

The Hemel Hempstead Case.

Further developments are promised in the Hemel Hempstead Workhouse case. Eleven justices were present at a special meeting of the Divisional Bench of Magistrates at Hemel Hempstead on the 17th inst, when a resolution was passed protesting against the allegations contained in a letter to the press from the Workhouse Nursing Association, signed by Princess Christian and others, in regard to the charge against Nurse Bellamy.

A vote of confidence and expression of appreciation of the manner in which the Clerk impartially dealt with the case was passed. Mr. Lovel Smeatham, the Clerk, in reply, said it was the first public opportunity of denying the charges, which amounted to judicial dishonesty, and stated that the case was by no means at an end.

Previous to this date letters of protest appeared in the *Times* from the Chairman of the Hemel Hempstead Board of Guardians, Mr. H. R. G. Craufurd, Chairman of Justices for the Dacorum Division of Hertfordshire, and Mr. W. H. Cranstone, Foreman of the Jury which found Nurse Bellamy guilty of culpable negligence.

On the 17th inst. Miss Jane Wilson, Hon. Treasurer of the Workhouse Nursing Association, in a letter to the *Times*, writes that "Our references to the Coroner's attitude were merely incidental. I am quite sure my Committee never intended to suggest that he would have intentionally permitted, much less committed, anything he thought was an injustice to anyone. . . . I therefore take the opportunity of repudiating such an idea, and our regret that it should be so understood."

But Mr. Smeatham is not to be calmed down with this retraction. On Saturday he replies "I have awaited a further communication from the Workhouse Nursing Association withdrawing the gross and unfounded libels upon myself which the letter contains," as he considers Miss Wilson's letter "entirely inadequate."

In the meantime, do not let us nurses forget that Nurse Bellamy has passed through a terrible, nerve-shattering experience, and whoever was responsible we stick to our opinion—that the charge of manslaughter against her was monstrous, and a *coup de grâce* to such a charge was all that could be expected from a judicial authority.

NURSE BELLAMY'S DEFENCE FUND.

Our readers will be pleased to learn that £52 12s. has now been received by the Rev. Walter M. Aste for this fund, but alas! £9 is still required to meet the necessarily heavy legal expenses. We are most grateful to those of our readers who have already subscribed a generous sum, and should others be able to help, subscriptions may be sent to Mr. Aste, at 1, Ballingdon Road, Battersea, S.W.

Legal Matters.

SISTER TAYLOR, M.D.

Ruth Elizabeth Taylor, who wears a nurses' uniform, has on two occasions recently appeared in it in the dock, to answer to charges of obtaining, in the one instance goods, and in the other credit, by means of false pretences.

AT ALDERSHOT.

At Aldershot Police Court, on October 25th, the prisoner was charged with obtaining goods to the value of 11s. 0½d. on false pretences from Mr. Charles Frederick Williams, draper, of Fleet.

Mr. Williams stated that last November the accused spent 6½d. in his shop, when she told him that she had been in South Africa as a nurse, and had been blind for six months afterwards. She was wounded there, and had a pension of 12s. 6d. a week. She was in nurses' uniform, and was wearing a medal with clasps, and a regimental belt similar to that worn by the Royal Field Artillery. On the strength of that conversation she obtained credit from his wife on January 2nd, goods being sent to her to the amount of £2 8s. 3½d. The parcel was sent to the accused at the address of Miss Warburton, resident in Fleet.

Miss E. Blackthorne, house-parlourmaid to Miss Warburton, said the accused was cook there, and left on January 2nd. She wore Army nurses' clothing and a medal.

Inspector Garrett deposed that he saw the accused at 141, Victoria Road, Fleet, and told her and two other women who were there that various sums of money had been missed from the house during the last few days, and that he was making inquiries. He asked the accused her name, and she informed him that she was Sister Taylor, a nurse. She had been in the Army and "through South Africa," and had a medal to prove it. On his asking to see the medal the accused handed him the one produced. It had five bars—Paardeburg, Relief of Mafeking, Relief of Ladysmith, Tugela Heights, and Cape Colony, and on the edge was engraved, "Nurse Taylor, attached Northumberland Fusiliers." On his questioning her the accused informed him that the medal was posted to her. On his asking "By whom?" she replied, "The King." Asked how she accounted for a nurse being attached to an individual regiment, she replied, "I was." When questioned further as to how she accounted for being in possession of three bars for engagements which took place at the same time, miles apart, the inspector stated she asked to speak to him alone, and bursting into tears said: "For God's sake don't say anything about it. I have no right to wear the medal. I bought it in Lincolnshire about three years ago, and I had my name engraved on it."

The accused pleaded guilty and expressed contrition, sobbing pathetically and pleading for forgiveness.

Colonel Bruce, Chairman of the Bench, said the magistrates had a duty to perform to the public, and could not allow the prisoner to get off scot free or with a fine. Her actions characterised her as an absolute fraud. She was sentenced to a month's imprisonment with hard labour.

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