

The Sisters of Mount St VincentCincinnati

The Sisters at Camp Denison - Sister Sophia  
and her assistants - with the army of the  
Cumberland - Their services in Virginia - Their  
devotion and attention to the sick and wounded -  
The Sisters joined upon - their return to Cincinnati -  
to attend the wounded after Shiloh and Pittsburg Landing -  
- Movable testimonials of service - The Sisters  
subjected to the most arduous of general orders to nurses &c -

The services and devoted zeal of the Catholic Chaplains and Sisters, in discharge of their Christian duties during the war, have evoked the admiration and praise of persons of all creeds and classes. In the field, in the hospital, they were ever foremost attending to the wants and sufferings of the sick and wounded. The same in the Confederate prisons and hospitals; they made no distinction between Federal or Confederate, Catholic or Protestant, but extended their charitable ministrations to all alike, regardless of their religious or political tendencies. Among the noble band of Sisters who were to be found in every hospital, meekly and unostentatiously soothing the sick, comforting the dying, and ministering to the wants of all, the good Sisters of the above community took a very prominent part.

The first year of the war, by request of Dr. McMeenes, Medical Director, Sister Sophia, with six other Sisters, went to Camp Denison, to attend the sick soldiers. While there, they were quartered in a small Presbyterian Church, around which four soldiers were placed as sentries night and day.

This church was used for the threefold purpose of chapel, dining-room and sleeping rooms. The Sisters employed all their time in visiting the sick in the various tents within the camp grounds. When the regiments were ordered off to the battle-fields, the Sisters returned home. A short time after they were sent for by the Medical Director of Cumberland, Dr. Sukely. Thither Sister Sophia and six Sisters repaired, accompanied by Very Rev. Father Collins, of Cincinnati. The Sisters boarded at a private house, and visited the hospitals. They remained thus engaged about ten weeks. In compliance with the request of Dr. McMahon, they went to New Creek, Va.; there they were lodged in tents on the camp grounds. There was a great number of sick and wounded.

The hospitals here were most admirably adapted for the purpose intended. From here the soldiers were ordered to Strasburg. At times, the Sisters were obliged to travel night and day in ambulances. The soldiers were encamped, for a short time, near Middletown. The doctors and Sisters were hospitably entertained in the house of a worthy gentleman, Mr. Dingez, from whence they attended the sick and wounded in the camp.

One night an alarm was given that the rebels were going to attack the camp. Amid the greatest confusion and agitation, orders were given to depart. They proceeded to a town in Western Virginia (the name I have forgotten), but were not allowed to remain long, fearing an attack from the enemy. In consequence of which the Sisters, with the sick and wounded, were sent forward. After their departure, a severe battle took place. Again, at the request of Gov. Morton, of Indiana, the Sisters went to Richmond, Ky., to attend the Indiana regiments. The soldiers here were terribly mangled, but had good medical attendance. A terrific battle had taken place a few days previous. The rebels held the town and the roads leading to it, consequently the Sisters had to pass through their lines, with a flag of truce; but once, through mistake, they were fired upon.

The Sisters' hospital in Cincinnati was given for the use of the sick and wounded soldiers, and even their chapel converted into a ward.

In compliance with the request of Mayor Hatch, of Cincinnati, the Sisters from the hospital went, on several occasions, down to the battle-fields of Shiloh and Pittsburg Landing, to attend the sick and wounded, who were being brought to the city in boats. They also went to Corinth for the same purpose, under the direction of Professor Blackman.

After the battle of Stone River, the Sisters went up to the field hospital to attend the sick and wounded, between which place and the Nashville hospitals there were some sixteen or eighteen Sisters constantly occupied, and remained there about eighteen months. Finally, Dr. Stone, of Mass., requested the services of the Sisters for the camp hospitals in Gallipolis.

Throughout their attendance on the sick and wounded soldiers, the Sisters received, from both officers and privates, the utmost respect, courtesy and attention.

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Confederates

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The Sisters of Mount St Vincent

(Is this not a mistake?)

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*Enemy*

*Confederals*

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The following General Order shows the high opinion held by officials of the services of the Sisters; both the Federal and Confederate authorities exempted them from all restrictions.

WAR DEPARTMENT.  
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
WASHINGTON, Oct. 29, 1863.

The employment of women nurses in the U. S. General Hospitals will in future be strictly governed by the following rules:—

1. Persons approved by Miss Dix, or her authorized agents, will receive from her, or them, "certificates of approval," which must be countersigned by Medical Directors upon their assignment to duty as nurses within their Departments.
2. Assignments of "women nurses" to duty in General Hospitals will only be made upon application by the Surgeons in charge, through Medical Directors, to Miss Dix or her agents, for the number they require, not exceeding one to every thirty beds.
3. No females, except Hospital Matrons, will be employed in General Hospitals, or, after December 31, 1863, borne upon the Muster and Pay Rolls, without such certificate of approval and regular assignment, unless specially appointed by the Surgeon General.

4. Women nurses, while on duty in General Hospitals, are under the exclusive control of the senior medical officer, who will direct their several duties, and may be discharged by him when considered supernumerary, or for incompetency, insubordination, or violation of his orders. Such discharge, with the reasons therefor, being endorsed upon the certificate, will be at once returned to Miss Dix.

By order of the Secretary of War:

E. D. TOWNSEND,  
Assistant Adjutant General.

A Nashville paper, speaking of the services of the Sisters there, says:—

"The negroes near Nashville were lately attacked with small-pox and would have perished, were it not for the Sisters of Charity who, under the direction of Sister Anthony, visited them in their hovels and camps, and saved many from perishing. We suppose the good Sisters will be called Abolitionists, as we have been, for extending mercy to God's suffering creatures."

