

OUR DEBT TO SERBIA (ANON.)

Contributed Article.

OUR attention has lately been drawn to Serbia again by the death of His Majesty King Peter of the Serbs, Chechs, and Slovaks. And it is deemed opportune to publish this interesting article asking for funds for the Serbian Orphanages. I am sure those of us who have been in Serbia will endorse all the writer quotes.

Miss Bonser, Fort, Bannu N. W. F. P., will be glad to receive (for favour of forwarding) any small sum even one rupee from old Serbian Doctors; or Nursing Sisters now in India.—*Editor.*

To try and give you anything like an adequate idea, in one article, of the needs and claims of Serbia, is to put oneself in the position of the Scottish minister who said that he has chosen for the subject of his first sermon, "God, Man, and the Universe", and that he would devote ten minutes to each!

We are all of us hearing a good deal about reconstruction nowadays, yet I fancy that most people have only a very imperfect notion of what is involved in an attempt to reconstruct a devastated country which has been in enemy occupation for several years. At least that this is so, I gather from the question repeatedly put to me: "Why aren't the Serbian war charities demobilising? Why haven't they closed down?" In fact people are pretty hazy about Serbia altogether. Amongst private people one heard such wiseacre criticisms as, "Anyhow the Serbs began the beastly war; didn't they shoot somebody somewhere?"

"Serbia doesn't interest me," remarked a prosperous connection of mine, in the October 1915, as she sat on a hearthrug in front of a good fire, while the Serbian army pursued its desolate retreat through 300 miles of ice and snow in the mountain passes of Albania, with thousands of refugees in its wake. I have myself met a man who on that retreat swapped a motor, for a tin of cocoa, the cheapest car and the dearest cocoa I have ever heard of. And don't you believe it when people tell you that the Balkans are all much of a muchness, and that the Serbs are cruel and uncivilised. Primitive they may be, but not exactly uncivilised, and certainly not cruel, for on that same terrible Albanian Retreat, when the army at times had only a little rice and beans for commissariat, they shared and shared alike with their Austrian prisoners, though God knows they owed the Austrian nothing but detestation and abhorrence.

Indeed where Serbia is concerned, a good many of us have really not got much beyond the stage of knowing that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, like Froggy would a-wooing go, whether his mother would let him or no; that when he was sent to choose himself a wife from six Archduchesses, he most inconveniently fell in love instead with a Slav lady, their maid of honour, and that his pro-Slav opinions were amongst the more immediate causes of the whole trouble, including his own death and that of

his Duchess at Sarajevo, midsummer, 1914. I say among the more immediate causes, for of course every war in history has apparent, surface causes and real, fundamental causes, and the two are by no means always very closely connected.

There is a Serbian proverb which says, "He who weeps for the world will soon have no eyes", and it is true enough of Serbia's own history, which has been a tragedy from start to finish.

While we were still groping our way towards a certain degree of ordered freedom under the Plantagenets, the great Serbian Empire, reaching far up into Carniola, its Dalmatian coasts constantly traversed by Crusaders on their way to Palestine, was already in possession of a highly democratic code of law, a most independent peasantry, and excellent universities and schools. Besides agriculture, the country had great resources in gold, silver, and copper mines, and highly skilled craftsmen, specially in metal-work. During the Middle Ages a French princess, first cousin to St. Louis IX, King of France, married the then Emperor of Serbia, and brought numerous French scholars and troubadours in her train. This Queen Yelena established a considerable degree of Franco-Latin culture in her new kingdom, and is still regarded as one of Serbia's patron saints. The little fleur-de-lys, tucked away in a corner of the royal coat-of-arms, is a souvenir of that mediæval alliance.

But all this prosperity was swept away by the disastrous Turkish invasion of Europe, and in particular by the crushing defeat of the Serbs in 1389 on the Field of Blackbirds, the historic plain of Kosovo, bright with poppies and other wild flowers, overlooked by snow-mountains, and crossed under exceptionally tragic circumstances by the retreating Serbian forces during the recent war. In this battle the Serbian army was practically destroyed, and the country fell under Turkish domination for over four hundred years. Yet so memorable were the deeds of heroism done by the losing side, that the 28th June, the anniversary of Kosovo, is still observed as the great national Serbian holiday. I have seldom listened to anything more moving than the dirges and litanies for the fallen of Kossovo, sung by Serbian exiles in 1917 and 1918, at the Russian church in Welbeck Street and St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside. It is as though for generations and generations we were to celebrate a yearly memorial of the futile glories and sacrifices of Gallipoli, supposing that Gallipoli had cost us our Empire.

