

Our Foreign Letter.

FROM ROME.

The summer is now virtually over, although the heat is still at times greater than is entirely agreeable. But the dread inspired by the idea of a real baking temperature has proved—mercifully—to have been unfounded. In fact, the old-fashioned real southern summer, like the old-fashioned real northern winter, seems to be a thing of the past.

With "Peter Pan" instead of "Ambulance" collars, and a minimum of underclothing, uniform has been quite compatible with work, and though the nurses, foreign and native, appreciated a siesta when off-duty from 1.30 to 4.30, yet the wards were never unbearably hot, even during the mid-

applause evidently of British loyalty, which had already been expressed when we wore the crape band for our late King.

Real holidays have also been fitted in, apart from the month which each will have within the year; seven to ten days' *pension* was also offered by an anonymous giver through Princess Doria, to the English nurses and those probationers who had no home to go to.

The longing for the sea drew most of the English to Anzio or Naples; one went even as far as Capri. At Anzio, being September, and therefore late for Italians (who only bathe in warm water as a rule), two nurses obtained a small flat looking on the sea, and with picnic breakfasts and suppers, and dining at a restaurant, incurred no greater expense than had they put up at a pension;



SISTER IN BED-SITTING-ROOM.

day hours, and the sea breeze, which regularly visits Rome both morning and evening, prevented the air being ever stagnantly oppressive.

After supper a turn in the grounds was much appreciated by the probationers, and a moonlight visit to the Coliseum, or to listen to the band in Piazza d'Esedra (as an exceptional treat ices were eaten), made the months pass even more quickly than when marked only by changes in work and the weekly half day off.

A rather amusing incident occurred over the band-playing one evening, when there with only the staff. They suddenly started "God Save the King," when—*va sans dire*—we all instantly and instinctively rose (including our one Italian colleague), and though they elected to play it twice over, we stood, continuing to finish our ices. On sitting down, applause sounded from many tables,

whilst conceive the joy of utter freedom! "No bell to call one to meals," one of them wrote me, "no servants to tip (the landlord's little girl came to sweep), but just to do and go what and where fancy called," and *pour comble*, to be able to dress (?) in bathing gown and with a dust coat just run across the strip of sand (no low tides on the Mediterranean) and bathe or boat whenever the desire moved.

Naples was also very ecstatically successful; rooms looking on the sea with its perpetual movement of shipping, and the glorious September moon at nights. Pompeii, Pozzuoli, etc., etc., to visit by trams, Capri and the Blue Grotto by boat, and there also the absence of pension meals (so great a drag on liberty), returned us three very ardent admirers of the rival city, professing comprehension of the old saying of its natives,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)