

CHARITY MOST NOBLE

WORK OF THE LITTLE SISTERS OF THE POOR IN ROME.

Description of the Home for the Aged Destitute Erected in the Eternal City—A Model Institution on the Palatine Hill.

On one side of the Palatine hill, quite past the Golden House of Nero and the ruined halls of the Caesars, has been erected a beautiful home for the aged destitute, under the charge of the Little Sisters of the Poor—that society of devoted women, banded together a little more than half a century ago at the mother home in that quaint old Britany town of Rennes.

The date of the foundation of the order was 1840. It began its work in the most humble way, and its capital consisted of faith and courage, undaunted zeal and pure devotion. Yet it has grown in a half century so that homes have been established in France and Italy and England and America and Algeria and Turkey and the Indies and in Australia, while in our own country what representatives of true charity are more honored than these simple, modest women, whose quiet tread and long black gowns and white coifs and true and earnest lives have brought them reverential affection from the throngs who have learned to know them as personal friends and who are willing, even the poorest and most debased among them, to cry as with one voice, "God bless the Little Sisters of the Poor!"

But to return to the Little Sisters in Rome. The "Piccolo Suore del Poveri," as the plain black letters over the arched gate of the high wall that guards their Roman home from too curious gaze tell us they are here called, came to the Eternal City just 15 years ago. Their first home was a small house on the Via Giulia; their first "care" was one poor, deserted old woman; their own first number was six.

In those days of beginning the noble and utterly self forgetting character of the sisters and their institution was not understood, and many and bitter were the trials they were obliged to overcome. Now they are recognized, as one of the most beneficent forces that ever came to the salvation of the outcast.

The position of the new Roman home of the sisters is one of the finest in the city, high and dry and bathed in pure, fresh air mellowed by rosy dawn sunshine. The very atmosphere of the place is full of reviving power. The view is superb, sweeping the whole country—hills, plains, temples, palaces and ruins—for many miles around. At the sunny side slope of the home there is a thrifty vegetable garden, and in the center—for, like nearly all other Roman buildings, it is open in the center—there is a fine cortile, with fountains and pink oleander trees and palms and a beautiful Madonna. There is this difference in the construction of the Little Sisters' home and the majority of the Roman buildings, though—that for the most perfect entrance of sunlight and fresh air, one side of the building, that toward the hill slope, is left open, so that, with only a light fence between, the kitchen garden follows the cortile, and then there is terrace beyond terrace of trees and private gardens leading down straight toward the heart of the city.

The people who inhabit this beautiful home and receive its kindly care are of many nations, and as I have already said, their admission card is "Necessity." The mother home in France receives them at 70 years of age, but here they must be 60, and, recovering rapidly after their admission from all the painful ill-effects of old age, they live to an almost phenomenal number of years. Three hundred old people are cared for all the time, and applicants for admission, who wait in scores, may not come in, owing to lack of room, until death makes a vacancy.

Those of the men who are strong and understand the trades may work at the making of furniture needed for the home, while others manufacture all the shoes required both for sisters and for pensioners. Some of the women move around as busily and as deftly, employing themselves in light household duties, as if they were in bright, sunny homes really their own; others, as they sit on the veranda or in the long salon, knit and sew and chat, and still others help to keep the household clothes in order. They all look the embodiment of happiness, and many of them are extremely winning in their sweet, gentle, clean, comfortable coats, and they all welcome one with a gracious and courteous hospitality that is touching. This is the home they have found at last—these poor wanderers the world has left to toss about as best they might for weary years—but, directly they have a home, they open wide its doors and offer you its best with the pathetic eagerness of those who have learned bitterly to know what it is to be "outside" and to possess absolutely nothing, not even a friendly smile, for season after season. But although the "family" of the sisters is, as a rule, a very happy one, there are exceptions, for it must be remembered that the majority of these old people have fully entered their second childhood, so many times they must be favored and regarded and petted like children.

The expense of the place, even within its regular contributions, is very great. For bread alone 1,000 lire a month (\$250) must be expended, while the wine costs a little more than half that sum for the same time. Simple games are allowed in the proper season, and many indulgencies which seem small to us, but are great to them, are granted.

But everything is real and simple here. The rules are few and gentle, and the day's programme is an easy one. The first mass is at 6, but in the winter time the majority of the inmates are "indisposed" at this early hour, recovering very shortly thereafter, though, and all appearing at table when the clock strikes 7 for the breakfast of coffee and milk, or coffee or milk alone, and also, from bread.