"Long as the grass shall grow
On the plain of Kossovo,
So long, even so,
There resteth to Serbia a glory, a glory that shall not grow old."

Our allies, the Montenegrins, are if possible more Serbian than the Serbs, for they are the descendants of the remnant of the Serbian army which, after the defeat of Kosovo, fled northwards into the mountains, rather than abide the rule of the Turk, and to this day the Montenegrin wears a black band round his hat in sign of mourning for the Kosovo disaster. There are no short memories in the Balkans.

The Serbian national spirit never died out, kept alive mainly by strolling minstrels who went from house to house, singing the epics and ballads of Kosovo to the guslar, the little, primitive, one-stringed lute. "For Holy Cross and Golden Freedom" has always been Serbia's motto: it is her motto still. Generation after generation she guarded the approaches to the East, prostrate beneath the sledge-hammer blows of the Ottoman invasion, prostrate but invincible, and the Turkish onset having spent itself in the Balkans, we were left free gradually, and tranquilly, and bloodlessly, to build up our own Mahommedan Empire.

Early in the nineteenth century, unaided by any of the great Powers or by the other Balkan States, Serbia threw off the Turkish yoke, and a century afterwards finally defeated Turkey in the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, only, as we all know, to fall under a still worse tyranny two years later. Among the countless legends that have gathered round the fight of Kosovo, is one in which the dying hero, Marko Markovich entrusts his sword to the keeping of his fairly half-sister who lived in a cave by the sea, and who promised him that by the sea Serbia should ultimately regain her ancient empire. This prophecy has in a sense come true. By the sword and by the sea she has, in part, regained it, by her own unconquerable valour and the succours of the British fleet—but, at what a cost!

I hardly think that the part played by the Serbian army on the Salonican front is fully appreciated over here. Those soldiers held their line in tattered uniforms, with empty kit-bags, for a very considerable period, no woollen underwear whatsoever against the snow blizzards of the bitter Macedonian winters, only cotton shirts, which as often as not they tore up into strips to bandage their bruised feet, since they had boots but no socks. Their rations consisted of a cup of lukewarm tea when they went into the trenches at 3 a.m. (I say lukewarm, because the country was so treeless that there was neither shade in summer nor fuel in winter), followed at noon by a slice of bread with beans, mushrooms, or perhaps cobnuts, and the same at 6 p.m. For three years they did not set eyes on meat, spirits, sugar or butter; yet Flora Sandes, a British woman who served as a combatant in their ranks, declares that she heard more grumbling, chiefly on the everlasting subject of margarine, during two months' sick-leave in London, than during these three years from the Serbian army. Compare the giant head-lines of our newspapers in 1917 when our own meat shortage began: "Black Saturday. Fish Sunday. This will be remembered in many a British home as the first Sunday without the family joint". I remember a woman who, when the war was in full blast, asked me in a voice positively breaking with emotion, "What are you doing about jam?" "I am not doing anything", I replied, "except eating it, when it comes my way." My answer seemed to annoy her. I think she dimly felt that the war was a put-up job, to prevent her getting all the jam she required, while I thought of the men on the Macedonian front.

How often in the course of the war did I not secretly call to mind Dr. Johnson's outburst to the fussy little clerk with grievances and scruples about stationery: "Pray, sir, cease tormenting your neighbours about paper and

packthread, when we have all of us got to live in a world that is bursting with sin and sorrow."

The ground was so hard, specially of course in winter, that only very shallow dug-outs could be constructed, with the result that whatever position you at first took up, in it you had to remain, since the slightest movement betrayed you to the enemy snipers. Lovers of Italy plead, and plead quite rightly, in extenuation of the disaster of Caporetto, when in the autumn of 1917, 60,000 troops deserted into the enemy lines, that the Italian soldiers would not have so failed if they had been better fed, better equipped, and better amused, if they had had a tithe of the amusements and distractions provided for our own troops. This is very possibly true, but if so, it is all the greater credit to Serbia that there was no Caporetto on the Macedonian front.

