

## OUR FOREIGN LETTER.

*Policlinico, Roma.*

When last I wrote, cholera was the subject which everyone associated with the word "Italy"; now it is war. Our experience of the first remained virtually nil. It was really most ably grappled with—only in the Southern provinces and at Livorno and Venice did it ever assume at all an epidemic form.

Here in the Policlinico, during the whole summer, only a few cases came in. Most of these were at once diagnosed and sent to the Lazzaretto; a few cases only suspected were also sent there, to the quarantine department, and returned here after five days, as examination proved the absence of cholera bacilli. Two cases only developed in the wards (neither of them in our Padiglioni), and the whole block was immediately isolated, quarantined, and even "piontato," men on guard by night and day, to prevent anything even being thrown from the windows.

What touched us most nearly though, was the mother of a Roman probationer developing it. The probationer was on leave at the time, and on sending to tell her to return, the note was brought back, the maid explaining in agitation, that she had found the flat closed, and a "guardia" (policeman) in charge, the whole family having been carried off that morning to the Lazzaretto, as the mother had got cholera.

I went to see the signora after her return some three weeks later, and heard that she considered her daughter's nursing had saved her life. Her description of the cramps, the pain of which was worse in her legs even than in the abdomen, her certitude of death, her lividness, was very graphic. Her daughter had never left her, she said, night nor day, till she was out of danger, and the doctors had presented her after to the Direttore with encomiums, specially on the fact that none of the hypodermic or saline injections had given origin to suppuration. She explained that in the majority of cases this was a constant sequel. In the desperate struggle with collapse, and the incessant vomiting and evacuation, it is not really much to be wondered at that the necessary antiseptic preparations of skin were at times omitted, or insufficiently carried out.

This was all long ago though, now it seems—early in September. We have been absorbed in our own concerns since then; especially in completing the holidays of staff and pupils, and to be honest, I must own that the latter question has given Matron a great deal of trouble. Already last year, we had some difficulty in convincing pupils that it was necessary to return at the date fixed for expiration of leave, but this year it has been more serious, their powers of arguing on what to us in England seems a closed question. Parents kept writing that they needed their daughters or that their daughters needed longer holidays. Properties were sold, requiring the presence of said

daughters, households were moved, idem, and—simply they did not return. This happened, incredible though it must seem to those who have not lived and worked with Latin peoples, with the best pupils, not only with the mediumly satisfactory ones. At the end, however, I think Matron has convinced them that this is a thing which one does not do, and the last pupils have all returned on the day fixed. Holidays over, the new courses of lectures had to be definitely arranged; these are in greater number than in English hospitals, as the various subjects have to be got into two instead of three or four years. But they are fewer than in Miss Baxter's training school, and in any of those soi-disant training schools which do not really train in hospital wards, and so have limitless time for lectures. Juniors and seniors have each two lectures per week, plus Matron's weekly lecture, and a bandaging class for the junior pupils.

The seniors have the privilege of a weekly lecture from one of the chiefs, who have undertaken the courses on surgical and medical pathology. It is hoped that the Professor will have these lectures published when the courses are finished, and so both present and future nurses will have the immense advantage of having them to refer to. So far there is no Italian bibliography for nurses, only medical students' text books and pathological compendiums, etc., exist. Professor Bastianelli happily possesses the rare gift of adapting himself to his audience, so his lectures will be really lectures for nurses, not for doctor students.

## THE WAR, AND SICK SOLDIERS.

It already seems long ago that war was announced. It came so quietly, the prognostics were so hopeful, it is still difficult to realise what it is beginning to mean, much more what it may lead to.

So far there is no doubt that Italians have approved of the annexation of Tripoli. Hardly a paper or a person has shown aught but genuine enthusiasm and patriotism. I have not yet met an Italian who actually disapproved and blamed, very few who even regretted. But now that news of the deaths of sons and husbands are being communicated by the Municipio to the relatives of rank and file, and several of one's personal friends are mourning kindred who are killed, or in keen anxiety over those who are wounded, or, almost worst of all, are now beginning to dread that cholera may claim them as victims—now a sort of pause has ensued, and one begins to wonder, will the enthusiasm last should the war follow the example of others, which also at the beginning were so hopefully undertaken, and prove of long duration, of hideous cost of life and property? May time *not* show us!

In the last number of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, I see mention of the fact that Red Cross ladies are working on the transport steamer, "Menfi," and amongst them, the Duchessa d'Aosta.

This brings me to Naples, and the Blue Cross nurses, for the Duchessa, before enrolling herself

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