

It has also been voted that the pupils should work only half the day; retaining half for home duties, or for earning by whatever means they are accustomed. Everyone tells me I must give up all hope of getting probationers with independent means; nursing is still too little understood as "the finest of fine arts." Like my poor Antonia, they all look on it askance, and think I must have some ulterior motive (religious propaganda probably,) for devoting myself to it.

May 17th.

I interviewed the first aspirant to day. Cssa. S— found her, and she came to their house after lunch, that we might talk to her together. Virginia looks good, and dependable; fat, and very healthy, a nice bright face and manner. She had helped to nurse Cssa. S—'s children with influenza, and had shown herself quick, and capable, and shown no signs of fatigue. She had also seen two American nurses with Cssa. S—, so understands that ladies can wear caps and do "humble services."

Virginia read over the rules and accepted them, saying she would prepare the various papers, and be ready to begin on the 15th, if the committee accept her. The hospital will give our pupils the regulation pinafore; so they have no uniform to prepare.

May 19th.

Cssa. S— has found another would-be probationer, and a very hopeful one, she told me, of a better class than Virginia, speaking French fairly, and altogether more educated. Her family, however, being *decaduta*, she is bound to help them, both parents being in weak health, and the only brother having died a year or so ago; otherwise she always had desired to become *Sœur de Charité*. This sounds most satisfactory, as if nursing to her would represent the combining of christian *dévouement* to the "neighbour," without the abandoning of filial duty.

The only difficulty is that of money; but it is so infinitely important to get a woman who *wants* to nurse, that we decided it would be right to give her the equivalent of what she usually makes by millinery (for richer relations and friends) during half the day, and she told Cssa. S— that she thought it would average about twenty-five francs per month.

May 22nd.

I heard last night, when dining with one of my committee ladies, that another *Sœur de Charité* has been murdered; but in France this time, and by an apparently mad *infermiere*. Still the murder of two Nursing Sisters within a few months is tragic. A French Abbé remarked, in answer to someone's comment on the generosity of a nun's devotion to duty—"Yes, but charity should be moulded by prudence." Our host answered with an irony so fine few, I think, perceived it—

"Most true, but yet the courage of charity, and prudence, are two qualities, and since we are human, we cannot be at the same moment both courageous and prudent; one chooses one or the other."

I could not help thinking how badly courage generally came off when the choice lay between it and prudence. In both of these murders not one spark of courage has come to light *anywhere*; the victims were killed like helpless animals, no one attempting to rescue them, they themselves paralysed by fear. M. l'Abbé need not exalt the virtue of prudence, I fear me: its position seems assured.

May 23rd.

*A propos* of last night's talk on charity, devotion, etc., I have been thinking over the reproach so often made to religious people by sceptical ones, "You do your good works because you think to reach Heaven thereby." I do not believe it is a fair reproach though, for anyone who really thinks must see the utter impossibility of doing things so well that he could offer them as payment for an eternity of gladness, of peace, of good—as exchange for eternal perfectness of condition? No, I really do not see how any earnest soul, viewing the fact that we create neither our instincts, nor our cravings, nor our environment, can believe in the "laying up of merits," or say, when facing death, aught else than (with Whittier)

"We leave the works and words we call our own  
And lift our empty hands above  
For Love alone to fill."

May 27th.

Two more girls have been found: all four came to-day to Msa. G—, our President, to be interviewed, as their papers have proved satisfactory.

We saw them separately, beginning with Clotilde, the girl who must be paid. She came in very quietly; is dignified, and very attractive. Soft voice also. She thanked us quite simply, and said she would gladly do any sewing or writing for us, and so *earn* in a way what we give her.

Number two, Elvira, was a different type, small, less good looking, but very refined. Possibly delicate—want of breadth in chest—but declaring she was perfectly well. She had seen the notice in the papers, and after seeing the rules at the hospital, sent in her papers. She, too, had wished to be a nun, but could not leave her father alone, the mother being dead, and her only sister married.

Numbers three and four were sisters, not so well dressed as the two first, but of rather better position, as the father is Director of some association. We had heard he was not very satisfactory, but that did not seem a reason for refusing the girls. Marietta, the elder, had a nice sensible face and manner. Antoinetta was pretty, but rather foolish in manner. They were most anxious to be taken, so further inquiries will be made from Sig<sup>ra</sup>. P—, as they gave her as referee.

As all the other young women who have been to the hospital these days to look at the rules have been frightened away by the length of the training, and by having no salary, we must make the best of these five (adding Virginia, who did not come, as we had already accepted her), and arrange with Professor Tarti and the nuns for them to begin. The lectures do not commence till the 15th June, so we can still accept others if they come forward; but we think it best to let these begin the 1st June if possible, as I do not want to stay on in Rome now that the girls are to be left entirely to the nuns.

The rules are as follows:—

1. The entire training will last during two years.
2. During this period the pupil nurses will aid the hospital nurses in all offices.
3. The ladies of the Committee will inspect (they promise each to take their turn, and go twice during the week—no fixed hour or day) the conduct and progress of the pupils, and keep a monthly report of each.

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