

3. In the next case the applicant was questioned by the chief officer of the Council as to an advertisement which appeared in the *Stage* in August, 1907, in which he advertised for pupils "experience not necessary," also as to statements made concerning him in *Truth* in October last, and whether he had taken proceedings for libel. He replied the paragraph was very carefully worded and there was no libel. The licence was granted and the applicant warned to be careful about his advertisements.

4. In another application for a licence for a variety and dramatic agency, the applicant attended and explained why on one occasion he could not pay the salaries of his artistes, and the steps he had taken to deal with the situation. All his obligations were, he said, discharged except to one lady, who, in reply to a postcard to call upon him, brought her husband, who assaulted him. The lady attended and gave her version.

This man was also granted a licence.

To enable certificated professional private nurses to grasp the situation, the point we wish to emphasise is that the action of the L.C.C. in obtaining powers to control questionable agencies is not concerned with professional standards of education or efficiency, but rather with the personal conduct of persons acting as agents, and, as far as we can gather, as there are no professional nurse-inspectors at present attached to this department of the L.C.C., to take out a licence means exposing the professional Committees and Superintendents to lay and therefore inefficient inspection and control; and perhaps to "blackmail" and malicious misrepresentation before the Public Control Committee of the L.C.C., which is not a Court of Law. This is proved by the applications made to it and the evidence and accusations advanced at its last meeting. Nothing in our opinion could have a more disastrous effect upon the morale and status of the professional nurse in private practice than to be classed with such agencies and agents as fought out in public their claims with so much disgusting detail before the Public Control Committee on Friday. And what good would be gained by taking out a licence? The Act does not deal with standards, and cannot therefore enforce efficiency. Employers and sweaters of nurses are protected and exempt, and the crop of lay domestic agencies which now foist discharged probationers and semi-trained women on a defenceless public as "trained nurses," cannot be refused a licence if the agent is a *respectable person*, as no doubt many of them are.

A smashing blow has been dealt through this Act at the professional status of the trained nurse. She has, in applying for a licence to work, to fight it out in the gutter—side by side with pimps and prostitutes—and a more degrading position it is not possible to imagine. If the nursing profession has an ounce of self-respect its members will not rest an hour until the Bill for the State Registration of Nurses is placed on the Statute Book of this Realm, granting them that legal status which is their right, and a professional title which alone can distinguish them in the public mind from the most degraded of their kind.

E. G. F.

Legal Matters.

THEFT AT A NURSING HOME.

At Marylebone Police Court last week Miss Miriam Manning, Matron of a Nursing Home in Gloucester Terrace, Regent's Park, charged Miss V. E. Moore Wright with stealing a gold watch, value £3. She stated that she had been asked by the authorities of a London Infirmary about a month ago to take the accused "partly as a probationer and partly as a patient." She did so, and soon discovered that the prisoner was in the habit of taking morphia, and had evidently done so for years. The prisoner, when appealed to to tell the truth about the watch, eventually confessed having taken it.

Detective-Sergeant Seymour gave corroborative evidence. The prisoner was remanded that her father might be communicated with.

THE CARE OF SUICIDAL CASES.

The Chichester Coroner last week held an inquiry into the circumstances of the death of a female patient at the Graylingwell Asylum, due to drinking boiling water from a kettle in the kitchen during the momentary occupation of the nurse. The patient was known to have strong suicidal tendencies, and a verdict of "suicide while of unsound mind" was returned, without blame being attached to anyone. Surely the responsible nurse should not be required to undertake duties which will divert her attention, even momentarily, from a case of this kind. Apparently the nurse in charge of the day-room, where the deceased was, answered a door bell a few yards away, and made two journeys to the kitchen with loaves. It was during this time that the unfortunate patient slipped out of the room and took the fatal drink.

CHARGE OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN.

At the South Police Court, Dublin, Sister Bernard Smythe and Miss Mary Quilan, of St. Agnes' Home, Twickenham, were last week charged with wilfully assaulting, ill-treating, and neglecting two children in their care while in lodgings at 83, Queen Square, Dublin. We mention the case as it has been referred to in the *Irish Press*, under the headings: "Alleged Ill-treatment of Children: English Nurses Charged." No evidence was offered that the accused, who were committed for trial, had any connection with the nursing profession. Indeed, as Sister Bernard Smythe, the elder of the two defendants, deposed that she was 21 years of age, and had been a member of the confraternity connected with the Twickenham Home for eight years, it is manifestly impossible that she should be a trained nurse.

Wedding Bells.

FENWICK—STOCKDALE.—On the 17th December, at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, by the Rev. H. Rose, M.A., William Stephen Fenwick, M.S., F.R.C.S., 81, Harley Street, W., only son of Thomas Fenwick, of Southampton, to Enid Stockdale, third daughter of Thomas Stockdale, Spring Lea, Leeds, and late Sister, Charing Cross Hospital, London.

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