

each ward. One of the saddest Sister left me is Maria, unmarried, twenty-four, and rather pretty. Her brother died in Sala III. of phthisis a few months ago, and Maria is convinced that she will follow his example, though she came in with diagnosis of pleurisy, and, on aspirating, no bacilli were found. Still, her temperature kept high, and her mental state has been terrible. In fact, she seemed to be going steadily crazy from panic at the thought of dying. She would not speak to the other patients, but kept constantly calling Sister to ask what the doctors said of her. She never believed the patiently reassuring answers, for as no one speaks quite the truth here themselves they never can conceive the possibility of anyone else doing so. So poor Maria cried for hours at a time, getting more and more bemazed, stupified, and almost deaf, asking us always to repeat. Finally, about a week ago she became unconscious, and lay in a state of coma or talking incoherently. Her parents are devoted to her, and have spent every hour of "permesso" with her. The last few days she has rallied a little, and seems to know her father and mother, and to like to have them with her. They are such nice people, and in spite of grief at the prospect of losing so soon a second child, they are relieved by her present sort of imbecility after the first weeks of agonising struggle for life and horror of death. The diagnosis is tubercular meningitis, and she cannot last many days now.

Next to hers, the most serious case is Elvira, who came in with the diagnosis (by her *medico di condotto*, parish doctor) "probabilmente tutti i fenomeni, compreso la febbre, sons isterici"—probably all the symptoms, including the fever, are hysterical—but whose sputum showed at once a large quantity of tubercular bacilli. She is a very piteous little person, the other "fenomeni" comprising paresis of the lower part of the body and consequent non-control of abdominal functions. With no water bed, and with infermiere who will not wash and change with sufficient regularity, I fear that my attempt at preventive treatment will not save the skin of this poor girl.

August 7th.—Maria died quietly yesterday, and Elvira went home. It is sad that she should spread the disease, as is probable with their little belief in disinfection, but her parents have no other children and are fairly well off, so it is right they should try to make her last months as happy as possible, they will call in some nursing Sisters, and not treat her any more for hysteria!

Sala III. has now some interesting cases, from the psychical more than the pathological standpoint. Giovanni, a contadinello of twenty-one, is a sort of Tolstoian peasant, so simple and natural, and so gracious in manner and look. He only came in yesterday, and it is pathetic to think of him joining the downward race in the ward, gradually losing ground, and developing the symptoms which "do not pardon." At present he is not emaciated, but says it is fourteen months since he began to cough; and his temperature is high, and there is perspiration. Next to him, unfortunately, is another phthisical patient very near the end, though to-day he had an extraordinary "voglia"—longing—for sea baths, he

who had no longer strength to turn in bed! He first asked me, this poor No. 18, to get him sent to them, and then repeated the request to the doctor at rounds, who looked at him, involuntarily, with surprise, but answered cheerfully after a moment, "Wait a settimana (little week), and then we will see about it." The answer satisfied him; but how marvellous are the mental vitality and hopefulness in victims of this disease!

August 8th.—The empty bed, No. 18, this morning showed me that its inmate had not waited the "settimana," but had gone where poor "fratell' asino"—S. Francesco's tender term for the body—will need no sea baths. He died quite easily and quickly, they told me, at 2 a.m., before the priest could be got. Padre Filippo will be sorry, for he was telling me yesterday that he was trying to *eresimare* (confirm) the youth, but that, though willing enough, he insisted on having one particular old coachman of his acquaintance as *compare*, and he could not be found when the Bishop came, so the patient firmly refused the ceremony! Conceive sending away a Bishop because a poor old coachman could not be found as sponsor! It shows excessive kindness on the part of the clergy to indulge a patient to that extent. Padre Filippo had hoped to catch the *compare* to-day and fix an hour when he was free to come, then beg Monsignor to return. But No. 18's soul needs the Bishop now no more than his body the sea baths.

My nice contadinello was much depressed by the death, and I doubt whether we shall be able to persuade him to remain. The Chief is trying Magliani's serum on him, as he is one of the few not in the last stages of tuberculosis. The doctors do not believe in this treatment however; for, though a few cases have remained stationary or improved slightly, yet they do that under guaicol or creosote treatment also—combined with better nourishment and hygiene—and no entire cures, of even moderately advanced cases, have been obtained. Patients in the initial stage never come to hospital, so they cannot try it on them.

However we are doing our best to persuade Giovanni to give it a trial; but he has made no friends, and wept when his mother came this morning, with longing to return home with her, so I expect his courage will not hold out long.

(To be concluded.)

The late Mme. Hélène N. Zarifi, a Greek lady well known in Constantinople for her works of philanthropy, has bequeathed in her will a legacy of 2,000,000 francs for the construction of a large hospital in the city. 600,000 francs are assigned for the buying of the proper site and for the necessary furniture, the rest of the large sum being allocated to the continual upkeep of the hospital. A plot of ground will probably be bought in the city quarter Shishli, best adapted for an institution of that kind. All poor patients of the Greek nationality will be admitted free of charge, while patients of other nationalities will have to pay a moderate fee for admission. According to the will of Mme. Zarifi a bust of her husband will be placed at the entrance door of the hospital.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)