

There was no one belonging to her so far as we could find out. She was not communicative, and when an indiscreet journalist asked her about the earthquake her answer was decisive, "Non voglio pensarci." She told me that she had been living in a casadi lavoro, and when we asked what work, she said, "trasparente," so we conclude she meant a school for embroidery, of which she was one of the teachers. "Io ero maestra," she repeated twice over, and then we understood why the little old lady knew so well how to command, and to show what she wanted. As teacher she had been accustomed to be obeyed.

Another patient we are not sure about, and who excites our pity and our admiration, is a man of thirty, well educated, speaking both English and French, whom we term "Lazarus," as he has no part of his body without suppurating wounds. He was three days and nights buried alone. At first he heard his sister's voice, but soon she ceased to answer his call. The brother who shared his room he heard nothing of, nor of his mother and other sister. He is so suffering (the multi-dressings are torture, and often have to be suspended) that he does not perhaps quite realise how entire his loneliness seems likely to be. But of course we tell him of all the others, who find relatives only now, since they were carried to Catania or Palermo, or here, or even to Malta. But the days go on, and all he has had is a letter from a cousin saying she had been to Messina to look at their house and try to find news of them, but no one could she find (until she got news of "Lazarus"), so we fear he is indeed the solitary survivor of his family, and a most patient, courteous sufferer, physically and mentally, so uncomplaining, and so grateful for every service.

Our little girl patient of the terrible gangrene in thigh and inguinal region is going very slowly. There was a menace of femoral hæmorrhage three days ago, but it has not so far been verified. She simply grows paler, and more shrunken, and they dress her wounds once or twice instead of the three times that they used to martyrise the poor mite so long as they had hope of saving her. The saddest part is that her aunt (who has been the truest mother) is not alone, but has two daughters at Messina, waiting for her. The little Sarina lost her parents and is all alone, so this devoted aunt confided her two daughters to her brother, and came off with the patient, hoping soon to take her back cured. The fractured limb was immobilised, and inside the mischief worked. . . . So now we can only hope the little wings will unfold quickly, and the poor foster mother who so piteously apostrophises her as "Figlia! figlia mia," will be free to return to her own two (of 16 and 11) who write that they are still sleeping in a boat, as their uncle thinks it safest, since in the town there are thieves . . . or, I imagine, worse.

For the most terrible part, perhaps, of the whole great tragedy, is the survival of the unfit—of the refuse—to the largest extent. It is explainable, of course, in that the cheaper houses, with their herds of the lower population, killed fewer in proportion than the well-built houses where the solid masonry was more destructive, and where the

inhabitants were comparatively few. But when I asked a professor, in another hospital, what his experience had been, if amongst his hundred odd patients many of them seemed valuable lives, he answered, "Hardly any," and added, "There seems an irony in the fate that saves one epileptic son and kills the father and six healthy ones. Yet that is one of the facts that I came across, the mother feigning herself mad so that she might be shut up in the manicomio with her one surviving idiot."

"Fate—destiny—miracles," these are the words we hear constantly, and to which there is very little to answer. To the non-believer, there is nothing but stoicism to advance. Endurance of pain, of loss of loved ones, and of possessions—nothing can give back health to many; never will they find their family or friends again. What is there for them but endurance, until hope can to some measure be born again?

To the believer, who pauses in her exclamation of gratitude, to the Madonna who has saved her and her family by a miracle, on seeing my eyes turn to her neighbour who has lost husband and children, what can one say but, "yes, but be thankful silently in respect for those who have not had the miracle."

These are all great questions, to be thought of in solitude, and which, so far as I can see, have only one solution, that of *the unimportance of life, of health, of prosperity*. In the face of this upheaval of Mother Earth, casting her children blindly out of the world, or maiming them, physically or morally, with so reckless a hand, what can be the meaning but that life, health, prosperity, are not the things to cling to, since they lie so utterly beyond our grasp. Whilst what does remain through everything, what—to quote another professor—"reconciles one to the world," is *goodness*. The solidarity of mankind, which (through all the perversions of the individual) has shone so luminously through this whole catastrophe, God given goodness impelling people of all nations to acts of heroism, to give of their possessions, their time, their sympathy, and personal services, with a generosity which will surely be its own reward.

M. A. TURTON.

## International News.

The officials of the *Assistance Publique* in Paris are desirous that some of the pupils in the Nursing College of the Salpêtrière Hospital shall have an insight into English methods of nursing, and arrangements have been made through the Matron for them to have this experience at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C. The first pupils to be admitted will, by the kindness of the Treasurer and Almoners, be received as the guests of the hospital, an act of international courtesy which we are sure will be appreciated. They will be accompanied to London by Mme. Jacques, the Matron of the Nursing School at the Salpêtrière, who went over St. Bartholomew's, and was much interested in what she saw, when in London last year.

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