

AT WORK AMONG THE GREEKS



An UNRRA doctor wins the confidence of a small Greek patient

CORSO Carries Medical Aid to Lonely Villages

We left the 15cwt. truck at the village to bring back the Nomiatos and his assistant next day, and returned to Florina in the jeep I use for covering the territory. Next day we went to the village of Neachorakion, about a half-hour's drive from Florina.

the interpreter is lecturing the onlookers under direction of the nurse, and then the ointment is applied from head to toes. The smile of satisfaction on the lad's face, almost makes you feel the itch going out of his sores. All we lack to make a proper job of him are some new clothes, and we watched him climb back into his rags with regret.

Call to the Mountains

Back in Kozani, the girls are preparing for the next week's programme. They go to Mikpovallon, Tranovallon, and Livadheron. The two former can be reached by truck, but the latter is in the mountains and entails a two-hour journey on foot or by mule. Besides medical and dental equipment to carry, there are also rations, and blankets and ground sheets if they stay the night. If they get through in time they will return to the car and sleep there. The trip means that they sleep out two nights. Their work consists of vaccinations, inoculations, general treatment of common ailments, dressings, etc., advice on first-aid, sending to hospital those who should go, advising those who won't or can't go, dental extractions and anything else that comes along.

The work, at present, is still in the exploratory stage, as far as establishing clinics. They are probing the territory to find the best locations—villages which can serve others in the vicinity, and where someone possibly can be selected for training to take charge eventually. Something like a District Nurse. Recently there was an outbreak of diphtheria at the village of Krokos, just a mile or two from here. Some children died before we had time to inoculate them all.

Miss Stevens and I went out one Saturday morning, and I helped her to do as many as we could round up. When we had finished the tally came to 213 children aged 10 and under. That was only half.

Easter Thanksgiving

The others were having Easter holidays, and had to be done later. We ran out of vaccine or serum too, which did not help, but managed to get a further supply from Salonika within a few days. Some of the children had their hair dyed with saffron—an old Easter custom here. During the inoculations, I swabbed their arms and kept the primus going for sterilising, and Miss Stevens gave the injections. Youngsters would come up to the table, receive the needle without flinching, and would then hand Miss Stevens a coloured egg, often two, with a "Christos Anosti, Kronya Pola"—"Christ is risen, Many Happy Years." Or, "Kalo Paska," which means "Happy Easter." By the time we had finished, there was a small basket filled with eggs of all colours. We brought back to Kozani with us a small girl who was on the verge of contracting diphtheria, and left her

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War on Scabies

The school has 400 pupils, but there are only two rooms that can be used, and one of them has no windows, so half of the children are taught in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. Again, there is only the schoolteacher and his wife to tackle the job. By 2.0 p.m. the doctor and nurse had set up their things on a table in the one good room and were ready to start work. Mothers and fathers with infants and youngsters, others with

trembling daughters, old and young, all crowd round waiting their turn to tell the interpreter what ails them.

Scabies is prevalent here, also malaria; skin diseases are prominent; one little lass has bronchitis, many of the younger ones have malaria; others have obscure aches and pains that may be serious and may not, but all have to be examined and diagnosis arrived at through the interpreter, which is a slow and laborious process, and often very misleading. Through the door comes a youth, about twenty or so, supported by three women and one man. He cannot stand or walk, so they half drag half carry him to be examined. He is sent back to bed to wait until the schoolroom clinic is finished, and will be seen at home by Dr. Hunter.

Demonstration Scrub

Mothers need to know about the treatment for scabies, so Miss McLean rolls up her sleeves, rounds up some of the mothers with infected children, and prepares to give a demonstration on the spot. She selects a little orphan lad of about twelve. He is dressed in rags, really dressed in rags. Somewhere he has come across an old pair of boots, miles too large for him, but his proudest possession. They are so large that they help to dwarf his size. He seems to shrink into them. She gets him out of his rags somehow, and he stands naked in a bath of water, a little shy, but obviously looking forward to a bath in warm water, and with soap and a washer too. This is a very pleasant surprise indeed. He soon forgets his shyness and Miss McLean begins to soap him gently, but he is not only covered in dirt and grime, but also has the sores of scabies all over him. Throughout the operation

THE CORSO relief unit from New Zealand has now been long enough in Greece to know what its principal tasks are. Here are extracts from the first full report of J. A. Horne, the Chief Administration Officer.

"KRANIES was the usual pathetic village — no clothes, little food, houses destroyed, under-nourished children—the same old story. We met the Vice-President, and had a table set up on the track that served as a street. I tried to assist with the rounding up of as many children as possible, but they just cleared out when they saw me coming. So did the women. I discovered afterwards that we were the first British people to visit the village since the Occupation. They soon put in an appearance when it was discovered that our visit was friendly, and before long the table was surrounded by mothers and fathers eager to have their howling children vaccinated or immunised against typhus and diphtheria, both prevalent.

"When the immunisations were completed, the job of looking over those who were sick began. Among those present were two children, twins we were told, seven months old. Both were dreadfully undernourished, and looked no more than a month old. Only their clothes seemed to be holding them together. All they needed was a course of good and regular feeding, and we promised to report to the Welfare Officer that they were not receiving the milk ration. One woman could hardly stand up. She looked like one of those famine pictures or illustrations we so often see in connection with

starving Europe. All she lacked was the black cowl. Others were suffering from malaria, the scourge of 80 per cent. of Greece. Apart from the medical aspect, our mere presence there would help to put a little heart into them.

Back in the boats to Mikrolimni, where we were told that we were to be the guests of the village president for lunch. He had some pork for us, rare in Greece, and we waited on the lake shore again, while things were being prepared.

Village Medical Services

At the lunch we had pork, and plain brown bread, Ouzo, and home-made wine which was very palatable. Toasts were honoured as is customary, and about an hour and a-half later we managed to get going again, in the village school-room. Whilst the inoculations were being done, I cornered the president with an interpreter and arranged to send him monthly supplies of first-aid material—dressings, ointment, atabrine for malaria, and other items likely to be needed. A first-aid post known as a clinic, is to be established there, to serve that village and six others in the vicinity, with the president and the schoolteacher doing the dispensing. We realised that it was little enough, but still, better than nothing at all.

The clinic will be visited from time to time by our team at Florina, and it is also hoped, that at a later date, some suitable person from the village can be selected for training at Salonika, and later put in charge of the clinic. By this means we hope to build up some kind of medical services where none now exist, possibly forming a framework on which the Greek authorities can establish permanent services.