

It is true that infections of '606' do cause a diminution of symptoms, but only time can show whether it is a complete cure. And it takes a long time to make sure that the syphilitic germ is dead. Cases are reported in which people after having been apparently cured, married and had families, and the disease re-appeared after a lapse of twenty years. The Wassermann test is especially useful in these latent cases to detect the presence of the germ. Mercury is still largely used, often in connection with Salvarsan as a remedy. We know that 3 per cent of syphilitics die of general paralysis of the insane, and this disease is the cause of 25 per cent of the mental cases that occur. At the commencement of the disease before the germ has affected the general circulation and rashes have appeared, it can be cured without a long course of treatment. The percentage of cures is about 100 per cent. But if the disease has lasted a couple of years, it is very difficult to get rid of. The inventor of the Wassermann test says that the cure or otherwise of a patient is decided during the first two years, after that cure is doubtful.

We ought to remember that the saliva of these patients conveys the disease, so care should be taken that all cups, glasses, spoons, etc. used by them should be carefully disinfected; and, in the interests of the healthy population all these cases should be segregated and efficiently treated. If only we could get free treatment for all classes at all general hospitals and public dispensaries, if all ships could be made to carry out the preventive medicines enforced by the Royal Navy, if more lectures were given on the subjects to educate the public, then we might hope that this disease would become less common. In Norway and Denmark notification with free treatment has had a good effect. All other serious contagious diseases are notifiable and it is time that syphilis should also be placed in the same category. It is scarcely to be hoped that legislation can do anything towards preventing these awful diseases. Our hopes therefore must be centred in education.

SERBIA.

BY DR. HELEN HAUSON.

CONDITIONS here are very different from those that obtained in Belgium and France. One appears to be living in the Middle Ages when there were great epidemics of plague or small-pox abroad. If some of those who prate so glibly of the golden age of the past, and bemoan the present with its industrial unrest, its women's movement and its supposed lack of romance and glamour could come out, they would, I think, find that they would be glad to be back once more in the twentieth century.

All parties for Serbia have to come *via* Salonica, and no sooner does one embark in a train there, than one realizes that something serious is afoot.

Although there has, so far, been established no quarantine system, Serbia disinfects her railway carriages, and the train in which we travelled to the frontier was so strong of formalin that it made one's eyes water and one's

breathing difficult. As one came up the line, boys came round at the stations, selling naphthalene; people that came into the carriages dropped it from their pockets, and at the biggest stations men appeared with vessels of disinfectant which they squirted impartially over carriage, luggage, and passengers.

All the waiting-rooms were occupied by the military, and at night there was no light in the trains owing to the shortage of petroleum, so that in addition to dirt and disinfectants, there was a plentiful sprinkling of candle-grease over the cushions. Serbia is a very generous country, and all Red Cross workers travel free, either in first class compartments or even wagon-lits.

She is generous too in doing what so far, I believe, neither France nor Belgium have done, *i.e.*, giving to all such people a very handsome house-keeping allowance; moreover, she is at present paying several of her medical workers.

The first part of the country, in coming up from Salonica, is rugged, full of crops and boulders, and is a suitable background for the Turks, from whom it was so recently taken. There is the one very beautiful feature, and that is that amidst the grey stones and boulders appear pink almond trees in full blossom. Higher up the country becomes more smiling, and round Kroguievatz, though there are still snow-covered hills, there are woods and fruitful fields, with primroses, violets, and a delightful green-coloured Christmas rose, all out. This town, is in common with many others, riddled with typhus.

Definite statistics are hard to get, but while the Serbian army numbers about 300,000 over 40,000 at least are returned as ill with typhus and other complaints. The chief illness, numerically, though one seldom fatal, is "Relapsing Fever," a kind of glorified malaria which leaves its victims very weak. Typhoid is here too, and dysentery and pneumonia, while cholera is expected later on. Tetanus, however, is mercifully absent.

Already over 80 of the 400 doctors in Serbia are said to have died—40 odd from typhus. At the chief typhus hospital here first a man doctor, then an English woman doctor, then the two men who succeeded her all succumbed. In this unit a Sister and an Orderly have died, and a medical woman has had it and recovered. In the case of these latter three, the disease was not contracted on the premises, but was doubtless acquired in the typhus hospital above mentioned. To-day we hear a rumour,—we hope false—that Lady Paget has also taken the illness. (Lady Paget *did* take the illness but, happily, she recovered.)

The condition of the hospitals is appalling. In one typhoid hospital 18 beds accommodated 80 patients. In another men lay three or four in one or two beds, others were huddled on the ground, just as they were brought in, in their own mud-stained and dirty clothes. The hospital attendants are chiefly Austrian prisoner-orderlies—gentlemen, very depressed and sad looking, and apparently very safe to trust. They act, too, as housemaids, etc., to all foreign units. In some of the fever hospitals many of the orderlies are themselves ill, they stagger round giving medicine and food, but no nursing

of any sort is attempted. It is the complete lack of sanitation and Western cleanliness, coupled with the awful overcrowding (men lying in passages and corridors beside the rooms), that accounts for the spread and for the great fatality of the disease. So far one has spoken only of the army, but the civilian population is in worse plight, as for them there is not even the semblance of care.

