

depends on circumstances, time and place. Now," she raised a bough of double red hawthorn some one had placed before her on the table, "just now when I look at these tiny clusters of flowers, like masses of miniature roses, I seem to see my favourite flower; but presently those purple pansies over there will serve me just the same. While I look at them, I give myself up to them, I cannot think of others. Each interests me, and fascinates me in turn."

"Is it so with other things?"

"Yes," laughed Sister C. "It is so. I take things without favouritism, as they come." . . .

As I have already mentioned, the Mother-House provides for sick and aged Sisters, although when the latter have families able and willing to provide for them, the Sisters are encouraged to accept the protection most natural to a woman's declining years. In very many cases, however, invalid Sisters prefer to end their days in the Mother-House. Here they are able to work for the Institution long after they can no longer nurse or take part in the domestic duties. Needlework, embroidery, the designing of Christmas cards and decorative ornament occupy the hours they are strong enough to give to such work, the proceeds of which are sold for the benefit of the Order.

Lay-helpers are sometimes invited to join the invalid Sisters in their work-room. As a young girl I have spent many a pleasant hour reading or drawing for the Sisters, one of whom gave me such excellent hints on textural design and ornamental drawing that the subject has had a certain charm for me ever since.

It was a very peaceful, cheerful room in which we worked. The walls were hung with pictures, the windows were tall, and, in fine weather, open to the air. Among the busy crowd I recall, as I write, the form of one fair young Sister is most distinct. She seldom spoke, and only joined the party for a short time every day, her delicate beauty growing less earthly with each. One morning we were told that she was dead, that she had been dying all the time, well aware of the fact, glad that she was allowed to work to the last, "doing what she could." The golden letters she had been embroidering were just finished, the "Amen" she had worked actually forming the concluding sacrifice of her short life.

Habitual reverence for duty, the root from which heroism springs, is common in Germany. In spite of the old Sister's criticism, I know that the "fussiness" of our age has not quelled it. Among the Deaconesses who work unknown to the world at large, unappreciated save by their own small circle, there are a host of spirits kindred to that of Margaret Leue, who during recent riots in Dahomey quietly attended to the wounded while bullets whistled past her ears, and who, when night set in, placed a revolver in her belt, and braved the prowling cut-throats, that she might assist in the transport of the wounded. . . .

The census of 1894 showed that 7,854 Deaconesses were employed in 2,776 stations, *i.e.*, hospitals, districts, colonies, etc.

IV.—DEACON NURSES.

The number of male Nurses belonging to this order is comparatively small. They are all connected with Brotherhoods, formed more or less on the plan of the famous *Rauhe Haus* (Rough House) of Horn, by Hamburg, founded in the year 1833. Like the Deaconesses, the Nursing Brothers are actuated by religious motives. In their case, Nursing is frequently an adjunct of missionary labour, the education of neglected children, the service of the forsaken, ignorant, and imprisoned.

V.—SISTERS OF MERCY.

Any attempt at giving a detailed account of the work of Roman Catholic Sisters would lead far too far for the limited space at my disposal. For example, a mere list of orders would occupy several pages.

The difficulty of obtaining unbiassed information is considerable. On the one hand, prejudiced Protestant pamphlets represent the Catholic Sisters as mainly bent on proselytising; on the other hand, I have been asked to believe that religious enthusiasm can support superhuman effort without re-action. Party spirit on both sides still runs high, and those who judge the Deaconesses and Sisters of Mercy impartially by what they *do* rather than what they *profess*, are often in some danger of being classed with the indifferent.

However, it is well to risk the world's opinion at times, and use one's eyes rather than one's ears. That the Roman Catholic Sisters are, as a rule, self-forgetful and devoted, is a *fact*. That many doctors and patients are enthusiastic in their praise is another. Nevertheless, it is impossible to read the reports of Protestant Commissions on the work of Sisters of Mercy, and at the same time deny that numerous attempts have been made to make Proselytes among the patients. The rather uninteresting denunciations of the latter I will not quote here. (It is a curious fact that by far the larger number are brought forward by members of the lower classes.)

Among a somewhat extensive personal acquaintance with Nurses of varied denominations and nationalities, I have never met any who, as a body, surpassed the Sisters of Mercy in tact and tender sympathy. In the Black Forest I chanced upon a settlement of four Sisters of Mercy (I forget to what Order they belonged), who worked a small Hospital, and undertook the nursing of a mountainous and extensive district. In winter, one or the other of the Sisters would occasionally *wade* to her patients for miles, in actual danger of her life, often over her knees in snow, passing up or down a rough mountain-side, through the frost-bound forest in the dead of night.

Wherever Germany is Roman Catholic, Sisters of Mercy take the place that Deaconesses occupy in Protestant districts. The duration of training is almost always regulated by the capacity of the novice, who regards the profession of Nursing as a work assigned to her by the will of God through the agency of the Superior of her Order.

Wherever the Sisters nurse in hospital or campaign, they are, of course, expected to conform to the scientific nursing rules now generally prescribed (with more or less uniformity) throughout the civilized world.

(To be continued.)

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