

ITALY'S ARMS WHICH ARE PREPARING FOR WAR ARE ATTACHED TO PRETTY ROMAN GIRLS

BL ALICE ROHE

(United Press-Correspondent)

Rome, Nov. 21 (By Mail to New York).—I sing not of "arms and the man," but of "arms and the woman."

The arms which are being prepared for war—more vital than those of which Virgil sang—are attached to the lovely shoulders of aristocratic Roman women, young and old.

At the great Polyclinic hospital they are steeped in strong antiseptic, they are strained with burdens of groaning humanity, they are busied in quick and necessarily first aids to the injured.

And for what purpose? For war! These sheltered Italian girls—these exquisite grande dames of the high families—are gathered every morning at the Polyclinic to be instructed in the art of becoming nurses, preparing to serve when Italy becomes involved in the war. And they are working fast and furiously, ready to be called into service at a moment's notice.

This morning I attended a class of the Samaritans, as this special war course is called. Seated in the lecture hall while Dr. Amante stretched before them a man with a badly wounded shoulder—torn by a terrible knife thrust—I saw the Baroness de Renzis di Montanaro, eagerly noting every detail of the explanation. An exquisite, eighteen year old girl—daughter of one of the old Roman families—sat next to her.

On the other side of the aisle I saw Signora Ida Gayda, wife of Virginio Gayda, author of the greatly discussed study of modern Austria, "The Crisis of an Empire" and "Italy Beyond Its Borders." Signora Gayda told me she had made but one stipulation in entering the course and that was that she would be permitted to go at once to the front if Italy became involved in the war.

Near the wife of the writer on in-

ternational conditions sat the daughter of Levi Della Vida, the financier; beside her was the daughter of a former mayor of Rome, while nearby sat Signorina Ponzio Vaglia, sister of the famous general and former aide de camp to King Victor Emanuel.

Two strong forces of impressions dominated the lecture hall. One was the assurance of approaching participation in the European conflict, which neutrality has avoided so far. There is no question in the minds of these women that war is not only inevitable but imminent. The change in the original plans of the Samaritans courses—from classes three times a week to daily—shows their belief that haste is needed.

The other force that seemed to dominate that lecture hall was the realization of a new awakening among Italian women. The sight of carefully sheltered, protected girls of eighteen, preparing for work as nurses on the field of battle—perhaps—or at least in hospitals, is something which is entirely new, even in the Italy of today.

War has sounded a new note in women's emancipation, not only in Italy, but in all Europe. It is showing what women can do in reality and not in theory. But in no land as in Italy has the "young person" been kept in such protected obscurity. That she has been permitted to emerge into the light of active work—in the glare of approaching war—is a sight marveled at by Romans themselves.

Seventy women of rank, of high families ranging from the eighteen year old daughters to the sixty year old dowagers, are enrolled in the present Samaritana course which ends in the latter part of December. The application for entrance into this class are so plentiful that an effort is being made to give instruction in some of the different hospitals. The