Gradually things improved a little. The Hon. Evelian Haverfield's Serbian Army Comforts Fund, now merged in the Haverfield Funds for Serbian Children and Disabled Serbian Soldiers in which I want to interest you, did wonders in the way of sending out comforts to the army.

The medical and nursing professions bear witness to an impressively high standard of clean living in the Serbian army, so much so that it was possible to pass 3,000 men through a hospital without encountering any instances to the contrary. The care of the disabled soldier is obviously the main problem of reconstruction; for these men there is no Roehampton, no Star and Garter, no St. Dunstan's. And the same applies to returning prisoners of war.

The deaths of Serbian prisoners in enemy camps were terribly numerous. During the first two years of war no parcels were allowed, and British and French prisoners were forbidden to feed the Serbs out of their own supplies; so much for the enemy's pet argument that prisoners went hungry because of our blockade. In such camps as Heinrichsgruen and Matthaussen, there were as many as fifteen thousand graves from consumption alone, not counting those from typhus, spotted fever, dysentery and starvation. I am not belittling the miseries of our own British prisoners in the salt mines of East Prussia, on the ghastly pallets of Wittenberg, or the rain-swept heath of Minderheide. But our men at any rate had the certainty that their wives and children were safe in a free England, with victuals in plenty, and separation allowances, and a Government pledged to a pension. There was a no such comfort for their Serbian brothers-in-arms. They knew, on the contrary, that if they attempted to escape, their homes would be burnt down and their families deported, and what deportation meant you shall hear later. In many instances they had no idea what had become of their relations and friends. "Where are your people?" you might ask a Serbian soldier, and nine times out of ten he would answer that they had lost one another on the great retreat, and order to get rid of all traces of Serbian origin and rule, the Bulgar set to work to destroy the Government Archives, the Church registers, excepting birth registers which he kept for purposes of enforced recruiting; all the Serbian libraries, burning the books or throwing them into rivers; all public gardens, fountains, and historical monuments, blotting out the Serbian inscrip-

tions even from grave-stones, while in the churches, which they most horribly profaned, they removed the pictures of Serbian sovereigns and saints, and replaced them by those of Bulgarian saints, who must, I think, be singularly few and far between.

You can easily imagine that when a town or village has been plundered by four armies in succession, German, Austrian, Turkish and Bulgarian; there is not much left in the way of cattle, crops, timber, machinery, household utensils or clothing materials. Several months after the Armistice there were still no chairs or tables in the Serbian Government Offices. There are no desks or books in the colleges and schools. Belgrade University is crying out books as passionately as Louvain itself. In outlying districts the peasants have absolutely nothing in their houses, and sleep on the floor, and if you want to do any repairs, you can't raise a hammer and nails for love or money. Quite well-to-do people who have still a mattress or two left, take out the stuffing and weave it into clothing on their looms.

The main difficulty is transport. Don't be misled by newspaper accounts of the comparative prosperity of Belgrade. Belgrade is fairly well off, lying as it does on the borders of Croatia, which is the larder and the granary of Greater Serbia (and as such, incidentally, has to be listened to with respect by the Serbian Government, in regard to Fiume or any other burning question). But it is one thing to get your stuff to Belgrade, and another thing to get it up-country, for the enemy before evacuating, ingeniously contrived the collision of express trains in tunnels, with high explosives attached, which blew up the railway stations and the railway lines for miles, besides mining every petty bridge and ferry and ford, while the roads became blocked with broken-down motors and waggons with no oxen to draw them. Though the enemy has gone, the rats have stayed, and are a most formidable plague, everywhere.

Amongst the most urgent problems is the medical. Two-thirds of the Serbian medical profession died, in consequence of the typhus epidemic, which came into Northern Serbia with the first three Austrian invasions between 1914 and 1915 (for remember, that during the first year of the war, the Serbs unaided rolled back the Austrians three times). When Flora Sandes, then a nurse, reached Valjevo, she found 5,000 civilians down with typhus, with one Serbian doctor, twenty others having died, and two American nurses to care for them.

