

Criminals who Pose as Nurses.

Many nurses have expressed to us the distress they have felt at the way in which their professional good name has been dishonoured by the recent sentencing, for serious crimes, of untrained women describing themselves as nurses, and so proclaimed in sensational newspaper head-lines and placards. Such sentences as "Nurses in the Dock," "Nurses Charged with Murder," and similar announcements have been made in the Press almost daily of late, to the manifest injury of the nursing profession.

We are glad, therefore, to be able to announce that, in answer to an application made by the Hon. Secretary of the Matrons' Council to the Criminal Investigation Department, the Assistant Commissioner has courteously furnished her with information which proves conclusively that these persons have no right to the title of nurse. This official says:—

"In reply to your letter of the 16th instant, I have to inform you that after the arrest of Eleanor Susannah Gale it was found that she had acted as a nurse for the past twenty-five years, but it could not be ascertained whether she possessed a certificate, or had received any hospital training. The doctors, however, with whom she had come in contact spoke highly of her nursing qualifications. With regard to Amelia Sach and Annie Walters, my inquiries tend to show that these persons have had no hospital training either as nurse or midwife.

"The person Sach has a sister-in-law who, it is reported, is a trained nurse, and from whom she has acquired what knowledge she possesses of nursing and midwifery."

As there is no legal register of trained nurses, and no possibility of demonstrating to the public that these criminals are not what they profess to be, the nursing profession suffers most unjustly from the disrepute brought upon it. We therefore take this opportunity of urging upon the Criminal Investigation Department and the Press that, as a matter of common justice, if criminals are described in the public newspapers as trained nurses their qualification to the title should also be given.

A flagrant case, showing the need for nursing organisation, has within the last few days been brought to our notice. Two men recently called at one of the Metropolitan Infirmaries, asking for advice, and stating that a woman describing herself as a nurse, and engaged in nursing on their premises, had been confined there. She was removed to the infirmary, and the nursing staff of the ward to which she was admitted were outraged to find that she had given her occupation as that of a nurse, and was so described on her head-board. On the representation of the Ward Sister, this description was subsequently erased by the medical officer. Further inquiries in regard to this woman proved that the infant referred to was her third illegitimate child. No doubt she is now once more acting as a private

nurse, and until nurses have the power of control and discipline in their ranks, so long will all sorts and conditions of persons be able to pose with impunity as members of one of the most honourable professions, and to bring discredit upon it.

If the above cases do not rouse the nurses of this country to the necessity for combining to obtain legal powers of self-government, nothing will.

Meetings to Discuss Registration.

The plan of campaign of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, in sending speakers to address the nurses in institutions where the co-operation of the authorities is secured, is being justified in its results. The work of the Society must be at first educative, and therefore friendly and informal meetings, where the whole question can be discussed without prejudice, are most valuable, and the thanks of the Society are due to those Matrons who have so kindly arranged such meetings. In the busy life of a hospital Matron this means real interest in the question. Since the publication of our last issue the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, has addressed two meetings on the subject.

At the Fulham Infirmary, the Matron, Miss Shipley, whose quiet and consistent support of the principle of Registration may always be counted on, took the chair and introduced the speaker, who gave a history of the Registration movement, and discussed the question both in its professional and industrial aspects. The audience followed most attentively the line of argument adopted, and, at the conclusion, on being invited to give an expression of opinion for or against the principle, gave a hearty round of applause in its favour.

At the Brook Hospital, Shooter's Hill, on Tuesday last, a large meeting had been ably organised by the Matron, Miss Bann. The Medical Superintendent, Dr. MacCombie, presided, and all the medical staff of the institution were present in addition to a large number of nurses and some members of the public. Here also Mrs. Fenwick explained the object of the Society for State Registration and dealt with the chief points in connection with the movement. The nurses present heartily applauded the principle of Registration on being invited to give expression to their views for or against it.

Dr. MacCombie, in thanking the speaker for her address, said, if Registration was good for the medical profession—and it had been proved to be so—he thought it must be equally good for nurses.

An artistic and refreshing tea was served in the board-room, when much informal and harmonious chat was continued on the subject of State Registration.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)