

ting. They came up to the would-be suicide by whom I was standing, and I remarked that I hoped the poor creature would sleep well; they calmly answered: "Certainly, with two of us to guard him"; when I remarked, "Especially if you both stay in the kitchen." Whereat they replied, "But he was perfectly quiet." (*Ma stava quieto quieto*). It is quite useless talking to these people, and equally useless reporting them. When fined they are simply more ill-tempered and the patients suffer. In the other ward there are two really good male nurses, one having quite a vocation and being as conscientious and intelligent as he is kindly. The patients are all devoted to him, and he is constantly acting as godfather to men and boys who have never been *cresimati*. But Gaetano is a great exception, and the three I caught to-night are really types of the usual male nurse.

December 19th.—My unruly boy was discovered by a doctor last night gambling with another undisciplined youth, from whom he won 43 *sous*! This had to be reported; and the chief threatened punishment first to the *infermieri*. Of course they should have prevented it; but the second culprit is a tailor, and had been working at coats and trousers for them, so of course they could not be hard on him, and my unruly boy no one can manage, unless perhaps the chief. The boy wants to be sent home too; constantly threatens to leave, only his family implore us to keep him, and we wish to do so out of simple humanity as they are fearfully poor and numerous, and his return to their midst would certainly entail spread of disease. The consequences are that we spoil him to keep him happy if possible. The chief merely told them therefore that they must not play again, or the *infermieri* would get into trouble.

December 21st.—I took a half holiday yesterday, and went out to Posillipo. The weather cleared after a rainy morning, getting finer and finer, ending in such a lovely starlight night with a new moon. I got to *Princesse d'A's* about 4. Their villa is a sort of enchanted palace; one wanders, once inside the lodge gates, down through very well-kept grounds, till finally one reaches an almost Moorish building. It is really old Neapolitan though, the walls being partly Roman, as it is one of the oldest villas existing. But the present Prince has re-modelled it, and made it supremely comfortable and, to me, harmonious. One side goes down right into the sea, so that they can step straight into their boat, as if it were Venice. We had tea in the cosy warm library, full of beautiful books, open fireplace, and comfortable chairs. The *Princesse* is a very attractive personality too, and I enjoyed having an hour's talk with her alone; we also arranged the matter of sharing between ourselves, Lady H—, and *Direttrice*, the expenses of a Christmas dinner for our Hospital patients.

Later on I went to dine with A. J— at a Pension near, and felt quite astonished at so unusual an amount of dissipation. My horizon has been entirely Hospital-bound since once getting foot hold there.

December 23rd.—I managed to get the Chief to myself and the patients this afternoon, and asked him about the Christmas feast. We sat down and wrote out the number of patients, and which of them would be able to eat. He was delightfully human, and, knowing how much food is to his "children," decided that, with very few exceptions all might feast. We went next to the *Economo*, and the Chief told him to

order stuffed fowls at the hospital expense. The other good things I told him we would like to give.

After the Professor left we amused ourselves in Sala III. with preparing a little "Presepio" [grotto of the Holy Family] for the women's ward.

December 24th.—The *Direttrice* of the Convent School came with me to buy cakes and sweets for the patients - going to *Kaplish*, the best confectioner here. We next got 48 plates of a pretty bluish-grey colour, and on these I arranged the cakes and sweets over bright coloured paper, with the number of the bed on each, so that one could modify the contents according to the condition of the recipient. As our poor "Syndic" was still on milk diet (though now quite quiet and back in Sala III.) he received two striped caps, the Chief and I putting one on him and declaring it "Il berretto da vero sindaco." By three o'clock all was ready, and soon after *Princesse d'A.*, Lady H. with a friend, and the *Direttrice* arrived. The Chief and his lady were already there, so we fetched the plates (the servants and self) and gave to the ladies who distributed according to the numbers written. This prevented any confusion or mistakes; and everyone was pleased and merry, only one poor gastric case having pain, our only hopeless (cardiac) having died at 5 a.m. My unruly boy happened to be better, and eat all his sweets at once! Yesterday he had written home saying he would stay in Hospital "fino che Dio lo voleva," instead of insisting on returning, he added that "the *infermieri* and also the *Signora*" had advised him not to leave.

After the ladies left I went round and found all the nicest men wrapping up their cakes and sweets carefully and putting them by for their children. I told the Chief, who beamed, saying "Sono buoni i nostri malati." He is always so pleased at any good trait in their character.

When he also had left and I had given the medicines I went to the woman's ward and read them the "Considerazioni per la notte di S. Natale" (Christmas reflections) out of an old prayer book belonging to an *infermiera*. They were rather suitable for that class of simple believers, and with the little "Presepio" lit up, gave them, I hope, a little feeling of Christmas and its real message. I found that it was Santa Brigida who originated the "Presepio." She had it revealed to her that the birth took place in a grotto under the hill of Bethlehem!

I got back to the convent in time for dinner with the *Direttrice* and her family. The Neapolitan Christmas dinner is a tremendous affair, every sort of fish, fried, roasted, boiled, with macaroni and shell fish. Then sundry flesh and fowl and elaborate salads, then various cakes and sweets (like we gave the patients), and finally "rosolio" and coffee.

Christmas Day.—The bells woke me at 5, and I dressed and took my breakfast, and went to the 6 o'clock mass at the nuns' church here. This huge convent has two churches, one belongs still to the nuns, the other to the Girl's School of which our *Principessa* is the real President. It was pitch dark, mild and rainy; I had to feel my way cautiously up the steps guided by the sound of the organ and chanting. Lifting the heavy curtain I entered a blaze of light, three officiating priests, and candles everywhere. The church is rich with marble and gilding, but I found a quiet side chapel, and thought over many things, whilst the organ played a cheerful dance accompani-

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