



CHRISTMAS IN THE NEW HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN.



A HOSPITAL almost entirely under the management of women, and solely for the benefit of that sex, must have a special interest for those of our girls whose hearts are capable of sympathetic feeling towards the afflicted with bodily sufferings. Such an institution is that at 222, St. Marylebone-road, London, and to it I desire to call the attention of those who so often inquire where a gift of their own handiwork would prove a much-needed boon.

I have just made a little tour through the two united houses, seen the patients—consisting of both ladies and women in a humbler position—some prostrate, but others sitting up in bed and engaged in reading, writing, drawing, or working. They were, apparently, as cheerful as sufferers could be, under the thoughtful, kindly auspices of those directing the household and the nurses in personal attendance. Notwithstanding the dread of painful curative treatment, present pain, and that most weary waiting for better days, how many brave hearts—unknown to the world outside—beat time to those “songs in the night” heard only of God and the angels around them! I need not explain what songs those are, nor that they are born of that peace-giving Faith and Hope that sees in the far distance the borders of that land “where the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.”

I made my circuit of all the wards, the waiting, consulting, and operating rooms, the dispensary, office, etc. Some convalescent had left a pleasing memorial behind her of recovered strength, having decorated the lower panes of some of the windows with paintings of flowers representing a window-garden. Screens decorated with coloured pictures and cards on one side, and black and white ones on the other, were in great requisition; and one poor girl, who was laid up with bronchitis, actually cried because a dark, unadorned screen was placed between her and the window, and she had to be solaced with another gay with bright groups of figures, landscapes, and flowers placed on the other side of her bed. Truly nothing is a trifle when strength is wasted, nerves are weak, and “griefs are many, while joys are few!” Then,

“A little thing is but a toy—
With hey, ho! the wind and the rain!”

And the wind and rain make but doleful music outside the casement of an infirmary, when wintry weather prevails within!

A bright glow of natural sunshine does much to raise the spirits, whether you be sick or well; and in this smoky city, and at this ungenial time of the year, a little artificial

brightness should be created by those in happier circumstances. You amongst my readers to whom "the lines have fallen in pleasant places," "lend me your ears," and kindly accept a few suggestions with regard to this hospital.

As a preface to these, I must tell you of the efforts made by the ladies who hold office in this hospital, to make a Christmas for those dwelling amongst strangers as home-like as possible; and you will be glad to hear that some of our girls' deft little fingers unknowingly contributed to the brightness of the occasion, both last year and the year before. It is scarcely necessary that I should explain how you took part in this charitable work, as you all know well that the articles you send in to our needlework competitions are ultimately designed for the benefit of the needy in hospitals and homes.

In reply to my inquiries, I was told by the lady who has the chief management of the institution that, on the evening of Christmas Day, the largest of the wards is illuminated with Chinese lanterns, and gaily decked with evergreens; and that a "Father Christmas" is extemporised out of the wicker-work sides of a vapour-bath, standing about four feet high. A pole is secured in the centre of this, and a stick placed across it at the top of the wicker sides to form shoulders, from which some appearance of arms may depend. On the top a bearded and whitened head is affixed, an appropriate mask having been procured for the purpose. Drapery is hung

round the lower part of the figure; and in form it resembles that of the "Green Man," or "Jack o' the Green," paraded in the streets on May Day. A hole is left in the old gentleman's back, which renders the hollow in the middle of his body available for the insertion of the various gifts, clothing, and other articles contributed by the benevolent. These are all numbered, and tickets with corresponding numbers are drawn by everyone in the house—the nursing and the nursed.

Whatever objection may reasonably be urged to the removal of certain patients from their beds upstairs, or whatever the difficulties to be encountered, when bad legs with cradles over them must be taken into consideration, the doctors' scruples and anxieties are set aside for that pleasant evening, and the promoters of the fête are willing to bear all the responsibility of danger incurred. In fact, the refreshment of the change to weary eyes, and to the brain so engrossed by one most harassing train of thought, is known to counteract many disadvantageous results, and to do more good than harm.

The grizzly old "father," attracting so much of interest in the little community, has a very capacious inside, and articles of considerable size find space within his wooden ribs. Amongst the gifts that produced the most lasting impression were some beautifully made flannel petticoats, which elicited the admiration of all, and were sent by the Editor of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, the winter before last, from

the Needlework Competition of our young readers.

