

## OUR FOREIGN LETTER.

FROM KAISERSWERTH.

DEAR EDITOR,—If you only could have been here on September 15th! It was such a grand and blessed day for us. Twenty-seven sisters were set apart to be deaconesses.

Such a happy bustle was there in the Mother-house the day before—rooms were being prepared for dear guests, the church prettily decorated "with buds and garlands gay," and the altar made a perfect grove by the gardener and his people. The probationers—"candidates," you would call them, I suppose—had been called in from their "out-stations" to enjoy a fortnight's perfect rest in the Mother-house; they were set free from their everyday duties to prepare body and soul for the great day. Instructions of all kinds were given them, though many of them have a three years' certificate for teaching or nursing, and they also have ample time to retract, if they wish to do so. Nobody is forced, they take the step out of their own free will.

On Saturday, the day before the solemn service our guests arrive—relations of the candidates, sisters and friends. They all are made kindly welcome, and feel that there is one bond of love that binds us together. On Sunday, at ten o'clock the bells ring out their lusty peal. Soon the church is crowded and Divine service begins. On both sides of the altar chairs are set for the candidates; immediately behind them the guests fill the front benches, and then the deaconesses take their seats. When all is ready "the pealing anthem swells the note of praise," as your poet says, and the candidates, two-and-two, are conducted by Sister Bertha and the Warden to their seats, amid the breathless silence of the congregation, who are absorbed in inward prayer.

After the hymn has been sung, and the sermon delivered, the Warden steps before the altar and says:—

"Dearly beloved, it is the gracious will of the Lord that in His Holy Church, beside the ministry of the Word, another office should be appointed, the office of "serving tables" (Acts vi). To this ministry not only men, but also women were called. The Apostle Paul speaks with regard to women who laboured with him in the Gospel, and we learn from his writings that women served as deaconesses in the Primitive Church. In the

providence of God this form of ministry has been revived in our days to the great blessing of the Church and the comfort and help of many weak and suffering people." Then, after a prayer has been offered up, the Warden says:—"While these sisters have been under our care they have received such instructions as fit them to minister to the bodily and spiritual needs of those among whom they will labour. During a long time of probation they have given proof of their competence in health, mind, and spirit for the work they will undertake." Then, addressing himself to the candidates, who rise from their seats, he continues:—"It is fitting, Sisters, that in the presence of God and this congregation the duties to which you are called should again be laid before you. You are to serve as deaconesses. You must regard yourselves as:

1. Servants of the Lord Jesus Christ;

2. Servants of the poor and needy, for His sake; and,

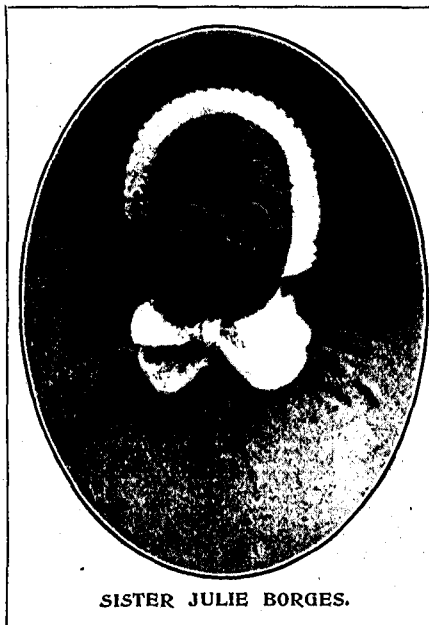
3. Servants to one another.

First, you are servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is your Master, and from Him you will receive your reward. You are set free from the ordinary toils of life that you may give your whole time and strength to ministering in His name to those whom He calls 'My brethren, even these least.' You are not to seek for earthly reward in this service. Having food and raiment and things needful, you must be content.

"Second, you are servants of His little ones, of the sick He came to heal, and the sinners He calls to repentance, for it is to them that the service is to be done you owe to your Master, Christ.

It is your duty and joy to bring home to their hearts the love, mercy and power of God. Count, therefore, no service too mean if love prompts to it, and no toil too heavy. Yours must be the Charity that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Your loving service is to set forth the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

"In the third place, you are servants to one another, for your work is to be done, if possible, in co-operation. You will find much help and strength in that sisterly bond which unites you to members of the Deaconess Order, and you must see to it that this bond is not weakened by neglect or self-will. When working together, let each in lowliness of mind count her comrade better than herself. Our Lord and Master, when He washed His disciples' feet said: 'I have given you an example, that ye should also do as I have done to



SISTER JULIE BORGES.

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