

or surrounded himself with such a profusion of odds and ends carelessly, and yet withal artistically arranged, as are in evidence here. The walls are tinted in harmonious shades, Eastern rugs and curtains screen the door, and are draped effectively in the archway, and cover—well, we must suppose it is the bed, as sister we know sleeps here, and there is no sign of any other, but it needs an expert in hospital matters to find out this fact regarding the luxurious couch which occupies the far corner. The walls are covered with engravings and photographs, reminiscences, may be, of a foreign tour, easy chairs, cosy corners, and fascinating nick-nacks abound, and at a low table sits sister, dispensing tea to you out of cups of egg-shell china, as merrily and light-heartedly as if she were not one of the busiest women in this busy city, laden, moreover, with responsibilities which it is impossible for the uninitiated to estimate, and weighted with the knowledge of many a tragedy in the lives of the ever changing occupants of the beds in the ward over which she reigns supreme. Footsore and weary she may be, and often is, —and yet supremely content, asking nothing better of Fate than to keep her always just where she is, and allow her to spend and be spent for her patients. One leaves her, feeling heartened with the knowledge that there is at all events one person in this restless, and oftentimes hard and cruel world, who is a round woman in a round hole, and who has found life pleasant and satisfying, and yet dimly conscious that though such a life is good, that those to whom the more rare inspiration of "divine discontent" is granted are even more to be envied, though their path may lie up-hill to the very end, and the goal towards which their faces are set seems, like the mirage of the desert, ever to recede as they advance.

#### DUTY OR PLEASURE.

A SERIOUS statement was recently made at a certain Hospital Committee Meeting with regard to the treatment of a girl who had been an in-patient. The girl attended accompanied by her mother, and in answer to the questions put to her, stated that she had been asked to get up at an early hour to do housework, that she was made to wear her underclothing for three weeks without its being washed, and that she was obliged to go about in her stockings for two days, while her slippers were being worn by another patient. The mother stated

that she had written to her daughter on two occasions. The first letter was not delivered so promptly as it should have been, and the second was not delivered at all, but was given to the girl's sister, who went to the hospital and got it after the patient had left. The mother further stated that she afterwards wrote to the matron but received no answer. The matron when interviewed by the committee said that the girl had been asked to do housework, owing to the large number of patients in the institution at the time, and that the letters had not been answered as she had been unusually busy. She admitted upon being questioned that she had been absent from the hospital at a wedding, and at the theatre. The nursing profession will, we think, endorse the opinion expressed that if the matron had time to be absent from her duties she had time to answer letters. In times of special stress, duty must obviously be considered before pleasure, and amusements give way to work which has been undertaken.

#### THE DARENTH SCANDAL.

UNDER this heading an occurrence at the Darenth Imbecile Asylum, ending in the death of an imbecile patient who had become *enceinte*, has been fully reported in the daily press. We should like to draw attention to the fact that though the committee and the acting medical superintendent were acquainted with the fact of this terrible occurrence, and of the condition of the hapless patient, no steps were taken to provide her with a qualified maternity nurse in her confinement. We consider this neglect quite inexcusable, and we are glad that the resignation of the responsible officer has been demanded by the Metropolitan Asylums Board.

At a meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Asylums Board the greatest indignation was expressed by members at the grave state of affairs disclosed by the report of the Committee appointed to investigate the matter. Protests were also made against the suppression of a part of the facts. It appears that a letter had been received from the Lunacy Commissioners, strongly condemning the administration of the Asylum, which letter, although it was officially addressed to the Board, had been suppressed. It would seem that the suppression of letters addressed to the Metropolitan Asylums Board is not the common occurrence that it is with regard to letters addressed to the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association.

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