

## Our Foreign Letter.

IN AN ITALIAN HOSPITAL

(More pages from an Englishwoman's Diary).

(Continued from page 361, Vol. 28).



January 3rd.

—It is still impossible to get Miss B— admitted as my substitute; yet I really ought to return to Rome for a few months; the

committee write to urge it, saying that the girls now need me in many ways. But I cannot leave the Gesu Maria until Sister G— can take my place. It is owing to the Principessa being on duty as lady-in-waiting at the Quirinal that everything moves extra slowly. She left before getting official permission for the change of teacher (*direttrice*), and only to-day did she send me a note for the President of the Consiglio, asking him to present Miss B— to his colleagues as my *remplacant* during absence, and aid on my return. I sent on the note to our chief at once, and hope we may soon get a satisfactory answer. Luckily Sister G— has been rather ill these three days, so the delay has been less hard for her.

January 6th.—I am proving that Naples is not even like Rome, the "city of to-morrow," but of "the day after to-morrow." No answer coming from the chief, and hearing he was ill, I went to his house after the morning rounds, and found that though he had sent on the Principessa's letter, and begged Professor G— to fix an hour for me to present Miss B— to him, as yet no answer had been vouchsafed. He suggested, however, that I should take her this afternoon to him and arrange for her to begin work to-morrow, as I could introduce her to the doctors in his absence.

On returning to the hospital I heard that Professor G— was in the Sala d'Amministrazione, so I sent up a note asking if I might bring my *remplacant* to him this afternoon. He answered ceremoniously that until the Consiglio should meet and approve, he could allow of no variation in the plan voted in my name. I went off again, regretfully, but not daring to act without his permission, to the chief, and asked if I might go to Professor G— and try to find out where the difficulty lay. At first he said "No," but I insisted quietly until he said, "Perhaps it would be well to try."

Directly after lunch I took a *carrozzella* and drove to the President. His servant gave me a friendly greeting:—"Ah, Lei è la Signora dell' Ospedale," and handed me in at once. The Professor was extremely kind, and I went straight to the point, saying I came to him as "l'amico della Principessa," as I was in despair at the new difficulty. He promised to do his utmost to get the matter voted at the next meeting (on the 13th), but repeated that he could not give the permission for anyone except myself to work in the hospital. He told me he was surrounded with difficulties, the hospital belonging to the province and to Government, having both clini-

cal and charitable departments, and he being accused alternately of partiality by each. He owned that the nursing was not satisfactory, but added that were there only room in the hospital he would put in nuns to keep order—a remark which showed that he holds very different views to the Principessa, who considers nuns too *anti-progressiste*. I merely told the Professor that we aimed at leaguings with some religious society for finding pupil-nurses, to show him that I was not a "Freemason"; but it is all extremely complicated, and I can only hope that my visit may have done some little good by showing the President that we trusted him.

January 9th.—My poor unruly boy began to grow worse several days ago, going so rapidly down-hill that I have come to pass the night. Two days ago tubercular gangrene set in, and his state is beyond description. God grant it may not last! We ought to isolate him, but the chief is away (still having fever), so no one is able to find a room. The Economo has taken possession of the "carnerette," which used to house isolation cases, and nothing else remains but the paying rooms, which no one dare touch. Were only the chief here, I believe he would have had the poor boy moved to the one or the other.

This morning I found several of the patients frantic. The night had been cold—Vesuvius white with snow—impossible to keep windows long open, so one and all complained of headache and nausea. Galasso, an old hospital bird, was violent, declaring his bed must be moved, he would not be poisoned, &c., &c. But the majority were compassionate, lamenting their own sufferings, but still perceiving how far worse were those of the unfortunate boy who, still conscious, lay exuding corruption. . . . It is really ghastly, and Sister G—, who came to fetch me this evening, says she has never had so terrible a case.

He lies very quiet now; has given up grumbling and using such mild epithets as "assassins" when the doctors failed to content him, or "ubbriaocchi" when the servants did not immediately satisfy his wants. There is but little to do for him. Give him a drink, and wash his mouth from time to time; see that he keeps covered, and that the *infermieri* are not rough in handling him. But it is more for the *morale* of the ward that I wanted to come, to show that one shares the general misfortune, if one cannot remedy it, to see that one window is kept open, and order and quiet maintained.

The hospital was very quiet as I came in about nine. Lighted up everywhere, but solitude and silence in the *colonnades*, only the cries of a poor "*fratel cane*" piercing ears and heart. I looked in a moment on the women's ward, having brought lozenges for one of them; the other patients and one *infermiera* were all asleep, the second *infermiera* was sitting knitting near the worst case. In the male ward there was also silence, partly because the doctor reprimanded them this morning, but also because they were expecting my return. I think, too, that they are really sorry for poor Salvatore, and impressed by the horror of his condition.

I found that the lamp which I had left to maintain trementine in evaporation by his bed had gone out; also no one was using the carbolic spray. The *infermiere* told me that there was no more alcohol for the lamp, and it could not be got at the pharmacy, so we must wait till the morning. I went back to the women's ward (the *infermiere* could not go there)

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