I inquired of the secretary what articles were the most acceptable, and she gave me the following list. Knitted woollen night-socks (very particularly), and every description of article for wear; plants (especially ferns), vases, and fancy flowerpots. These plants and vases, of course, would be placed out of sight on Christmas Day behind the old gentleman's drapery. Those of you who have read that charming Italian story, "Picciola" (the little prison flower), will understand the truth of the secretary's remark to me: "Something that is growing is always such a pleasure to the patients, and they are so interested in the springing up of the new fronds of the ferns, which thrive better than almost anything else in the wards." But any little gift would be welcomed—such as workboxes, needle-books, thimbles, scissors, packages of pencils, boxes of cottons, tapes, and pins; ribbons, spectacles ("clearers"), books (especially those illustrated), bottles of Eau de Cologne—in fact, almost anything. Bed-rests, to support the back when sitting up in bed, made of light woodwork, and also horsehair cushions, not very hard, I think would be very valuable.

I have written so far without telling my readers certain other particulars that may interest them respecting the management of this hospital, and the special claims which it has on their consideration. I said it was "almost entirely under the management of women;" for although the "general" and



A QUIET CONVERSATION.

"managing" committees are composed of both men and women, the four "visiting physicians" and the "house doctor," as well as the "dispenser," the hon. treasurer, hon. secretary, and the acting secretary and house-keeper, are all women. In fact, this is the only hospital in London thus completely "officered" by them. This is a great boon to many whose peculiar circumstances and individual feelings cause them to prefer female medical attendance, and that in a hospital where there are no male medical students.

This institution commenced with twelve beds, increased to fifteen, and now provides twenty-six. But out-patients are likewise attended to. Upwards of 2,000 patients were of this latter class during the past year, and about 200 are annually admitted as in-patients. Payment by the latter is not compulsory, for very necessitous cases are taken in free of charge; but as a general rule the patients are expected to pay from 2s. 6d. and upwards weekly. The out-patients pay an entrance fee of sixpence, and twopence for every succeeding visit.

All the nurses are taken from St. Thomas's Hospital, and the lady superintendent and secretary, Miss Hunt, was trained at the "Nightingale School," at the same hospital. At her special request, I invite any of our London readers, not too far removed from the locality, to pay a visit to the hospital. On any day, excepting Saturdays, they would be welcome between the hours of 2 and 5 p.m. Saturdays are reserved for the visits of the friends of the patients.

Lastly, this New Hospital for Women is entirely dependent on voluntary contributions, and the promoters, managers, and all the officers connected with it look forward without apprehension, not only to a continuance of support—such as that with which the good Providence of God has already blessed their labours—but to a further increase of the same. May I not cause a more widespread interest by far in commending their cause to the kindly remembrance of "Our Girls"? I appeal to that "charity," the loveliest of Christian graces, which, like mercy,

"Droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest—
It blesseth him that gives and him that
takes."

S. F. A. CAULFELD.

HER VIOLIN. A SKETCH IN SEPIA.

CHAPTER III.

THE winter of that year passed drearily enough for Frida. Before leaving London she had told her friend Mrs. Somerset about her engagement to Demetri, and had received great help and comfort from the sympathy and counsel of that lady. She had promised, for the present, to obey her father, and had told Demetri that there could be no formal betrothal for them, but that she trusted time would change her father's ideas and that they would occasionally exchange letters. This solace she felt she must have.

She had determined to work her hardest, and to spend as little as possible, in order to save money to be invested for her father's benefit, for in this practical outcome her talks with Mrs. Somerset showed her her best help lay, and her friend, in answer to her anxious inquiries, told her that Herr Bund would be well provided for if she could earn for him about sixty thousand thalers. This seemed to Frida an overwhelming sum, as she had no idea of what her present earnings were. One day, therefore, she asked her father how

much he received for each of her performances.

Herr Bund stared in astonishment at this question, as Frida had never before asked anything about the arrangements. He, however, replied promptly, "Never more than ten guineas at a time."

Poor Frida! she immediately strove to reckon how many concerts she must attend before attaining the desired sum, and was appalled at the idea that at least a thousand performances would be required; this, then, meant four years of waiting, she thought, but even that knowledge helped her, for she had something definite in her mind, and could count the days as they fled, each one bringing her nearer her goal.

She told Demetri, however, nothing of her plan, but resolved to work steadily on; and from this time she bent herself to make friends everywhere who could help her, insisting on accepting only those engagements which offered the best pay, and surprised Herr Bund by always asking him how much he received.

Meanwhile Demetri was working hard also; he, too, wanted to earn a sum sufficient to justify him in beginning to work the coal, and it grieved him greatly that he never succeeded in seeing Frida during the autumn and winter months. He had been twice in Germany, on his way home, but on neither occasion had he been able to secure a meeting.

