

AT THE SIGN OF THE MAPLE

A NEWS DEPARTMENT MAINLY FOR WOMEN

The Second Year of Slaughter

NOTHING could be more significant of the temper of the British Empire than the way in which its citizens are facing the second year of conflict. There is nothing resembling despair to be seen, although the lists of those who have died for England and freedom are heart-breaking in their length. Germany is to be conquered, only by more men and more munitions, and the supply is to be kept up, as long as there is the awful demand. Yet there is no thought of peace—nor can there be—so long as the Germans remain on Belgian soil. British women, as well as their fighting brethren in the field, are prepared to stand the contest to the end—no matter how bitter the struggle may become.

The Fund for Prisoners

MOST of us seem to have made up our minds that it is better to risk sending cigarettes and chocolates to Germans than to miss comforting our own soldiers with much-needed parcels. The various associations for the men who have been taken captive by the enemy are in a flourishing condition, that known as the Duchess of Connaught fund being especially well supported. Mrs. Rivers Bulkeley, formerly known to many Canadians as Miss Evelyn Pelly, is at the head of the fund in England, and is associated with the Canadian Red Cross Society in England, in the administering for the prisoners' benefit.

The Work of Women

WHATEVER wrangling there may have been in years of peace, concerning woman's place and work, the war has brought a sudden calm. Only practical considerations remain, and woman's work is whatever her hand finds to do, for either home or country. There is little need to speculate on after-the-war conditions. The present can easily absorb all our energies, and the place for the woman of to-day is wherever she can contribute towards the force which will win the strife for liberty and civilization.

ERIN.

With the Red Cross in Russia

MANY Canadian women are serving the Empire in foreign countries, but few have been called to do their bit in such remote and alien surroundings as has Miss Gertrude Nicol, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Nicol, of Vancouver, who, before going to that city in its early days were residents of Niagara Falls. Miss Nicol is working under the Red Cross banner in Russia, at Alexandropole, a small

travelling in Russia, and was near Tiflis. The difficulties which at that time were placed in the way of travellers were almost insurmountable, and she promptly decided that instead of making futile endeavours to reach England she would stay where she was and direct her energies toward fitting herself for service, and she at once entered a hospital in Tiflis, where she took a course in nursing. She is an exceptionally clever linguist, and during her sojourn in the country had been studying the language in which she had become fairly proficient, so that, although her examinations were in Russian, she passed them successfully, a very difficult feat, as anyone who knows anything of the language will understand.

For the past three months Miss Nicol has been working under the Russian Red Cross Society and was stationed in Tiflis until lately, when she was sent to Alexandropole. Writing of her first impressions there she says:

"Alexandropole is a queer little place, as much like one of our prairie towns as it is possible for an Oriental town to be like a Western one. It is situated on a plateau in the mountains at an altitude of four thousand feet. The population is composed almost entirely of Armenians, but the military element is, of course, Russian. The barracks, which is known as 'Cossacks' Post,' is a short distance from the town. There are thirty-eight buildings already in use and still many more to be fitted up. As this is a receiving point we get our patients direct from the front and will have beds for three thousand. There are many poor fellows who have nervous and mental troubles. Those who are wounded are kept here until they are cured of their physical ills and then sent off to sanatoria or asylums, and the others are sent



MISS GERTRUDE NICOL.

Of Vancouver, who is serving in a Russian military hospital in the Caucasus Mountains, close to the Caucasus and Turkey-in-Asia.

which they are stationed. There are thirty foreigners in the place.) "On our way we have to wait thirteen hours at a small Chinese station and also spend a night on a Chinese train which is not always the cleanest—but we are fortunate in being able to travel on this line by an express or 'white man's' train which provides good accommodation and cleanliness in the first-class coach. When we arrived at the station and looked up the steep mountain side it made one feel queer. I wondered how we should ever reach the top, but we placed ourselves in Chinese mountain chairs and let four coolies labour with our weight. In some places the grade of the path is so steep that one cannot but feel like tumbling over the back of the chair, but the coolies pant, hear and climb, and finally bring you three miles, or 3,500 feet above the sea level to the place of settlement on the top of the hill. When we reached the summit we were amazed at the number and at the structure of the houses, and also to see only a very occasional Chinese house. It seemed like a glimpse of home—the houses are mostly plain yet all of them have large verandahs, and all are built of brick or stone, because these materials can be secured in plentiful quantities here and at very little cost. The houses are dotted all over the hills, each man trying to find a place where he can have the most perfect view of the valley and sunset. Thus there is no law or order, and between all of them are winding paths. The air is quite cool, and the only unpleasant part is that during June and July there is a great deal of rain and mist, and every fine day everything in the house has to be hung out in the sunshine or it is liable to mildew. But as everyone has Chinese help it does not mean so much work for the rest of us. We live in a cheap fashion and do not attempt to bring much beyond the necessities for summer use.

"We see very few Chinese here except the servants and the men who come round each day selling vegetables, fruit, eggs and chickens, so that it is a complete rest for the missionaries. But at home it would almost need to be called a millionaire's hill, for it would cost so much to have people, baggage and provisions taken up the ascent. But here many coolies earn a living doing what I would call one of the hardest kinds of work, and I believe receive about ten cents for carrying up 150 pounds. Labour is very cheap, for a man's wage here is about ten cents a day, and we get sewing women for about five cents a day, so one may be free from darning stockings and mending.

"Vegetables are plentiful here. Just now we are having new potatoes, Spanish onions, cabbage, beets, beans and cucumber, and we have had heaps of strawberries, apricots, plums and peaches, and now the raspberries are coming in. We can buy all the eggs we want at four or five cents a dozen, and chickens at about fifteen cents. We have to use mainly condensed milk, as the milk we get from the Chinese is



MRS. E. ATHERTON SMITH.

Honorary President of the Women's Canadian Club and Regent of the Royal Standard Chapter I. O. D. E. of St. John. This Chapter of thirty ladies has raised upward of thirteen thousand dollars for patriotic purposes since February last, and its energetic Regent has recently collected enough money throughout New Brunswick to provide a Regimental Brass Band for the 55th New Brunswick Regiment.

on at once to Tiflis in trains especially designed for such cases.

"We live in the most primitive fashion, not much better than the soldiers themselves. The hospital buildings are all built of a black, volcanic stone and are most depressing in appearance. Our room, or rather cell, for it has iron bars across the windows, contained, when we arrived, two beds made of wooden slats and mattresses stuffed with hay, and a wooden bench. After much effort we succeeded in getting a tin water can and a little wooden pig trough to serve as a wash basin, also a table and a very unsteady lamp. Our doctor, who came with us, and who is a very clever and resourceful woman, has ordered comforts for us up from Tiflis. They are expected to arrive to-day and will include camp beds, new mattresses, a wash stand and even sheets and pillow cases."

M. D.

Summer in China

THE unusual experiences of a former Ontario lady, a graduate of the University of Toronto, and now the wife of a medical missionary in China, who is spending her first summer in the mountains of that country, are told in the following letter which has just been received from a summer resort in the mountains of Honan:

"It is rather a hard trip to reach this place from Weihwei." (Weihwei is the very large centre at



MRS. GEORGINE FRASER NEWHALL.

Who solved the problem of the high cost of living in Calgary by establishing a Consumer's League, an organization of which she is now Honorary President.

town in the Caucasus Mountains between Batum and Kars, very close to the Turkish frontier.

At the outbreak of the war, Miss Nicol, who has spent a number of years in study in Europe, was