Another cause of high mortality was of course the internment camps. Thousands of Serbs, old people, women and children, the convalescent, the blind, were driven from Serbia into Bulgaria, and there interned, and forced to do work for eighteen or nineteen hours a day, chiefly upon road construction. They went in whatever clothes they stood up in, and when these became rags and tatters, rags and tatters they remained. The food was an utterly insufficient dole of bread, together with some watery soup, flavoured with spice. A hundred people would be herded together in a space intended for twenty, with no sanitation and no water supply, and when epidemics broke out, the sick were not separated from the others. I spare you, of necessity, the obscene and sanguinary horrors of these camps, and will only say that,

out of 150,000 Serbs, 50,000 died, mostly under the bastinado, the terrible Bulgarian "fusil blanc", many committed suicide, many are permanently invalided, and very many insane. Under such atrocious conditions, what chance had the children?

There has also been an alarming mortality among young Serbian boys. When the fourth, final, and fatal invasion took place, many patriotic Serbian mothers, realising only too well from the Balkan Wars what the Bulgars were capable of, gave their boys such food as they could carry, and sent them across Albania to try and join the Allied ships, in order that Serbia's future fighting strength might be, to some extent, preserved. Thirty thousand of them they set out, little fellows from twelve to fifteen, but what with hunger, and exposure, and the snow, and the pitiless enemy air-craft, and the wolves, and Albanian brigands worse than wolves, only seven thousand of them, reached the coast, reached it in time to see three out of four British food-ships torpedoed within sight of land—why? Because the Italian navy had too narrow a margin of destroyers to convey them. I wonder is this the class of thing people ever stop to picture to themselves when they talk to us about the blessings of reduced armaments. Those boys, together with the remnant of the Serbian army and refugees, were taken to Corfu, but for weeks and weeks the boats went out daily to bury the dead at sea, and finally only four thousand out of the thirty thousand reached England and France.

Now it is of the utmost importance to ourselves that this hardy and self-sacrificing Serbian stock should not be allowed to die out. And how hardy and self-sacrificing it is, you may best learn from the facts that when war broke out, Serbia placed a ninth of her entire population in the fighting line (a tenth is generally considered ample), and that her losses in battle alone, not counting epidemics, massacres, the prison camps and so forth, are 311,000, losses totalling nearly half the number of our own military dead, though her population was less than a tenth of ours; losses almost equal to a third of the French, and five times greater than the American, the populations of America and Serbia standing in the relation of a hundred to four. We have two motives to impel us, national responsibility, and national self-interest. Let us take the cynical advice of Edmund Waller, poet and M.P. in the seventeenth century to "look first to our safety, and then to our honour." Well, what about our safety? What of national self-interest? This. Recently I was reading an account of early wars in Greece, their effects and after-effects. Between the days of Solon and Demosthenes prices rose to five times their previous figure. The landed gentry sold their estates to the new rich. The State subsidised certain articles of food to keep the populace in a good temper, and last of all they tried a League of Nations. History is the record of a series of Leagues of Nations, forming and melting like dissolving views, whether ancient history, or Mediaeval, or modern; and no League of Nations is going to alter geographical facts. The plain geographical fact remains that Serbia always was, and always will be, the jumping-off place for Constantinople and Baghdad, and so long as we have an Empire, so long as we hold Egypt and India and wish to protect our trade routes, so long must we safeguard Serbia's interests as our own. She

is by far the steadiest element in the Balkans.—She is the gate-keeper of the East, and we must be friends with the gate-keeper.

And then there is national responsibility. There is a confused idea in a good many people's minds, an idea partly cherished, perhaps, to salve the national conscience and make ourselves feel more comfortable inside, that the Serbian disaster was due to the fact that in the July of 1915, Serbia asked us for troops, which at the time we naturally could not spare. Serbia never asked us for troops. Unlike others of our allies she was more than ready to do her own fighting, and required no foreign Divisions to stiffen hers. What she asked was to be allowed to attack Bulgaria.

