

A Nurse's Travels

Miss Doris Finch (trained St. Helens Hospital, Dunedin) writes as follows:—

My friend Miss Hooper and I left Antwerp at 5 p.m. We had to change trains at Brussels, and again at Basle. One has to watch one's big luggage, as this is put out at each frontier station, and there are five of those between Belgium and Italy. Also one has to produce passports at each of these stations. At Basle there is a fearful scramble, as everyone has to pass both the French and the Swiss Customs. We then had a run across country by Berne. Just near Vevey we came to country that I knew, and I saw by changing trains we should arrive much sooner. At Vevey I took some snaps of the little war cemetery, bought more films, and changed our money to Italian coin. Next morning we had an early start. The Rhone Valley is beautiful; then as we climbed higher there were many small tunnels, and then the Simplon. The other side is quite different: one is in Italy when half through. The Italian Customs came along, but did not worry us. They looked so picturesque with their soft felt hats and big feather stuck in, and cloaks which they wore thrown over one shoulder. It was a very pretty run from there to Milan, especially when we were passing Lake Maggiore. We both expected to find Italy dirty, but I think Belgium and parts of France are much worse. At Milan we had a long wait for our train connection, so went into the town for tea and to see the Cathedral. This is a wonderful building, but, unfortunately, as evening was coming we could not stay long. Arrived in Venice at midnight in the heaviest rain. Stayed at the Station Hotel and were almost too tired to feel thrilled at being in Venice. And how we slept!

Next day we took a boat up to St. Mark's. It was glorious, with all the gondolas and the beautiful old palaces, then St. Mark's Square—a blaze of colour and crowded with folk and also numbers of pigeons everywhere. We had a guide

who didn't know much but who stuck like a leech. We were in Giovanni e Pavlo—a very old church with lots of interesting tombs and an ancient chapel which had been burnt and partially destroyed. We went to several other churches which weren't so old and not so interesting. We walked over dozens of bridges and through the quaintest of streets. Before going back to supper we went over some glass works. Oh, the glorious stuff they had! We did want some, but would have been hopelessly on the rocks. Next day we went to St. Mark's Church. Really it doesn't seem like a church. It is all mosaic and rich marbles of all colours. Then on to the Arsenal—another old part with its old stone lions and lionesses. At night we walked over the Old Rialto bridge. The Canal by moonlight and all the lights and gondolas is a wonderful sight.

Then there are the beautiful lace exhibits. The wonderful patience and the eyesight required in their making! We saw many fine palaces and such pretty quaint corners, that my camera was busy most of the time. On Sunday we went to St. Mark's and out on the terrace in front. Here one sees four great bronze horses. In one of the side chapels is a wonderful carved tomb, but Mass was being celebrated, so we did not wait very long. In the afternoon our tram run took us past miles of bathing huts, but we decided tea would be nicer in St. Mark's, with the old church to look at; and so it was. One doesn't want modern places in an old town like Venice.

Monday was a full day. First an old church with many fine paintings; then wandering on we found a picturesque place used as soldiers' barracks. While we were there a funeral passed. It looked so beautiful, the gondola all black with a broken marble column in front, the coffin covered with black and the boat a mass of glorious flowers. There were two boatmen, and they just glided from the landing away to the Island cemetery. All funerals are by gondola. Next we saw