milk, very thin, twice a day, and perhaps some lime juice. We used to make big basins of water arrowroot with plenty of salt and give to them, very hot, about 11 o'clock. No sugar. It was just something to prevent them getting ravenous. We had one fairly good meal a day. Tea without sugar, and often no milk, or else cocoa without either. A bath for some days was out of the question. The Germans cut off the water supply, poisoned the wells, and tore up the pipes, taking away all brass taps, etc. We had no clean clothes, and very little bed linen. The Austrian orderlies still remained faithful, and when it came for them to choose whether they would return to their own people or stay, to a man they wished to remain. They said the English had saved their lives and while we were there, they would not go. After Christmas 1915, we began to ask how much longer they intended to keep us. A great many of the patients had recovered and most of the fighting was over. They put us off, but at last in the beginning of February 1916 we were told we were going to Sofia, preparatory to being set free.

They offered to send us home through Germany promising the female section absolute safety; but the men they did not guarantee. This offer we refused. The only other route was across Bulgaria, Roumania and Russia. We were interned in Sofia just a month and treated diplomatically well. Then taken across the Danube in a Roumanian steamer. Our hearts ached at leaving Serbia in such a condition, but we felt we had done all we could. Directly we were across how free we felt. We wanted to sing the National Anthem, but refrained. The Roumanians at Bukharest treated us all as heroes. It was such a gay little place, we stayed two days and then went on to Russia. At all the big stations what a welcome we had. A day was spent at Kief seeing the Museum and other buildings of interest. From Kief we went to Moscow. Here we saw the Kremlin and a great many of the beautiful Russian churches, alas, now no more. The Czar's Palace was magnificent. From there to Petrograd, here they were all working so hard for the allies. Three days we spent in Petrograd getting passports in order and sending letters home. We then travelled through Finland and to the Swedish Frontier, crossing the actual frontier on sleighs as the Russians and Swedes will not connect the two railways. It is only a very short distance. Stockholm was soon reached, and here the late Princess Margarete of Sweden entertained us. From Stockholm we went to Christiania, here receiving a very warm welcome from the King and Queen of Norway. Then to Beyon, and finally landing at Newcastle on the 4th of April 1916.

(To be continued.)