

at one time. They are stationed at the Government Hospital at Accra, or, if there are three in the Colony, one is stationed at the hospital at Cape Coast.

In Lagos the nursing staff, two of whom are as a rule in the Colony at the same time, are employed in the Colonial Hospital. In Southern Nigeria the nurses are stationed at the European Hospital, Old Calabar. In Northern Nigeria, European nurses were first employed in 1898, with the West African Frontier Force. At present there are two European hospitals, one at Wushiski on the Kanduna River, and one at Lokoja. Some of the regulations for the nursing staffs in the various hospitals read strangely, and one would suppose them to be almost unnecessary but that from time to time reports have reached England that the behaviour of some of the nurses sent out to the West Coast has left much to be desired. The fact points to the necessity for extreme care and professional supervision in the selection of candidates, for on what may be termed outpost duty personal suitability counts for much. It is unfortunately true that many nurses when once they are out of England seem to consider discretion and a high professional tone unnecessary. They forget not only the obligations laid upon them as members of an honourable profession, but also that, in these days of cables and frequent mail services, there are few countries which are not in constant touch with Great Britain, and that in small and isolated communities even small indiscretions are noted and often magnified. Consequently, not less but more circumspection is required, if possible, in outlying stations than at home.

We must say, however, that a regulation that "the Matron and Nursing Sisters are required to be quiet and orderly in moving about the hospital" reads oddly, as also does one applying to Accra, that they will "under no circumstances be permitted to nurse officers in their quarters."

Strange also is the list of the varied assortment of household goods which, in some instances, nurses are expected to take out with them. It ranges from a dinner service, and a dust-pan and brush, *if desired*, to a bucket, chopper, cushions, and ornaments. Surely, as the appointments are only for a year, it would be well if necessary items were provided, even if the salaries were rather less.

Another somewhat surprising provision, this time in regard to uniform, is that a sun helmet is "optional." Personally, we should have considered it one of the most essential articles in the equipment of a nurse on tropical service. Sailor hats are not a sufficient protection except before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m., while we must own that, even for full dress, we consider a bonnet out of place. However, no doubt experience will lead to the modification of such regulations as prove unsuitable in practice.

Legal Matters.

THE BABY FARMING CASE.

At the resumed inquest into the cause of death of a child of four days old, supposed to be the son of Ada Galley, who was confined at Claymore House Maternity Home, East Finchley, the jury found that the deceased died from asphyxia, produced by Mrs. Walters, and that Mrs. Sach (proprietress of the home) was an accessory before the fact. Both of the accused were accordingly committed for trial, on the coroner's warrant, on the charge of wilful murder.

THE BABY DESERTION CASE.

Miss Eleanor Susannah Gale, who is described as a nurse, has been committed for trial at the Central Criminal Court, charged with abandoning babies. The last case preferred against her is that she abandoned a thirteen-days-old male child in December, 1901, in a second-class carriage between Willesden Junction and Broad Street, thereby endangering its life. It is suggested that she represented herself as a person of means, and received £15 with the child, and that the same night, a cold and wet one, she changed its clothes and abandoned it with the object of plunder. The prisoner pleaded "not guilty."

THE LIABILITY OF HOSPITALS.

An action was recently brought by an accountant named Porter against the Lowestoft Corporation to recover damages sustained through his daughter being discharged from the borough's isolation hospital in an unclean and infectious condition. It appears that the child had been in the hospital suffering from scarlet fever, and the plaintiff maintained that on her discharge she infected two of his other children. After a long hearing, Judge Willis gave a verdict for the defendant. We hope that it was proved that the children concerned were infected by other means, and that the hospital authorities were free from blame, otherwise the case would be a very hard one. This is the second instance which has recently come before us of a similar nature. In the first a child was, it is alleged, sent out of a hospital and changed from the clothes he had been wearing while there into fresh ones without any bath being given. He was then sent home some distance by rail, and, within a week, a younger and very delicate child who had been exposed to no infection otherwise developed the disease, involving the engagement of a trained nurse, whose fees, in addition to those of medical attendance, subsequent disinfection, and many other expenses will mount up to a goodly sum, while the anxiety and trouble caused cannot be estimated. The infection of railway carriages is, of course, also a probability. We are of opinion that where flagrant carelessness can be proved the sufferers have a right to redress in a court of law.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)