

Chapter XXVI.

The Sisters in the Army

How their services were at first ~~persecuted~~ -
 - All prejudices soon disappeared - True
 Charity knows neither Creed, Nation or persons.
 - The Charity that teaches us to love our neighbor
 as ourselves - what ^{the Sisters} have done and how
 gratefully their services ^{have been} ~~were~~ appreciated.

If the services of the Catholic Chaplains,
 in the field, exposed them to all the
 dangers and hardships of a Soldier's life
~~in time of war~~, the devotion of the Sisters, of
 the various Catholic ^{Orders} ~~Religions~~, to their sacred
 duties as nurses and attendants in the hospitals,
~~exposed them to all~~ brought them in contact
 with sickness, disease and wounds of the
 most malignant kind, and with men of
 uncultured minds, who looked at religion
 as a sentiment, an idea, a kind of luxury
 if you will, and at the good Sisters, as the
 mere agents of priestly influence and
~~political~~ intrigue.

The scoffs, the sneers and even the insults of
 such men did not deter them, in the least,
 from the faithful discharge of their duties,
 and hate and prejudice soon gave way before
 the chastening influence of words of mercy
 and charity.

When the Protestant Soldier found that the
 Sister did as much to cool his fevered brow
 to dress his aching wounds and to refresh
 him by delicacies and luxuries, as the

side for the Catholic patient who occupied the adjoining bed, he began ^{think the fact} to ~~realize~~ ^{realize} that all his bigotry and prejudices were simply the results of his mechanical education, and that it was possible for one to be a Catholic, or even a Sister, and still to possess all the noble attributes of true Christianity.

Prejudices gave way to facts, and the first night, when he found the Sister to watch at his bed side with the devotion of a Mother, to cool his fevered brow, to soothe his aching head, and to minister to his every want, began to ^{realize the fact} ~~realize the fact~~ ^{Charity} that true ~~Charity~~ ^{Charity} knew no distinction of religion or persons; and that the Charity, which prompted these grand deeds to sacrifice all worldly goods for the service of Jesus Christ, was too noble, too pure, too heavenly, to ~~be~~ be circumscribed by the narrow and selfish of Unitarian, Creed or Station.

It was the Charity of Christ himself when he looked with pity on Mary Magdalene and told her to go and ^{sin} no more. - It was the Charity of Christ when he praised the heartfelt cultivation of the poor Publican - it was more - it was the Charity and humility of Christ when he washed the feet of his disciples. Let skeptics and atheists ^{mar} ~~talk~~ as they will of religion, how much purer,

better and holier would this life be if we had among us more of that divine charity which teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Instead of this noble, ~~the~~ divine doctrine of love towards your neighbor, hate, persecution and discord seem to be the controlling principles of the Christian ethics of to day.

We see all around us men hating one another for the love of God and willing they go on to enrich themselves, ~~yet they will~~ ~~standing like demons to~~ ~~consent to~~ ~~one another~~, ~~stand up with an air of sanctified purity.~~ ~~all for the love of God.~~

~~This was the mission of the Sisters~~ ^{the Sisters} they labored hard to render all possible assistance as nurses, without regard to the religious opinions or doctrines of their patients. They were as attentive to a Protestant as to a Catholic, without interfering with his religious opinions or prejudices. In fact they knew no religion in the discharge of their duties, but Christianity, and pure charity; and they made no distinction whatever, in their attendance, but such as suffering humanity demanded.

If they removed prejudices from the minds of the soldiers of other denominations, it was because their good works impressed them with the conviction that their mission, must have been fromⁿ high; and if they made converts it was by the forces of example not by intreaty.

Though the paid and volunteer nurses rendered excellent assistance in the hospitals in Washington and elsewhere, we ask honestly, ask ~~if~~ ^{did} all these paid nurses ~~reach~~ ^{reach} the heart of the Soldier, or make him feel that he was attending for some motive higher than the paid consideration of dimes and dollars?

Ask the Soldier to say, who have given ^{you time} ~~every~~ ^{time} ~~month~~ in hospital, how he regards his nurses and attendants there, and ten to one, he will burst out into a fit of ~~praise~~ ^{praise} of ~~praise~~ ^{praise} upon the good Sisters and their services to him.

When the war commenced, these Sisters were quietly and modestly attending to their conventional duties, and also to the wants of the suffering poor, who want, and starve, and die, almost unknown in all large cities. Thus could we expect that the poor modest, shrinking Sister of Charity, would be the first to expose herself to all the hardships, privations and dangers of hospital life. Yet, so it was. She felt that there was her duty - there was her mission - there was where she could do the most good to relieve suffering humanity, and she cheerfully went forth on her true mission, brand of love and charity.

She felt, in her spirit, the summons of grace, that called her to live for the suffering race,

And heedless of pleasure, of comfort, of home,
 Bowed quickly, like Mary, and answered "I come".
~~She put from her person the trappings of graces,~~
 And rushing where pestilence scatters his breath,
 Like an angel she moves 'mid the regions of death,
 Where rings the loud musket, and flashes the sword,
 Whispering she walks, for she follows the Lord!"

Such was the humble religious, whether Sister of
 Charity - Sister of Mercy - Sister of the Holy Cross, or
 Sister of any other order, she cheerfully responded
 to the call of suffering humanity, and devoted her
 time, her ~~proper~~ services, her prayers, and in
 many cases her ^{very} life, to relieve the wants and
 sufferings of her suffering fellow creatures.

Their good works have proclaimed the success
 of their mission, and thousands to day, even of
 different denominations, bless the name and
 memory of the good, pious and faithful
 Sisters. Though the writer has left nothing
 undone to collect ~~all~~ ^{best} materials for the sketches of
 the Sisters and of their services in the ^{and hospitals} fields, he
 must confess that he has not ^{been} as successful as he
 was in the case of the Choralists, for thinking,
 modest, and retiring, the Sisters on the whole,
 declined to furnish much information, on the ground
 that they labored for the glory and honor of God
 and not for the approbation of men. However, the
 following sketches will give the reader a good insight into
 what they have done and how gratefully their services were appreciated.