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After breakfast they may assist as they like about the household matters, or they may chat and dispose of themselves according to their own desires. At 11:30 the sisters perform the midday religious exercises, and the inmates go to their rooms and repeat the "rosario." At 12:15 they dine. After dinner all the chairs and sofas on the balconies and verandas and the easy chairs in the salons are filled with dozing, nodding old people, each enjoying a siesta of longer or shorter duration as may please him. At the ringing of the chapel bell at 5 o'clock they attend service conducted by one of the sisters in the chapel. After church supper is served, and then they may again walk in the garden, chat or sleep until bedtime. At 9, when a sister makes the good night rounds of the dormitories, every one must be in bed or beside his bed.

There is a nice little library connected with the home, and there are always the daily and weekly journals, so that the disposition for reading may also be gratified. As a rule, lights by the bedside are not allowed, but if an inmate wishes to furnish one and has proved himself careful he may be thus indulged.—Boston Herald.

ANECDOTES OF FATHER BADIN.

Facilities of the Pioneer Priest—Directness a Prominent Trait.

In Father Badin's remarkable character directness was a prominent trait. There were no two ways about it. Like Father Neyron, whenever he heard or saw anything he did not like, he would speak out in a way that could be heard and understood. Sometimes, to tell the truth, he was a little too direct, a little too pointed.

During one of his periodical tours he staid over in a little village in southeastern Missouri. He had many acquaintances in the neighborhood, all of whom stopped to pay their respects to him. Among them was a lady acquaintance. It was the Easter season. "Madam," said Father Badin, "have you made your Easter duty?" "No, Father Badin, not yet." "Well, then, go and make your Easter duty and then come, and I will speak with you."

Once in crossing a bridge he met a Protestant acquaintance. Father Badin was carrying a saddle. "Hello! Father Badin," exclaimed the acquaintance, "what's up? What's the matter?" "My horse is dead," answered Father Badin. "Dead!" said the acquaintance, "that's bad. But then as your horse was a priest's horse, he was a good Catholic and died with all the rites of your church." "Ah, no," said Father Badin, "the rascal was a Protestant and died in his sin."

In his old age, Father Badin returned to France with the intention perhaps of spending there the remaining years of his life. But if he had such intention he quickly changed it and returned to this country. He found that France had not near so much attraction for him as he expected and that, after all, this country was his home.

In February, 1930, Father Badin read the last abolition of the church at the funeral of Bishop Flager. It must have been an affecting sight to see this aged and venerable priest invoking the mercies of heaven on him with whom he had come to this country almost 60 years previously and with whom he had labored so long in the ministry.

Father Badin was 60 years a priest and nearly 88 years of age when he finished the course that divine Providence had assigned him. He died in April, 1938.—Church Progress.

A Sublime Vocation.

There is no man more worthy of honor and respect than the priest, no vocation so high, so holy, so awful as his—high and holy, because daily he stands face to face with God as Moses on Sinai's top; awful, since to him is given the solemn dread power by his words to call God from his throne on high and once more take flesh among us, a living reality on our altars. Transcendent vocation! sublime calling! The person of the priest is to be venerated, never for a moment his prerogatives forgotten. How well then does it become the priest of God that his life should be an exceptional one among men! For he is separate, distinct, marked out as one who should be holy in his walk, his conversation, his every act.

It may be asserted with truth that there is no man so closely watched, so carefully scrutinized as the priest, not only by the great outside world, but by the humblest of his flock. His every word is noted, his merest look is marked, and it has its effect. Sublime as is this sacred vocation, the responsibility of the priest is of the greatest. His life is one that leaves him no room to deviate from his obligations, for in his every act and movement, word and look, he must lead the way that tends to the world not made by hands, but eternal in the heavens.—Pittsburgh Catholic.

Catholicism in England.

Roman Catholicism, as we know, is making considerable headway in England, and we are reminded of the fact by a statement made at the dedication of a new chapel at Dunsbridge, near Totness, which has been built by Mrs. Robert Harvey and dedicated to St. Rose of Lima, the patron saint of Peru, Mrs. Harvey's native country. The Rev. Father Hamilton, who preached an eloquent sermon, said that the number of Roman Catholic churches in Great Britain was 1,731, and that as many as 1,500 of these had been built during the last 50 years—certainly a remarkable evidence of the energy and enthusiasm of Roman Catholics all over the country. This particular church is built in the early English style, and comprises a nave and an apse.—St. James Budget.

