

**Annotations.****REASONABLE REMUNERATION.**

WHAT is a fair salary for a district nurse? This is a question which was incidentally discussed in a recent issue of *Truth*. The writer of a letter to that paper appears to think £70 a year—to cover salary, rooms, and uniform—unreasonably excessive. We quote from her letter:—

“About three months ago, a lady in the West End of London advertised for a parish nurse for a poor district. Among the applicants for the post was a Queen’s Nurse. She required, besides her salary, rooms, uniform, &c., which would involve, it was calculated, an annual outlay of over £70. There were also stringent rules to be observed. She was to act under a committee; her hours of work were to be strictly limited to eight; and she was apparently to be very much under the thumb of the Institute. The lady wrote and remonstrated, mentioning £50 as the salary she always offered. . . . The lady ended by engaging an independent nurse, whose terms were more reasonable.”

We wonder if the writer of this letter has ever tried to board, lodge and clothe herself in London on £70 a year. We hardly think so, or her ideas as to what constitute “reasonable terms” would probably undergo some revision. With the very strictest economy, it is impossible to obtain board, lodging, and attendance for less than £1 a week, and this leaves a margin of exactly £18 for clothes, laundry, travelling, and other expenses. The luxury attainable under these conditions does not appear to us to be more than that to which a woman, who works hard (even if only for eight hours a day) is reasonably entitled.

The same correspondent inquires:—“Is it necessary for a district nurse to dine late every evening, or to dress for dinner?” We may reply with other questions, “Is there any special merit in eating a heavy meal in the middle of the day, when hot and tired with a long morning round, and with the prospect of more work in the afternoon in view, or is it better to take the principal meal when the day’s work is done?” Secondly, “Is there any reason, or does it commend itself as fitting, that a nurse should dine in the uniform dress in which she has been working all day, in surroundings which are often insanitary and generally dirty; and, if not, is there any valid reason against her ‘dressing for dinner’?” We imagine the letter was written by some one who knows nothing of nursing, and has absolutely no sympathy with nurses.

**HEARTLESS SELFISHNESS.**

WE have recently had brought before our notice a case in which a nurse was refused admission to a house, to which she had been summoned by a medical man, on the ground that her presence would intimate that there was illness in the house, and that the landlady would consequently lose her lodgers. She used her powers of persuasion in vain, and finally returned to the institution from which she was sent, to ask for further instructions. She was sent to the doctor who had telegraphed for her, and he succeeded in gaining admission for her to the patient’s bedroom, and to that room only. She found her patient, a young doctor, alarmingly ill with pneumonia—so ill, indeed, that he died that night. The question arises, has the owner of a house any right to prevent a sick person living in that house from receiving adequate nursing care. We believe that a tenant has full liberty to receive any person in a room occupied by him; but the question, so far as we are aware, has never been settled in a court of law. From a moral point of view there can be no doubt whatever upon the subject. It is difficult to imagine the condition of mind of a person who can, from fear of some pecuniary loss, deny to a dying man that care which would render his last hours comparatively comfortable, if it did not save his life. We can only describe such conduct as heartlessly callous and selfish.

**RED TAPE.**

THE necessity for improvement in the nursing arrangements in most of our workhouse infirmaries is one of the most pressing needs of the day. Scarcely a week passes without some workhouse scandal coming under our notice. We therefore hail with satisfaction any expressions of opinion on this subject from those competent to give them. The question has recently been discussed at a meeting of the Naas District Nursing Association, of which the members, from their intimate connection with workhouses and their management, have had exceptional opportunities for acquainting themselves with facts concerning these institutions. At this meeting, Mr. Kennedy, the Lord-Lieutenant of Kildare, and other speakers, emphasised their belief “that a great deal of the mismanagement which exists in some public institutions is due to the red-tapeism of governing boards whose meddling interference more often than not acts as a clog upon the wheels of reform.” This is plain speaking, but milder measures have so far proved ineffectual. We doubt if even plain speaking will penetrate the pachydermatous hide of officialism, enveloped as it is in self-complacency.

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