I know plenty of people resident out there at the time, who used to sit on the hill-tops for their picnics, and watch the Bulgars mobilising, and these English people and indeed everybody on the spot, down to the veriest urchin playing on his mother's doorstep, knew perfectly well what the Bulgar was about. But unfortunately, as so often happens down the ages, the people who were not on the spot, notably, I am sorry to say, the British Foreign Office, knew much better. Bulgaria was a woolly lamb, with fleece as white as snow, and meant no harm to anyone. Or if indeed the lamb were mobilising, it was only against Turkey. Serbia must not be aggressive. Serbia must wait and see.

So Serbia waited and she saw. She saw her little towns and villages beflagged to receive the Allies, and only the Boche and the Bulgar came, and what she saw then, more especially at Gregour, and Krougievatz and Kumanovo, that I cannot tell you. Yet Englishwomen who did the retreat with the Serbian army have assured me that not once was England's blunder cast in their teeth. Serbia's unlettered peasant soldier was too much the gentleman to say "I told you so". I think you will agree with me that such unequalled generosity ought not to go altogether unrecognised, and that in this matter Britain's honour is pretty deeply engaged.

I don't want you to think, just because my own scrap of war-work has by the merest chance connected me with Serbia, which I had admired ever since the Balkan Wars, that therefore I am an uncritical partisan, praising everything that Serbia says and does. I know very well that Serbia has no real educated class (the Turks saw to that), and partly in consequence of this she has a Government which reduces its best well-wishers to a condition bordering on frenzy. There is a cabinet crisis at least once a fortnight. She has a Corps Diplomatique which, as far as I could make out, was permanently in bed, judging by the bother one had to get the Legation on the phone. She has a sort of middle class, a "petite bourgeoisie", which is simply insufferable. A ten minutes' interview with any of its members used to leave me wondering irritably why the enemy had done its work of extermination with so little thoroughness. They have the shiftiness and the tendency to intrigue which is the inheritance of an oppressed race, for every oppressed race learns to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. But after all, it is not for political or official Serbia that one works, or pleads, or makes oneself a nuisance to one's neighbours; it is for her disabled soliders (the soldiers who did not say "I told

you so"), her broken prisoners, her civilian population reduced to one-third of its pre-war total.

And I think it should be eternally remembered in favour of the Serbian Government and nation alike, that in the dark days of November 1917, when an overwhelming attack was expected in at Salonica, which happily never came, quite fairly advantageous peace-terms were offered, and refused, and the heroism implied by such a refusal can only be appreciated by those who know what is implied by a Bulgarian occupation.

It has been truly said, judging on Bulgarian evidence alone, that the Bulgars did things "from which decent-minded devils would have shrunk," and those things were done equally by the Bulgarian Government, the army, the police, and the civilian officials. It is not for nothing that the Bulgar springs of a Tartar breed, and claims first-cousinship with the Mongol; his inventiveness in torture is positively Chinese. He contrives to combine primitive savagery with the depraved morals which we usually associate with decadence, and I can assure you that when he is let loose upon a conquered country, the resulting compound is guaranteed to nauseate the least squeamish.

He committed his atrocities partly out of sheer bestiality, partly out of racial hatred (the Bulgars freely admitted to British prisoners that they tormented the Serbs merely because they were Serbs), and partly, and very largely, out of greed. Years of Turkish sovereignty had bred a habit of hoarding in the Balkans, and there was always the chance that by means of torture you could wring some more money out of your victims.

It is not easy to imagine, though, where the peasants were to get it from, seeing that a family rated under the Serbian Government at, say, £5 in English money, would already be paying £60 or even £75 in taxes to the Bulgarian Government, besides enforced contributions to the Bulgarian Red Cross--the one and only connection, as it happens, in which I have ever come upon the trail of that truly amazing Society. In addition, when deported for forced labour, they were obliged, somehow or other, to maintain themselves and their poor starving beasts. Rich Turks would often find themselves suddenly denounced as ardent Serbian patriots, when of course they were nothing of the sort, simply as a form of blackmail.

