

going on. I asked her where I might hang up cloak and hat, and she gave me a corner in a linen press, and a peg in the tiny ante-room which serves as kitchen.

I spoke to the patients and gave a hand in tidying the beds. Then the rounds were made, and the Chief presented me to his *sostituto* (our house doctor) and *sostituto assistente*. The former, Dr. R—, was very quiet and silent: the latter said something polite, and later in the morning told me a good many things that I wanted to know about the Hospital.

As soon as the Chief had examined the women patients, I accompanied him to the men's ward. Suor A— was as silent and melancholy as possible: so after the rounds (only two-thirds of the beds are full there as yet) I thought it best to return to the women's ward. I cannot dream of taking young girls in a male ward for some months to come; therefore it is needless to distress this unfortunate Suor for the moment.

A new patient had arrived, a *contadinella* (little country girl), Anna, with the sweetest face and voice. She is nineteen, but seems a child: was terribly shy and depressed. Anæmia of two years' standing, parents very poor, no meat, except on festas, &c. The other cases are—two cardiac, one nephritic, and the remaining, the poor woman suffering from cancer of the pylorus, I already mentioned.

November 11th.—I have been noting the things I should like to get in my hands—those which are not done systematically. But I fear the dear Suora will make it very difficult.

The beds are all full now, and three are heavy cases, especially the last arrival, diagnosed hysteria; symptoms—incessant vomiting, extreme emaciation and debility. She, Olivia, seems likely to give us a good deal to do. Also Agata, a young girl: diagnosis, necrosis cervical vertebra; immobility ordered, but will not be easily obtained. Thirdly—Olimpia, acute nephritis (very irritable young woman, deserted by her husband). All of these require constant attention, so perhaps Suor M— will let me take something off her hands.

The bathing question is the first which strikes one as needing attention. I offered, after rounds this morning, to bathe between blankets any patient unfit to go to the bath-room. The Chief approved, and said the doctor would indicate them, and I could teach the *infermière* how to do it.

Out of the six new patients, two were able to be sent to the bath-room. I accompanied them, to see where this part of the establishment existed. We walked (one woman wheeled in a covered chair by Teresina, our nicest *infermiera*, the other walking), through three male wards, and across the street, for the baths are in the other half of the Hospital. They are quite nice (*when* one gets there!), plenty of hot water, and all the apparatus for douching, etc.: showing that cleanliness is confounded with treatment as a rule.

Two other patients were declared unfit for washing, (nephritic and cardiac), too great risk of giving one cold, or exhausting the other. The remaining two he authorised me to wash. But I found it impossible to get hot water, as the only means of doing so, apparently, is boiling it on a small gas-stove in the little so-called kitchen, and Suor M— required that perpetually for one thing or another. I did not like to inconvenience her at the beginning, as innovations

anyhow are evidently distasteful to her, so felt it wisest to say, "We will wait for to-morrow." The doctor had, of course, specified no time for carrying out this wonderful performance, so it was not failing in discipline deferring it.

November 12th.—I found my two patients had been already washed when I arrived at 7.30! I wonder *how*? Teresina told me, awkwardly, poor girl, that Suor M— had come on duty very early, and had ordered them to bathe the patients.

I could not help feeling amusement at the promptness of action, so characteristic of a veteran Nurse! It was so intensely *human*, this rebellion at orders for improvements being given to a younger woman.

Of course the other patients were comparatively neglected, several with faces still unwashed and hair uncombed, when the doctors went the rounds. I thought best to say nothing of the washing question; it would be neither wise nor dignified to remark on the Suora's performances to the doctors; besides, I really am so anxious to conciliate her, I do feel myself such an intruder. Happily the good manners innate in Italians smoothes over things. The *infermière* are as nice as possible to me, though they look anxiously at Suor M— before accepting any offer I make of help. I find it, best in every way to act as if there were no possibility of opposition, but of course one *feels* it is there; and it is painful.

I see that I am not fortunate in the nun I have fallen on: she is too great a personage, poor lady, to be humanly capable of tolerating a rival in the humblest degree, and the Professor put me (unintentionally) in that position. I notice that all the other Suori make way for her, open the door for her, and listen to her with respect; and I hear she is the especial friend of the Mother Superior, sleeping near her, and being constantly with her when off duty. I genuinely sympathise with her, therefore, at having me *Fra i piedi*; but I see no way of altering the position. I can't give up coming now my friends have succeeded in getting me accepted; even if I could conceive (which I can't) giving up what I am convinced is the *present* step on the path reaching to the goal that has been set before me, *since no other has opened itself so far*. I can only hope that she may become more resigned to my presence, or that an opening may come before long in some other ward or Hospital. I must own to feeling considerably "blue."

I went to see Signora P— this afternoon. She said she had found two young women eminently suitable for medical nursing, since they were serious and intelligent, but afraid of surgical sights! She also thought them safe to trust to me; I am sure she thinks it a terrible risk letting girls come to a stranger, she warned me so against letting them be too friendly with the students and young doctors. I begin to realise how insanely quixotic my attempt must seem to people who do not know how thoroughly Italianised I am, and how well I understand and care for them. Only patience can prove that the matter is common-sense.

E. VERE.

(To be continued.)

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Deliciously Luscious and Fragrant.

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