Irish Kings Meet Violent Deaths.

Out of 76 Irish kings who ruled between A. D. 4 and 1172 no fewer than 52 died violent deaths either in battle, by murder or by thunder bolts—by the latter three were slain.

THAT VENTILATING HAT.

HAD to go to the very bottom of the ladder. Never mind how I got there, or why I got there; that's my business, and it doesn't concern you in the least.

But I was carrying my living all the same, and earning it honestly. The fact is I was a peripatetic advertisement at the time—a sandwich man—there's nothing like calling a spade a spade.

I and a gentleman in a position similar to my own were talking matters over.

"Things are very slack, governor," said he to me. "If we was a sickly looking we might sell our wares easier, and start the starvation workmen, as has just come out of hospital. But we're too well fed, we're, worse luck. I think I shall go into the country, and do a bit of hopping till business is brisker."

But I didn't care for hopping. I hate the country, and I resolved at all hazards to stop in town.

"There is one game you might try," said my acquaintance with a benign smile, "and that's Wilkins, the ventilating hat. But you can't keep on with that long, you know; it's a rule to the constitution."

"Anything was better to me," said I, "than the casual ward, so I asked for Wilkins' address."

"Oh, you can't miss it," was the answer; "you just walk down Shore-ditch, there's always a crowd outside Wilkins' shop, and all you've got to do is to ask bold like for Wilkins; and when you see him you just up and say: 'I'd like to be in the way of earning a honest half dollar, sir.' Then he'll put you in the way at once."

I started off for Shore-ditch at the comfortable pace usually adopted by the society flaneur and the gentleman of the profession to which for the moment I belonged. I mean, of course, the sandwich man.

I wasn't long in finding Wilkins; there was a crowd in front of the window. In the window were hundreds of hats; every one of them had a ticket bearing the name legend, "Wilkins' Ventilating Hat." Then, following the crowd, I first didn't see any particular reason for the crowd, which was staring into Mr. Wilkins' window in astonishment mingled with delight; but I gradually elbowed my way to the front row, and then I perceived what gave so much pleasure to the inhabitants of Shore-ditch.



THE EXHIBITION IN THE WINDOW.

In the center of the array of hats were two human heads, which were protruded through two artfully constructed holes in the polished mahogany which formed the flooring of the shop front.

Each head was covered with what appeared to be an ordinary tall hat. The head on the right had a large window ticket behind it, on which were the following words: "Wilkins' Ventilating Hat. Perfect comfort. No suffering from heat by want of ventilation. The wearer of this article enjoys life. The head is human; there is no deception. The only establishment in which Wilkins' ventilating hat may be obtained."

There was a similar ticket behind the head on the left.

The ordinary silk hat. Observe how the unfortunate wearer suffers from the heat. Poor fellow! He evidently wishes himself dead.

The common, unventilated hat of commerce is a fiendish invention, worthy of the atrocities of the worst days of the Spanish Inquisition. The head is human; there is no deception."

I noticed that the mahogany planking of the shop front below the head was perforated with innumerable small holes.

The gentleman wearing Wilkins' ventilating hat looked the picture of contentment. He was evidently very comfortable, indeed.

The other head presented a striking contrast. Never till now had I the least idea that such dreadful effects were produced by the wearing of an unventilated hat. The face was as pale as death; a cold perspiration seemed to trickle from every pore.

I was puzzled; there was a mystery somewhere. I determined to unravel it, and I boldly entered the shop.

"What can I do for you, sir?" said an assistant, with excessive urbanity.

"Well, I want to see Mr. Wilkins," I replied.

"That is Mr. Wilkins," said the man, indicating a portly and benevolent looking gentleman in a black silk waistcoat.

"What can I do for you?" said Mr. Wilkins.

"I'd like to be in the way of earning an honest half dollar, sir," I replied.

"Very good, my man," said Mr. Wilkins, with a smile. "Is there a vacancy to-day, Bolger?" said Mr. Wilkins, turning to a foreman.

"Yes, certainly, sir," replied the man. "We shall be ready for the gentleman in about twenty minutes. Step this way, young man," said the foreman.

but his neck and face had been carefully washed, and his hair well combed and brushed.

"I washed my face and brushed my hair, and in my heart I thought that to wear an unventilated hat, even for three whole hours, couldn't be so very dreadful a punishment after all."