It is true that Serbia has come out of the war greatly increased as to territory, but to my mind she is somewhat in the position of a person who has inherited a large estate without enough money to keep it up. However, be that as it may, what's done cannot be undone, at any rate not for the present, and what remains to do is to repair the damage as far as possible. Since we are not forcing the late enemy to do it, we must do it ourselves, and don't imagine that the Serbs are not pulling their weight. They are working very hard, but nobody can make brick without straw, and nobody can reconstruct a devastated country without money and material.

We have all had our war troubles one way or another, our casualties, our submarine tragedies, our anxiety for prisoners. For most of us the income-tax soars and soars, for many of us the dividends do not come when we call them.

We women buy gloves at 12-6 the pair which split the first time we put them on, and all of us had to endure the Yankee bacon, which tasted like very salt galoshes. But when all is said and done, 3,000 people have not been massacred in the fields outside some English country town, as in the fields outside Sour-doulitza, with say, 200 more in the nearest village, and 160 in the next, and only the walls of the next left standing. No English churchyards have witnessed the spectacle of tiny children writhing on the ground in the grip of poison gas. No English daughter has seen an old father bastinadoed, till the spinal cord was exposed, because he said "good-night" in Serbian rather than Bulgarian, or received a letter from a son in the Serbian army. English widows in their tens of thousands have not had their husbands burnt, flayed, impaled, and then been compelled to dance the Kolo, the national dance, on their graves, while the ground was still unquiet from the struggles of those who had been buried alive. All such things, and far worse than these, we of the Fortunate Isles have been spared, by the mercy of God and a two Power standard navy—we with our Black Saturday and Fish Sunday and our rending of the heavens if we could only get blackberry jam, when we had set our hearts upon blackberry and apple.

Picture to yourselves an ordinary Serbian village, racked with bombardment, partially burnt down, infested with rats, snowed up for several of the winter months. Back to these devastated villages, back to their ruinous farms, the disabled Serbian soldiers have dragged themselves, often without the aid of crutches, men who fought our battles as truly in the East as we fought theirs in the West. 95 per cent of the inhabitants of such a village have only the clothes they stand up in, nothing else to wear or to change into whatever. In one distribution of relief stores that I know of, at Schabatz, if your family was above four in number you received one sheet per household—per household, not per person—; but if you were four in family or fewer, you got none, as there were not enough to go round.

In a country mainly dependent upon agriculture there are insufficient seeds for the sowing of the harvests or the raising of garden produce, while the foul and neglected state of the pastures under the occupation, has resulted in an outbreak of anthrax and swine-fever so serious that two-thirds of the cattle imported across the border have already perished.

The children are of course suffering from every imaginable form of debility, chiefly rickets, consumption, ringworm, and what are known as globe-stomachs, due to eating grass, leaves, and the bark of trees. There are about 250,000 orphans in Serbia, homeless, uncared-for mites, just roving the country, their fathers dead in battle or in the prison camps, their mothers the victims of Austro-Bulgarian occupation. Mrs. Haverfield tells how, at her first orphanage at Uzice, the lady in charge one snowy evening heard a knock at the door, and on opening it found a little girl of about eight outside, dressed in the rags of what had once been a chemise. She and her small brother had been begging their bread from village to village all the winter through—the children of better-class people—until by chance they heard that there was "a place for children" at Uzice, and came to try their luck!

Sometimes it is possible to persuade people to take charge of the little girls, but nobody wants the little boys who have to be apprenticed to a trade. How I wish I could adopt one of them myself, one of Serbia's defenders in the next war; but what should I do with him in a three-roomed flat?

"My life's work", wrote Mrs. Haverfield a few weeks before her death, "lies in this stricken country, so ruined by the enemy, so little helped by the Allies. I am putting my whole heart and soul into the care of these destitute children, for whom there seems to be no place on earth, unless I make one for them". "My life's work"—on March 21st last, she died, while establishing her new orphanage in a very isolated and poverty-stricken district, Bayna Bachta, way beyond the Drina, 170 miles from Belgrade. It is a wild hill country, the mountain slopes covered with beech and birch woods of an almost unearthly beauty of colouring, festoons of old man's beard glimmering tier upon tier like snow-wreaths. But the old bishop was not so far out when he observed that upon occasion "Every prospect pleases, and only man is vile", for those hills have looked down upon the hanging, Turkish fashion, of boys of fifteen.

