

Nursing in Italy.

AT THE VILLA REGINA NATALIA.

To English-speaking travellers the existence of Nursing Homes carried out on English lines is often of great importance. Illness in hotels or pensions is not only a very costly matter, but recovery is often retarded by difficulty in obtaining right food, and by the noise inevitable to such establishments.

In Naples the "International Hospital" harbours patients of all nationalities, and usually appoints an Englishwoman as Superintendent, and nurses of various nationality.

In Rome the "Anglo-American Nursing Home" began last season to receive Anglo-American patients. Here the nurses are exclusively English.

In Florence a Cosmopolitan Nursing Home was started last November, with an English Superintendent, and the option of English or Italian nurses.

It is of this latter that we wish to treat, as it is a somewhat new departure in two or three respects.

Miss Turton, Lady Superintendent, started this Home, with the approval and co-operation of the Florentine Clinical Professors. She had two especial objects in view. (a) To provide sick people of all nationalities with a Home where they would be properly nursed at the least possible expense. (b) To make known to patients and doctors the quality of the Italian nurses she or her colleague, Miss Grace Baxter (graduate of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore), had trained in Hospital.

It is almost invariably a fact that labour of the country is cheaper than that imported from other countries. English nurses in Italy are necessarily expensive: the cost of their journeys to and fro, and of living between cases, compels the charge of from 10 to 12.50fcs. per day for their services, whether they are nursing on their own account or sent by some Nursing Institute. Italian nurses, trained on English and American lines (by Miss Turton or Miss Baxter), can be had for 5fcs. per day, or even less when engaged by the month, in Rome, Naples, and Florence.

Miss Turton, therefore, was convinced that by employing Italian nurses for her fixed staff, with one experienced English nurse as her assistant, and only calling in other English nurses when especially desired by patients or their friends, she could provide sufferers with the best chances of recovery at the least possible expenditure.

The following regulations were, therefore, drawn up, and have proved quite satisfactory in their working:—

"The 'Villa Regina Natalia,' 48, Via Bolognese, Florence, receives patients of both sexes for medical and surgical treatment (contagious and mental cases excepted).

"The terms per day vary from 7 to 10fcs. (according to room), and include room, board (with wine), and service. Pension rates made for not less than seven days, and must be paid in advance to the administration. If patients leave the Home before the end of the seven days the difference will be reimbursed.

"Pension terms do not include fees of doctors or surgeons, medicines, dressings, massage, baths, lights, firing, nor fine wines.

"Ordinary nursing is included in the pension terms; special nursing is paid for at established rates (5fcs. per day for an Italian nurse, 10 to 15fcs. per day for an English nurse).

"If desired, patients may be accompanied by members of their family, or by a servant, for whom special terms will be made."

The Villa rented for the Home, and of which a short account was given in the *Nursing Record*, December 15th, 1900, has also proved most satisfactory. Its position is perfect; well above the town and away from its noise and bustle, yet only fifteen minutes' walk from the *Barriera Ponte Rossa* (Piazza Cavour). It is surrounded on three sides by a pleasant garden, where convalescents can sit in shady spots, and gradually regain their walking power. Inside the Villa are large, sunny, airy rooms, with open fireplaces, and a large cheerful salon and dining-room where convalescents, relations, and friends of patients, meet for meals, or for reading, talking, or music when no serious case forbids.

There is also a well-arranged operating room, a sterilising room, with autoclavian stove, and a smaller operating room for dubious cases.

The *home-atmosphere* obtained by the admission of friends and relations (whenever a room can be given them), has proved most beneficial to nurses as well as to patients. To live only in an atmosphere of sickness is known to be harmful, but is, in small Hospitals, difficult to avoid. Nurses are not often able to read or go about enough to keep widely in touch with the outer world, they need someone to help distract their thoughts when work presses, and the presence of outsiders at meals and in the recreation room is an inestimable boon to them, and, through them, to their patients. It is also an infinite relief to Superintendent and nurses to know that patients are happy in the company of relation or friend, who can write their letters, read to, or amuse them by accounts of what they have seen in beautiful Florence.

Miss Turton has had in the Home, mother and daughter, mother and son, husbands and wives,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)