

Legal Matters.

A CONVICTION FOR FRAUD.

Christina Frances, or Mackintosh, who appeared in the dock at the Newcastle Police Court on January 13th in nurse's uniform, was charged with having endeavoured to procure charitable contributions by false pretences.

Mr. Lee, of the Town Clerk's Office, who prosecuted, said that the charge really was one of carrying on homes as bogus homes, on the false and fraudulent pretence that they were for orphan and friendless girls and respectable domestic servants. The defendant had for some time carried on homes in Glasgow, Newcastle, Harrogate, and, he believed, Scarborough. There had been no home in Glasgow since 1907, but it was mentioned in the latest appeal, as was the Harrogate Home, though the defendant had had nothing to do with it since September. In 1905 there were proceedings at Newcastle, and the defendant afterwards changed her name from Frances to McIntosh.

A servants' registry office was kept, but though in five years there were 360 applications on the books, only 28 situations had been obtained, and these chiefly for girls acting as collectors, and living in the homes, and as their names were repeated the number of situations obtained was negligible. Women of doubtful character frequented the home, and several illegitimate children had been born there. All, however, were not of that class, the chief aim being to collect money. Girls were sent out with collecting books which contained a decoy list of subscribers. Collections had been made all through the North of England, and as far north as Aberdeen. In the list of local patrons names were included without authority. A girl of 16 who had been engaged as a nursemaid, and then sent out collecting, was described as an assistant deaconess. When filled, the collecting books were burned.

The Magistrate (Colonel Downing) found that the defendant had been guilty of fraud, and bound her over in £25 and a recognisance in £25. He considered the institution was one against which the public should be protected.

A CHARGE OF MURDER.

On Wednesday, January 20th, Violet Edith Cross was charged on remand before Mr. Bros, at the North London Police Court, with the wilful murder of her newly-born illegitimate male child on December 30th last. Mr. Ley appeared for the Public Prosecutor, and Mr. Alfred Nisbet for the defence.

The first witness to give evidence was the Proprietress and Matron of the home with which the nurse was connected. She said that on September 16th the prisoner entered the home, signing an agreement for a year. She stated that she had been trained at the Middlesex Hospital. Prior to December 28th the nurse was away nursing one case for nine weeks and another for three weeks. On Dec. 29th the witness noticed the nurse's condition. On the 30th, Nurse Cross told her she had been very ill through the night, and attributed this

to eating sweets. The witness was out that day, and on her return, at 6 p.m., Nurse Solomon made a communication to her. As a result she went to the house opposite where the prisoner had a room, and inside her box, which was locked, was a parcel which felt warm. She sent for Dr. Henderson, who examined the parcel, and then went to the Police Station. A pair of scissors produced by the prisoner from her dress pocket, and an apron and cuffs, were handed over to the police.

Nurse Lucy Solomon detailed the circumstances which aroused her suspicions on December 30th. She afterwards saw the prisoner crossing the road to her room. She had on her uniform cloak, and was apparently carrying a bundle.

Dr. A. M. Henderson, of 17, Hampstead Lane, Highgate, deposed to finding the dead body of a newly born male child, still warm. There was a gaping wound in the child's chest in the region of the heart, which, in his opinion, was the cause of death. He afterwards interviewed the nurse and informed her what he had seen, and ordered her removal to the Great Northern Central Hospital. There were also punctured wounds on the skull, which would have been sufficient to cause death eventually. He considered the child had had a separate existence, but this must have been very short.

Other evidence having been offered, a remand of eight days was ordered.

NURSE CONVICTED OF THEFT.

Mary Baker, aged 43, pleaded guilty on Thursday, January 21st, at the County of London Sessions, before Mr. Robert Wallace, K.C., Chairman, at Newington, to stealing twelve brooches and other articles, the property of the Army and Navy Co-operative Society, Ltd., Victoria Street, S.W.

Mr. Huntly Jenkins, for the prosecution, said that the offence was committed on December 23rd last. The prisoner was observed to be acting in a suspicious manner, and after being followed by a female detective through several departments was arrested. She denied having taken anything, but several articles were found in her pocket. On being searched, she was found to be wearing a detachable pocket under her skirt, in which were other stolen articles. It was stated before the magistrate that thirteen years ago the prisoner had had a serious accident in the hunting field, and it was thought at the Police Court that she was perhaps not quite in her right mind. Dr. Poulerton, of Holloway Gaol, now said that he had been unable to detect any evidence of kleptomania.

Mr. J. R. Randolph, who, with Mr. Barrington Ward, appeared for the prisoner, stated that she had been a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association since 1890. She had suffered from neuritis after her accident, and later, as a result of heavy nursing work, suffered from insomnia and excitement. She was really unfitted for such trying work as nursing. He hoped that the Court would allow her to go to the care of a Sister Superior at a home at Brighton.

She was bound over on that condition, but warned by Mr. Wallace that if she left the home she would be brought up for sentence.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)