There is no notification of illness or death, so one has no means of estimating numbers, but the Serbs have a custom of hanging out black flags in case of death, and these are dotted all over the town, while the Cathedral which is just opposite us, is tolling perpetually, and one is always meeting funeral processions in the streets.

The Cathedral itself is now shut to funerals of all typhus cases; the service, a very long and a very impressive one, has to be held out of doors. Buildings of all sorts are utilized as hospitals, in many cases tea-houses, where the patients lie cheek by jowl on plank beds with hair mattresses, in dirty cotton garments, with one blanket each. The lack of clothes makes closed windows (and many houses have double windows) a necessity, and the heat from the stores intensifies the smells and encourages all forms of—as one knows now—dangerous animal life. From time to time, however, during a cold spell, wood will give out, and hospital and house will be completely unwarmed, with snow on the ground!

In the hospitals of the foreign units one experiences a sense of fatality when any of the orderlies become ill! These cannot be kept in surgical wards, so they have to be sent off, say with relapsing fever, to another hospital. Later, one hears that in the hospital to which they have gone, they have developed typhus and been moved to a typhus hospital, and after that one hears no more of them till one ascertains that they have died!

The women's hospital here is one of the bright spots in Serbia, the best as the Serbian authorities told an English Commission working out here. In fact, the aforesaid Commission say they chose their headquarters here so as to have somewhere safe to go to if they were ill. Speaking to me yesterday, one of the men said: "You might as well be at home as in these wards." There are still stables containing patients here, and the change from these to a hospital run on English lines must be great. The men are already getting quite attached to our custom of fresh air.

The surgical work in the country is now considerably decreased, as there has been no fighting for some while, but the kind of case seems much the same as one saw in Cherkourg. Sepsis is again deplorable, and what the men pull through is marvellous. Living itself is a good deal rougher than in the West. The town is paved with huge irregular cobbles, and mud comes up well over the ankles. Streams broader than one can conveniently jump course down each side of the road in the heavy rains, and lighting is poor. But the streets are clean; no rubbish may be thrown into them though they give hints of various malodorous scents to be expected in the warmer days to come. The houses are well warmed with huge stoves, the one at present inhabited by the unit belonging for some time to the Crown Prince. Food, contrary

to rumour is plentiful eggs, chickens, etc., being very inexpensive. The Serbian authorities take complete charge of the feeding of the patients, so there is nothing to be done in that line. The Serbian doctors are by no means behind in their profession, but the immensity of the present problem appears to have overwhelmed them, and not much wonder. The Commission before mentioned, speaks of the condition of things as being worse than any they could conceive, yet the Serbs are not an uncivilised race, the officers of their army are smart men of irreproachable manners.

The town itself is quite an important little town. There is a bishop here, a cake shop, picture post cards, and a post office which has the playful habit of frequently running short of stamps. It has been once or twice evacuated and at first it was almost impossible to buy even a tin bucket, but now it provides most elegant enamel ware, while the native garments one can buy, are a joy to the heart.

The language presents many difficulties, as it is more closely allied to Russian than to the ordinary Western tongues, and the letters, written and printed, differ in about half the alphabet from our own. The language beside Serbian most usually spoken, is German. All the orderlies speak this, and with a little French thrown in, a few words of Russian (for those that know it), and an occasional English word, the confusion is great.

But it is more than interesting to have been in the country at such a time, and to see its heroic struggle under such appalling circumstances, while one cannot be too glad if one can alleviate a little, the hardness of its lot by sharing its terrible burdens.

THE PARIS FLOOD.

A MEMORY.

By Miss R. H. BRUCE.

PLACE and time are unpropitious to the recital of an experience which is a common place in so many parts of India, and which, as an unusual happening, in Europe, is daily eclipsed by the events of the war. Nevertheless, the Paris Flood in the year 1910* had a character of its own which makes it impossible for us who lived through it to lose altogether the impression it made.

It was winter. Light snow lay on the ground, and hoar-frost covered the trees. All day a dark blue cloud hung low over the city, and the night came in between three and four of the afternoon. There had been no rain in Paris; the torrents which brought the catastrophe fell over the head waters of the river Marne.

Water and light were the two comforts of life which the flood took from us. The swelling river had pushed through the drains into the water-pipes, poisoning all the fresh conduits of the city. "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to"—make use of! The wise do not *drink* water in Paris at the best of times.

Our household of eighty persons was fortunately supplied from a private well in a neighbouring garden. But the supply was scanty. A tumblerful in