A communication in the *Nashville Times*, says:—

"The following extracts from a letter give the sentiments of many of 'the boys' who have had the misfortune to need nursing at Nashville. \* \* \* 'I am sorry to hear that the Sisters of Charity are to leave Nashville soon. All the hospitals are to be consolidated, and No. 14 goes with the rest into one of the two field hospitals. The building is to be made an exchange barracks. During the last year, next to getting well, a soldier desired to be sent to No. 14. If he got there he thought he was all right. The Sisters are the best nurses in the world. They are so steady, so unremitting by night and day, in their attendance upon every want, that they make each patient look upon the hospital as his own private house."

"The poor boys stretched upon their beds, when they found themselves nursed so tenderly, almost forgot that they were far from home, and that their mothers and sisters were not about them; for neither mother nor sister could do more for their comfort than the Sisters do. Many a poor fellow has lived to bless them, who, but for their care, would now be under the sod of Tennessee; and many a one besides, has felt that under their care he almost got well too soon. Wherever Sister Anthony goes, she and her companions will carry with them the blessing and good wishes of thousands of soldiers, and you at home ought to thank them for us, when they come back among you. The people gave Old Rose a good reception; the Sisters deserve no less. They have worked as fearlessly, as untiringly, as devotedly for the country, as the bravest of the heroes in the Army of the Cumberland."

The following notice of the Sisters' return from Nashville appeared in a Cincinnati paper:—

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY AND THE SOLDIERS.

Sister Anthony, the devoted hospital nurse, with her colony of six companions, returned from Nashville, after a year's absence, a few days ago. All the hospitals have been reduced to two—field ones—and, among the rest, No. 14, where so many sick and wounded soldiers had experienced the Sisters' devoted care, was abolished.

These Sisters have written as noble a record in the civil war as the gallant men they nursed. They were employed at Camp Dennison until the hospitals there were systematized; then they went to New Creek, Va., and Cumberland, Maryland. During Pope's campaign they followed Sigel's corps in the ambulances. After the battle of Stone River, they went to Nashville and took charge of Hospital 14, capable of accommodating of their stay. A correspondent furnishes us with copies of certain documents

\*The author requests sketches, incidents, letters, and the like, from Chaplains, Sisters and others, for the above work. He will soon commence in THE PRIMER, a sketch of the services of the Rev. Father Scully, while Chaplain of the gallant 1st Massachusetts. The Most Rev. Dr. Spalding encouragingly writes to the author:—"I applaud your noble undertaking, rescuing the history of our Chaplains and Sisters from obscurity, and shall render you all the assistance in my power." Address, 310 E. 18th street, New York.

\*"Sisters of Charity" are not affected by this Order, nor are they included amongst the nurses subject to the Order of Miss Dix.

By order of the Acting Surgeon General,  
O. H. CRANE, Surgeon, U. S. A.  
SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE, Washington,  
January 6, 1864.

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(12)

dating 700 or 800. It was crowded during written on the occasion of their leaving Nashville, which will show the light in which they are regarded by the inmates of the hospital.

GENERAL HOSPITAL, No 14, NASHVILLE, Tenn., November, 1863.  
To the Lady Superior and Sisters of Charity in attendance on said Hospital:

The undersigned attaches and patients in said Hospital, have learned with regret that you contemplate leaving your present post of labor, and the object of this is to express the hope that you may be induced to forego that intention, and kindly consent to remain with us.

During your stay in the hospital, you have been indeed sisters to all the patients, and your uniform kindness to all has endeared you to all our hearts.

Should you leave us, we can only say that, wherever you may go, you will bear with you the soldiers' gratitude; and our earnest prayer and hope is, that, in whatever field you may labor in future, you may be as happy as you have been kind and charitable to us; and may Heaven's choicest blessings be showered upon you, for your kindness to the poor, sick, and wounded soldier.

This is signed by two hundred and thirty-six persons.

Private William N. Nelson, 19th Illinois Infantry, writes that he was passing through the ward getting signatures to the above petition; when "one poor fellow, who was lying on the bed almost dead, aroused himself and said: 'I want to sign that paper.' I would sign it fifty times, if asked. For the Sisters have been to me as my mother since I have been here, and I believe, had I been here before, I would have been well long ago. But if the Sisters leave, I know I shall die,"—and adds: "This is the feeling of every sick soldier now under their care."

On the same occasion, Dr. A. N. Reade, Sanitary Inspector, under the impression that the Sisters were about to leave, to avoid coming into collision with the general superintendent of hospitals, addressed the following note to them:

UNITED STATES SANITARY COMMISSION,  
NASHVILLE, Tenn., November 7, 1863.

SISTER ANTHONY:—I learn with great sorrow that you and your associates are about leaving our hospitals. I beg of you not to do it. I have long known of your faithful and efficient work, and have rejoiced at it.

The commission you have received of Miss Dix only secures to you your pay; it in no way places you at her disposal.

And I also take pleasure in assuring you that, with the approval of the surgeons in charge of every hospital, which you can easily obtain, we will freely issue to you any sanitary stores we have. I am, very truly, your friend,

A. N. READE, Sanitary Inspector.  
There is no class of people employed in the nation's cause, more deserving of its thanks, than these self-sacrificing women. In the East and West, there have been many who labored faithfully; but there have been none more devoted than SISTER ANTHONY AND HER ASSOCIATES.

It is an old saying, and a true one, that  
the constant drop wears the hardest stone,  
constant perseverance, in any pursuit,  
political or otherwise, is sure to be attended  
with similar success. A fresh, vigorous,  
original idea, once started, gradually gains  
strength, until its force becomes irresistible  
becomes irresistible

irresistible irresistible

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