

The Midwife.

The Harlesden Maternity Home Case.

We are reporting in full the following case, as so many issues of importance to those wishing to qualify as certified midwives are involved in it, and are indebted to the *Willesden Chronicle* for the detailed report.

At Willesden, on Thursday, September 2nd, before Alderman Wright (Chairman), and other magistrates, Helen Swaine Pass, of 110, Craven Park, Harlesden, was summoned by Elizabeth Rosa Reed Paxton, of the Nurses' Institute, Alfred Road, Acton, for on May 21st knowingly by certain false pretences obtaining £1 ls., and on May 27th the further sum of £14 14s., with intent to cheat and defraud; also with obtaining on May 18th, £1 ls., and on May 22nd, £17 17s., the monies of Mary Emma Colebarn, also of the Nurses' Institute, Acton. Mr. C. E. Jones was counsel for the prosecution, and Mr. Hemmerde, K.C., M.P., appeared for the defence.

Mr. Jones stated that the defendant was the Matron or the proprietress of a maternity home, and that Nurses Paxton and Colebarn went there for training, as they were anxious to qualify for the Central Midwifery Board examination, in order that under the comparatively recent Midwives Act they might practice as certified midwives.

Miss Paxton stated that she was anxious to qualify as a certificated midwife under the Central Midwives' Board. It was necessary to pass an examination, and to enter she had to produce a certificate. Witness saw an advertisement in a paper calling attention to St. Margaret's Institute, and on May 20th she called on Mrs. Pass in Harlesden. In conversation, witness told her that she had come on the recommendation of a doctor as a pupil for the C.M.B. Witness understood Mrs. Pass to say that she had failed three times for the C.M.B.. Witness asked her how she got on for signing the pupils, and the defendant replied: "The Sister in charge does that." No arrangement was come to about terms on May 20th, but on the following day she sent a guinea as entrance fee, which was in accordance with the terms of the prospectus. Witness called again on May 27th, and, seeing Mrs. Pass, she paid her 14 guineas in cash. Defendant told her that the amount should be 18 guineas, and witness replied that she understood from Dr. Roberts that it was 15 guineas. Witness had a conversation with Dr. Roberts, and a few days afterwards she was informed that her 15 guineas in all would be accepted. Witness paid this sum and entered into residence on May 27th. There were three nurses at the institution, and she believed the "Sister" was in charge, and that she was the person qualified to certify. She was introduced to

her by the Matron, Mrs. Pass, and witness believed the institution was worked under the rules of the Board. After attending twenty cases, witness asked for her certificate, but Mrs. Pass said Nurse Edny could not sign. Mrs. Pass explained that she would get a doctor to sign a few hours after he had seen the deliveries. Witness communicated with the C.M.B., and, after receiving a reply, she instructed a solicitor. Mrs. Pass received the fees for the cases which witness attended, and they averaged 10s. Witness first heard that Nurse Edny was not qualified to sign about July 11th.

At this stage it was agreed that the case should stand over until Tuesday.

SUMMONSES DISMISSED.

At a special meeting of the Willesden Bench the case was resumed on Tuesday, the 7th inst., before Alderman George Wright, Chairman.

Nurse Colebarn, of the Nurses' Institute, Acton, was the first witness when the case was resumed. She said that in consequence of an advertisement in a nursing paper she communicated with Mrs. Pass in May last with a view to being trained in St. Margaret's Nursing Home for the October examination of the Central Midwives' Board. In reply to her letter Mrs. Pass agreed to train her, and told her in a letter that she would have no difficulty in getting in her requisite 20 cases before the examination. The charge was to be 15 guineas and an extra three guineas for doctor's lectures. She paid a deposit of £1 ls. and went into residence in the Home. Mrs. Pass then told her that she herself was not qualified, but that she had a fully qualified midwife who would sign for her cases. She was introduced to Nurse Edny, who, she was told, was the certified midwife, and after that she paid the balance of her fees. She commenced her duties with Nurse Edny the following morning, and up till July attended 16 cases. Nurse Paxton then made a statement to her, in consequence of which she wrote to the Central Midwives' Board. She showed the reply to Mrs. Pass, and she said she was very sorry, and would throw herself upon the mercy of the nurses, pay them 10s. a week, and return their fees. She had not yet been able to sit for her examination, and would not be able to until she had attended 20 cases under a certified and approved midwife.—Cross-examined by Mr. Hemmerde, for the defence, witness said her only complaint against the defendant was that she led her to believe that she had a certificated midwife who would sign for their cases, and because she had not, her time had been wasted.

NURSE EDNY AND THE C.M.B.

Elizabeth Edny, registered midwife under the Central Board, said that on April 24th she was engaged by Mrs. Pass to do her midwifery and sign the certificates of the nurses if the Central Board approved of her. Prior to that the Board had approved of her, and she told Mrs. Pass so. Later she applied to the Board for re-approval, but on

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)