Mrs. Haverfield was no longer young, indeed she was a grandmother, yet she worked early and late, was up with the small hours loading or unloading stores, and travelling tirelessly to and from in cattle-trucks upon almost impassable roads; and when pneumonia came along, there was no power of resistance left. As she lay dying she kept fretting about the future: "Who will care for the children? Who will care for my poor children?", till at last one of her workers leant over her and said, "We will see that the work goes forward. Do you understand? Can you hear?" "Perfectly", replied Mrs. Haverfield and it was the last word she spoke. We therefore owe it to the dead, as well as to the living, that those orphanages should be maintained, the other objects which she had in view, funds permitting, being the establishment of a little ten-bed hospital, and village centres, where the disabled men might be trained to become self-supporting.

Politically Serbia owes us nothing, militarily not much. Let us be glad that women like Evelina Haverfield and Elsie Inglis, like Mrs. Harley and Mrs. Dearmer, have served as lightning conductors to divert from us the sense of grievance, the sense of having been left in the lurch by a great Power, which the Serbs might otherwise very naturally feel. As it is, thanks to their devotion, thanks to their passage in the cause of Serbia "from splendid life to death desirable", thanks to the fact that they had their country's reputation at heart, whatever the politicians might do or leave undone, an Englishwoman's word is law to the Serbian soldier and the Serbian peasant. She has only to say "Please", and the thing gets done, even if it's next-door to an impossibility.

There is a business-like Serbian proverb which says, "What the vineyard requires is not prayers, but a hoe", and I ask you of your kindness to contribute, if you will towards the hoe, not for Serbia's sake alone, but also for the sake of England's good name in Serbia; and I have failed indeed, if I have failed to make you understand that this is not a mere question of charity or compassion, but a question of honour, and a debt of honour, I ask you to respond

generously, not specially to my appeal, which is a second-hand affair, but to the appeal of Serbia herself, of an allied nation which has suffered and sacrificed to the uttermost limits of endurance, an appeal which says, "It is nothing to you, all you that pass by?"—"Come over into Macedonia, and help us".

Lady Wimborne's Unit, the Scottish Women, Lady Paget's Unit, Mrs. St. Clair Stobart's Unit, American Doctors and others also did splendid work in Serbia and as for the Ladies and officials at the Head-quarters Serbian Relief Fund, London, nothing can express their unfailing help and courtesy to all their workers.—Ed.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE GUINEA WORM.

BY EUREKIA.

I do not know if all my readers are familiar with this trying ailment but the short history below will, I trust, interest some of the readers of the "Nursing Journal of India". The Guinea Worm or *dracunculus medinensis* seems to limit itself to certain districts in India and is very common in the Deccan and Sindh.

In these districts it is no uncommon sight to find ignorant folk with a damp rag tied round their leg. It is clever of them to apply a damp rag as it helps the Guinea Worm to the surface—it also helps the sense of burning experienced when the Worm is making its appearance at the surface.

Patients I have nursed, have cried at night with the excessive burning, which they say increases 100 times more than that in the day time. They have even begged to have the limb amputated. Such is the pain and irritation.

The Guinea Worm is a parasite of the connective tissue, and usually attacks its victims in the monsoon.

The female or troublesome Guinea Worm is said by some to attain to 3 or 5 feet in lengths but this is an error of observation, two worms having been regarded as one.

The average length of the Guinea Worm is about 12 inches, the body is cylindrical milky white, smooth and without any markings. The tip of the tail comes to a point and is abruptly bent, thus forming a sort of blunt hook. The head end is rounded off. Nothing definite is known about the male Guinea Worm.

The female is chiefly found in the limbs and trunk, occasionally in the scrotum and rarely in the arms and back, with the exception of the *harbi*, or water carrier, as the worm is fond of moist damp surfaces and will make her way to where the mussak, or water sack touches the skin.

When instinct tells the Guinea Worm her time of emergence is drawing near, she begins to bore her way to the surface of the skin in a downward direction—the patient experiences a good deal of itching, and sometimes fever and urticaria make their appearance.