

ing, hopeless, ever-recurrent suffering cannot be unreasonable or even cowardly, especially when the trouble given to others is great, and they may not care enough for one to wish to prolong one's sojourn, or may love so deeply that their whole longing is the unselfish one for our release. Under such circumstances, can even the highest philosophy convince one that the door *may not be opened*, but we must wait for the actual call to depart! Surely there is nothing that would prevent any being as agonised as my poor Arzolina, and who understood what an over-dose of laudanum would do, and could get it, from passing through the door, except a *certainly* of belief that since we had nothing to do with coming into life, we have no right over it—it is not ours—but was just consigned to us; or as Epictetus first declared, "*For I came when it pleased him, and when it pleases him I will go.*"

May 8th.—Arzolina is a shade better. Yesterday she was able to talk in a low voice. Her elder sister has come from Torino—such a nice woman, a sort of housekeeper maid to Contessa S., of a most devout family, and whose cousin I know well in Firenze. Arzolina is very proud of her sister, and was pleased for me to see her and talk of her "Signora."

The morphia seems to continue to act; for several hours she has little pain, only occasionally her face contracts from a sharp twinge, which recurs more and more frequently until she is unable to keep still, and begs for a new injection to still the aching, eating anguish.

Yesterday she told me another quaint little legend. Gesu and S. Pietro were again *girando il mondo* (wandering round the world), when they met a poor woman who was swearing, and S. Pietro was much shocked; but Gesu told him it was from her lips she swore, and not from her heart. Then they passed a *baroceio* (peasant's cart) and the *contadino* on it swore as he beat the poor horse. Gesu was grieved, because the man swore from real anger and hatred in his heart. S. Pietro could see no difference, so they followed the woman to her poor little hut, and Gesu knocked at the door, and begged for a bit of bread. Again she swore at God because she had no bread either for herself nor for the pilgrims. But Gesu told her to go and look in the cupboard, and when she opened it she found it full of loaves. So she brought one at once to Him, and gave it, saying, "*Ora che Dio me ne ha mandato, ne do a tecon piacere*" (Now that God has given me some, I willingly give to thee), and smiled, and blessed God. Gesu turned to S. Pietro and said, "*She swore only because she was so sorely tried: but the contadino because anger was in his heart.*"

May 15th.—Arzolina was worse yesterday, hardly spoke. The day before she had been quite bright, and enjoyed talking to her sister. No more hæmorrhages, but the dull, gnawing pain is *always* there now, though the morphia deadens it to a certain extent. Her sister left last night; Arzolina did not seem unhappy about it—too ill probably. I had Signora Elena's little book in my pocket, and read her the thoughts on the verse, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and talked a little after to her. She told me that the night she had

been so very bad she had prayed hard to have a vision of the Madonna. "*Credevo che mi avrebbe tanto consolata!* (I thought it would have consoled me so!) *Ma si vede che non merstavo quella grazia; non ho veduto nitute*" (But one sees I was not worthy of such a blessing; I saw nothing).

I do not remember anything else that she said; she seemed quiet and not unhappy. Very patient—an example to poor old Nella in the bed beside her, who never ceased moaning. I asked her if she did not think it good of Arzolina, whose pain was a long way the greatest, to remain silent, and not distress or disturb the others, and Nella seemed to think she would like to make an effort too. It is terrible what one patient with no self-control can inflict on others. Nurses who have authority, and power of influencing them, are greatly needed in this respect.

May 12th.—Rachele told me this morning, "*Troverà una di meno di là,* (You will find one less over there). *Arzolina morì ieri alle 9 e mezzo.*" (Arzolina died at 9.30 last night). "*Dio sia benedetto!*" (Thank God!) was one's heartfelt answer. So death has been quick at the last. Hæmorrhage began about 7; they called no doctor, but fetched the *capucino*. Ice was applied; hot water is, of course, used for ordinary hæmorrhages, but in her condition I doubt its having been of use. Anyhow the draining away of this poor suffering life mercifully continued, and by 9.30 all was over. I am truly sorry not to have been there. I hear there was great confusion, great agitation; no one was calm (except the Capucino). Arzolina's sister (the other who lives here) was in convulsions, and poor Arzolina begging for consolation. "*Cecchina, mi consoli*" (Comfort me, Cecchina) was her cry. The only answer being the usual professional one here, "*Aspetta, aspetta ti passerà*" (Wait, wait; it will pass!) I do wish I had been there—not that it now matters, not that one can really help. But it seems to me that I should like to have some one with me at the last who really felt. "*Dio sia laudato per la nostra sorella morte*" (God be praised for our sister Death), and no one seems to have realised that last night whilst she cried for comfort—I wonder how many of us actually do when in health ourselves? But it is only of what we are ourselves convinced, that we can convince others.

E. VERE.

Outside the Gates.

WOMEN.



MRS. ANNA LEA MERRITT and Prof. Roberts Austen have recently been making experiments in the new method of mural painting with the aid of metallic oxides and soluble silicates. Indeed, this was the method used by Mrs. Merritt with much success in decorating the church at Chilworth. They read a very interesting paper on the subject at the Society of Arts, on December 4th, Mr. Holman Hunt taking the chair.

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