In the old castle at Szantó things went on in much the same fashion as heretofore, except that Demetri was in a sort of disgrace with his mother, as she would by no means consent to listen to his plans, or even to believe in the reality of his intention to marry Frida. She persisted in treating him with a species of irritating forbearance whenever he mentioned the subject, explaining his ideas to her daughters as the necessary consequence of the degrading career he had adopted, and assuring them that if his affairs were arranged and he returned to the castle for good, they would hear no more of the "bourgeoise" wife.

Early in the spring of the following year Frida was again in London. She was changed, her friends said, and even Mrs. Somerset scarcely liked to own to herself what judgment told her was really the case, that the girl had lost something as a woman, whatever she had gained as a musician. She tried to make allowance for the pain caused her by the discovery of her father's mercenary ideas; for, though to all the world Herr Bund had ever been only a vulgar, odious little tradesman, yet to his daughter he had seemed "guide, philosopher, and friend," until the rupture with Von Szantó had revealed him in his true colours. Undoubtedly, however, there was now about Frida a sort of unapproachableness and hardness; she seemed to live only to play, and to play only to gain money. She never went into society if she could help it, and in her rare talks with Mrs. Somerset revealed a kind of morbid eagerness to earn, always to earn, which horrified that lady, and made her try by every means in her power to turn the girl's thoughts into more healthy channels, and to dispossess her of the idea that she would never see Demetri again until she had gained the large sum she had determined to be needful.

Thus she seemed to be dominated by two passions, devotion to her lover and a desire for gain; her loving delight in her art was exchanged for a feverish anxiety to make the most of her unusual talent, and she had no longer a pleasure in music for its own sake.

Her appearance, too, was altered: she had lost her look of brilliant health and strength, and was thin and pale, only becoming flushed with excitement when some unusual effort aroused her, and her large eyes now looked larger and darker than ever, giving out a

fierce, hard light, instead of the wistful, appealing softness that had held such a charm.

One morning in May, Herr Bund had gone into the city on some pressing business, and Frida was, as usual, practising intently, when the servant brought in a note, saying the messenger awaited an answer, and that he had been told the Fraulein could reply as easily as her father if he were absent. Frida opened it and read—

"SIR,—We agree to your terms, and are willing to give your daughter one hundred guineas for the three performances, though we think it a very large amount. Let us know if the time named yesterday for the first rehearsal will suit.—Yours truly,

"B. SMITH (for Messrs. Church & Co.)."

The note fell from Frida's hand, and she felt stupefied. What did it mean? She had, however, to rouse herself, and she took an instant determination. Turning to the servant, she said, "Tell the messenger I will answer the note in person, and at once." Then, hastily throwing on cloak and hat, she set forth to see the writer of the missive, who was agent for the conductors of the concerts at which she had frequently played, and to learn—what? that this was a new and exceptional scale of pay, or that her father had been deceiving her systematically? for he had hitherto adhered to his declaration that he had never received more than ten guineas for any performance, and that any change of price meant a lesser one. Her mind was in such a chaos that it was only as she was being ushered into the presence of the gentleman of whom she was in search that she realised the difficulty of the inquiry she wished to make. This, however, was rendered easy to her, for the agent coming forward said, "I hope, Fraulein, you are satisfied that we consent, and that the time I named for rehearsal suits you?"

"Perfectly," replied Frida, her self-possession returning. "I come to thank you; but I wish to ask what you gave me last year for these concerts."

"You will remember," was the answer, "that at first you had fifteen guineas, but at the end of the season it was twenty."

"I thank you," said Frida; and turning, she departed with a sense of despairing rage in her heart, so engrossing her that she only mechanically took her way home. This, then, was her father's care! this his interest in her welfare! He had lied; he had watched her weary work and toil; he had known how to lighten it, and given no sign but a false one! As she mounted the stairs to her room, she tried in vain to think how much her earnings had really been and whether release was indeed likely to be at hand; but her brain refused to aid her, the figures she tried to reckon were meaningless, and she only felt a weary sense of the intolerable burden she had to bear, and of the disgust she could not conceal from herself at the thought of her father's conduct. For she hated lying for its own sake. But how much greater was her hatred when the lies were given her by her false, miserable father!

She went to the drawing-room at length, to find Herr Bund in his favourite chair, with a cup of coffee beside him, his pipe in his mouth, and the *Allgemeine Zeitung* in his hand. He looked the personification of comfort, and in Frida's distorted mental condition his very attitude and occupation were insults.

She advanced, and holding out the note received that morning, asked, "What does this mean?"

Bund was taken by surprise, and glancing at it replied, in feigned astonishment, "Ah,