I had reckoned without my host.

"This way, gentlemen," if you please," said the latter's assistant, as he motioned us to follow him through a door leading toward the basement.

At the end of a passage was a sort of little room with a sloping roof; it was exactly under the shop front. Side by side were two easy chairs, beneath each of which was a wick for raising or lowering the chair to any required height.

My companion took his seat at once—he was evidently used to the ways of the place. Then the assistant stepped in by means of two thick leather bands, with massive buckles, one at the neck and the other at the waist.

Then the shopman suddenly opened the little trap door, some twelve inches square, in the low, sloping roof of the apartment, and worked away actively at the winch. The chair slowly rose, and the head of my companion disappeared through the little trap door to the shoulders.

Then the man turned a large tap, which was affixed to the back of the chair, and motioned me to take my seat in the other one.

"Why do you strain us in?" I said to the man as I took my seat.

"You'll know why, governor, by the time you've earned that half dollar," said the man, with a malignant grin. "Now, look here," he continued, "if you want no sweat, or cough, or anything, get in now. And don't you go looking or looking with the boys at the window; if you do it will be deducted for."

Then he began to wind me up, and I made my first appearance in Mr. Wilkins' shop front to a round of tumultuous applause from a crowd of idlers in the street, who stared into the shop window. These suddenly carefully fitted a hat on to my head and gave it a knowing cock.

And then a draught of cool air began to flow through the holes that were just now so carefully closed. I really took a wonderful amount of trouble to secure my comfort.

At first the novelty of my situation entirely occupied my mind.

Then I took a look at my fellow victim out of the corner of my eye.

He was evidently already suffering from the effects of his unventilated hat. His teeth were tightly set; he looked anything but happy; great drops of perspiration already stood upon his brow. I didn't trouble myself very much about him.

The time passed pleasantly enough, and I heard the clock of Shore-ditch church at length strike six. As I did so I was startled to hear the wearer of the unventilated hat give a hollow groan.

He had become ghastly pale; he looked as if he were melting gradually. In fact, the poor fellow seemed very ill indeed. Strangely, a badly ventilated hat should produce such marked effects!

After awhile the clock of Shore-ditch church struck 4:30. I heard footsteps in the room below, and at the same time I was surprised of my ventilating hat. A brand new hat was placed upon my head, and the show cards which stood behind my respective heads were exchanged.

The draughts of cool air which came through the innumerable little holes in the mahogany flooring around my neck suddenly ceased. A current of heated air supplied its place.

I looked out of the corner of my eye at the other head; its face was an ecstatic smile.

Then an extraordinary thing took place. The easy chair in which I was sitting suddenly began to grow warm; it then became scalding hot—unpleasantly hot.

I was being gradually cooked alive, and I felt that concentrated boiling gravy, not blood, was coursing through my veins.

My features were contorted with agony; the crowd in the street outside gave me a tremendous round of applause.

I tried to break loose. As I did so a voice from the room below uttered the following dreadful threat:

"It's 1:30 now, my man, and if you move I'll make it 1:50!"

I endured the most dreadful tortures for a whole hour and a half. When I left Wilkins' establishment I was more dead than alive.

It is the dream of my life that I and Mr. Wilkins, the inventor of the ventilating hat, may meet in some lonely place. I am not a revengeful man, but I feel that I owe Wilkins something that I should like to repay.—Black and White.

Sympathy 6289.

A sympathetic lady on one occasion stepped up to the bedside of a soldier lying in a hospital during the war, and inquired: "Well, my poor man, is there anything you want?" "No, miss, I leave that to you."

"You're sure there's nothing I can do for you?" "Nothing," I can think of. "Oh, I do want to do something for you—can't I wash your hands and face?" "Well, if you want to do that, I reckon you kin, but you'll be the 10th lady who's done the same thing this mornin', and two of 'em has washed my feet."

Lee Majors.

At a dinner given by a workingmen's union in Krausdorf, two Socialists refused to drink to the health of the kaiser. When the customary toast was proposed they put on their hats and left the room. One of them is now serving a three months' term, the other a nine months' sentence for insulting his majesty. The difference in the sentences is due to the fact that one of the men was more free with his remarks on the occasion than the other.

In the Vatican at Rome there is a marble statue with natural eyelashes, the only one with this peculiarity in the world. It represents Ariadne sleeping on the island of Naxos at the moment when she was deserted by Theseus.

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