

### Legal Matters.

NELLIE CORDON, a nurse employed at the Lawn Asylum, was recently charged at the Lincoln City Police Court with ill-treating a patient by smacking her in the face.

Mr. Porter, who prosecuted on behalf of the Treasury, said he did so under an order made out by the Lunacy Commissioners. The offence with which the nurse was charged was punishable under the Lunacy Act of 1890 with a fine of not less than £2, or more than £20.

The Matron of the Lawn Asylum stated that she saw the defendant smack the patient across the face with the back of her hand. She spoke to the nurse about it, and told her she should report it. There might have been some provocation before, but she did not see it. The patient was tiresome at times, and she knew that the defendant had been bitten by her.

The Medical Superintendent gave evidence as to an interview he had had with the nurse after the Matron had reported the matter to him. She admitted the offence, but said it was done more in play than anything else. She did not say she had put up her hand to ward off a blow. The defendant knew that it was against the rules of the hospital to strike a patient.

For the defence it was urged that the patient had made "two or three grabs" at the defendant, and that she put up her hand to ward off a blow. Her solicitor asked the Bench to say that "the trifling incident" was not ill-treatment under the Act.

The Chairman said that the magistrates had listened very carefully to the evidence. They considered that a blow of some kind was struck, but they were not satisfied that it was intended to injure the patient, or to break the rules. They were of opinion that the Matron was justified in reporting the nurse, and the Doctor in dismissing her, but it did not necessarily follow that the case was one of those contemplated in the Act. They therefore gave the nurse the benefit of the doubt, and dismissed the case.

We draw attention to this case because it proves how very difficult it is for discipline to be maintained in our asylums. Here is a case in which an act of cruelty to a patient was seen by the Matron, who did her duty in reporting it. The Medical Superintendent did his duty in dismissing the nurse, and the Lunacy Commissioners in prosecuting her also under the Act which provides for such prosecution. But the magistrates give a direct encouragement to other attendants to behave in like manner, and make it almost impossible for asylum authorities to perform their duty, by letting this woman off scot free. It must be remembered that by no means every case of cruelty to patients is made public, and, when this is done, in our opinion it should be severely dealt with.

### Nursing Echoes.

\* \* \* All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.



WE are asked by the Reverend Duncan Travers, the Secretary of the Universities Mission to Central Africa, to state that his appeal for nurses to work in connection with this mission has met with an adequate response, and that for the present there are as many nurses ready to join the mission as are required. This is satisfactory testimony to the value of a professional journal for nurses.

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THREE nurses left England on Tuesday last for Central Africa: Miss Howes, until recently Matron of the Cheltenham General Hospital; Miss Ram, Night Superintendent of the Monsall Fever Hospital; and Miss Field, a nurse at the Royal Cornwall Infirmary, Truro. They will find plenty to do on their arrival, more especially Miss Howes, who is proceeding to Magila, a station of the Universities' Mission in German territory on the mainland, for there the worst famine which has been known for thirty years now prevails—the people are dying, absolutely dying, of starvation. We are told that the missionaries never take a walk without finding some one dead, and of those who find their way to the mission stations, many are too weak to convey to their mouths the rice put into their hands, and actually die of exhaustion when food is within reach. This, of course, entails a heavy strain on the limited number of workers, and there are many sick who have to be cared for, many ulcers, and limbs attacked by jiggers to be attended to. Miss Howes' presence will, therefore, be most welcome.

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AND have our readers ever considered the difficulty of feeding convalescent Europeans in a famine-stricken country? A nurse who is not allowed to return to Africa, on account of the serious illnesses she had when there, tells us that she attributes her break down greatly to her anxiety of mind during a former famine in the same district. She was the only nurse at the station, there was no doctor, and she had on her hands patients recovering from severe malarial and hæmoglobinuric fever, and to feed them—well, tinned provisions were running out, eggs and

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