

Legal Matters.**"NURSING UNIFORM IN THE DOCK."**

A YOUNG woman, dressed in nursing uniform, who gave the name of Mary Bowen, and whose manner and speech betokened some degree of education and refinement, recently appeared in the dock at the Victoria Courts, Birmingham, to answer to a charge of having obtained thirty shillings by false pretences from Marie Lochten, of the Home for the Little Sisters of the Poor at Harborne. The prosecutrix stated that the accused, who said she was a nurse at the Women's Hospital, Sparkhill, and who had visited the inmates on one or two previous occasions, asked her if she would change a £5 note or cheque. Subsequently she said she had not the note with her, but would send it the following morning, and the witness lent her 30s. upon this representation. The prisoner said that the money was a gift, not a loan, and that she was going to the institution at Sparkhill in two years' time. The Matron of the Women's Hospital, Sparkhill, Miss Richmond, however, stated in the witness-box that she knew nothing of the prisoner. The police gave evidence that she had been under observation for some time. She had obtained lodgings in various places in her character as nurse, and had left without paying for them. When arrested a large number of unpaid tradesman's bills, relating to purchases in different parts of the country, were found in her possession. The prisoner pleaded that she did not obtain the money by false pretences. No special time was mentioned for its return. She was trying to raise money on a mortgage to pay the bills. She further said she had been a probationer for twelve months at St. Luke's Hospital, Halifax, and left last August. The magistrates considered the case against her proved, and sent the prisoner to gaol for two months, with hard labour.

ADA BALL, described as a trained nurse, of St. James' Square, Wolverhampton, and formerly of Grange-over-Sands, Lancashire, was recently at Wolverhampton ordered to pay 26s. or to go to prison for 14 days for stealing two solidified soup squares, value 1s., the property of William Fleming, chemist, Queen Square.

MIDWIFERY UP TO DATE.

Mrs. Boucher, who, for some unknown reason, has assumed the title of Madame, a midwife of the Woodlands, Harcourt Villa, Isleworth, was concerned in an inquest recently held by Dr. Gordon Hogg as to the case of a child certified by her to be still-born. "Madame" has previously been censured by the Coroner for West London respecting children who were born at her house, and has also been sent to prison

for three months for neglecting a child. Madame Boucher asserted that the child was still-born. While at Isleworth she had six women under her care, and three other children were still-born. In reply to a question from the Coroner as to how many inquests on children she had been concerned in, the witness put the number at "under 50."

Mr. J. A. Bowen, undertaker, said he had buried two still-born children for Mrs. Boucher. "She wanted him to contract to bury all her still-borns at 7s. 6d. each."

Dr. Tomblinson stated his belief that the child had breathed after birth, but he could not be certain that it had a separate legal existence.

After long deliberation, the jury returned a verdict that the child was still-born, and added that they were of opinion that Mrs. Boucher should engage a doctor for all cases at her house.

We are entirely in sympathy with the views of the Coroner, who commented strongly on the imperfect law which permits a midwife to give a certificate to an undertaker for burial in the case of a still-born child. In our opinion, midwives should always be required to report cases of still-birth delivered by them to the Coroner for the district, who can then order an inquest to be held, or not, at his discretion.

Mr. Wynne E. Baxter recently held an inquest at the Bromley Sick Asylum respecting the death of an infant at 115, Campbell Road, Bow. It appeared in the evidence that the mother had engaged a nurse from "Dr. Guinness' Home at Bromley," and paid the fee of 5s. The child was born while the father went to fetch the midwife, who came with a nurse, but absolutely refused to do anything, stating that it was against the rules if they were not actually present at the confinement. In such cases they returned the fees. A medical man expressed his belief that the child would have lived if the nurses had done their duty. The Coroner's opinion that the nurses had shirked their duty was endorsed by the jury, who returned a verdict of "Death from Misadventure," and censured the nurses (why nurses?) for their conduct of the case.

We would wish that the institution which enforces such a barbarous rule had been included in the censure. Who is Dr. Guinness, by the way, that he gives his sanction to such procedure? We all know that cases where delivery takes place before the arrival of the medical attendant or midwife, are those which commonly cause anxiety subsequently, owing to the lack of anti-septic precautions, but common humanity demands that the welfare of the mother and child should be placed before the interests of the midwife. After all, unselfishness is at the root of seemly conduct.

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