

## A WHITE SLAVE DECOY AND ACCOMPLISHED SWINDLER.

Many incredible stories have been told of late concerning women with a superficial acquaintance with nursing who have swindled the public, and acted as the agents of persons engaged in the iniquitous white slave traffic; but for audacity the story unfolded at the Borough Quarter Sessions at Hastings on January 23rd, before Mr. George Elliott, K.C., sitting as Deputy Recorder, when Mrs. White, of Heidelberg, Milward Road, Hastings, prosecuted Edith Taylor (a servant) for stealing seven gold rings, a gold watch and chain, a Masonic Badge, four £10 notes, and other articles, would be hard to beat. We have heard the story from the lips of a trained nurse, subpoenaed to give evidence, and in court during the proceedings, who also heard many details from Mrs. White personally.

The theft of which the accused was convicted was not the only, or the worst, aspect of the case, there was a sinister suggestion of white slave traffic about it which must put every careful mother on her guard against admitting to her house and to acquaintance with her daughters, unknown women wearing the once honoured uniform of the trained nurse, but now adopted by criminals of every kind as a cloak for their nefarious purposes.

The prisoner happily did not appear in the dock in uniform, probably because she is at present "doing time" for a previous offence which brought her within the arm of the law, and for which her sentence does not expire until February 7th. Mr. C. F. Baker, barrister, instructed by Messrs. Gaby & Stapylton Smith, prosecuted, and Mr. Salkeld Green defended.

Mrs. White, who is the wife of a captain in the Merchant Service, was travelling down to Hastings from London one day in July last summer, two other women, one in nurses' uniform, being in the carriage. She fainted on the journey, and on coming round found herself alone with the nurse, who was administering brandy and endeavoring to revive her. On arriving at Hastings the nurse, who stated that she was trained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, volunteered to accompany Mrs. White to her own house. Arrived there her young daughter, Miss Ivy White, assisted her mother and helped to make her comfortable, removing the jewellery which she was wearing. Her mother instructed her to put it in her jewel case, but to be careful as the case contained four ten-pound notes.

Subsequently the "nurse" called at the house. Mrs. White expressed surprise at seeing her, as she understood from her on the former occasion that she was only in Hastings for the day. She aptly replied that she was going on night duty, and the Matron had given her a day off. As she would not have another day for some time, and seeing the Hastings Pageant advertised, she thought she would like to come to see it.

As she arrived about lunch time she was invited to stay, and removed her outer things in Mrs. White's bedroom. During lunch Mrs. White's daughter said to her "Oh, mother, nurse has asked me to go up to the garden-party at St. Bartholomew's." (It will be remembered that during the International Medical Congress such a Garden Party was given, and announced previously in the papers, so there was no doubt as to its genuine character.) The visitor, who was most urgent in proffering her invitation, explained she was allowed to invite a guest, and as she had a large bedroom and had been at the hospital for so long, she was permitted by the Matron the privilege of having a friend to sleep in her room for the night, where another bedstead could easily be put up. The invitation was declined by Mrs. White. Before leaving Miss Taylor said she had forgotten her umbrella, which she had left in Mrs. White's room, but on that occasion, as she was not left alone, she left the house without further incidents.

On August 7th she again called on Mrs. White, and was coldly received. She renewed very determinedly the invitation to the garden party, which was declined. Before leaving, however, she asked and obtained leave to go upstairs for a moment. Downstairs in the hall Mrs. White, with a young child in her arms, heard something suspiciously like the opening and closing of drawers in her room, and "nurse" was evidently disturbed, for she ran downstairs, and as she passed mother and child in the hall, patted the latter on the head and said, "Good-bye, little one; be good to mother." The child, unfortunately for nurse, dropped a toy, which she perforce stooped to pick up, and Mrs. White saw peeping from under her cloak her own jewel case. "Nurse, you have my jewel case!" she exclaimed, which nurse hotly denied, and a scuffle ensued in which Mrs. White was hit on the head by the nurse's handbag, out of which her purse fell. Nurse admitted that she was a desperate woman who must have money, and ran out into the road. Mrs. White, who had succeeded in regaining possession of her case, went after her and appealed to a man passing by to stop the woman. Taylor immediately informed him that Mrs. White was a dangerous lunatic with whom she had had a great deal of trouble.

"Look at her," she said dramatically. It was true that Mrs. White's hair, which had been disarranged during the struggle was partly down her back, and as the man hesitated to interfere when the apparently responsible nurse made such an incriminating statement, "nurse" was not slow to follow up her advantage, first to ask the man to appear as a witness on her behalf, should the case come into court, and then to show a clean pair of heels. The police were communicated with, and she was ultimately arrested in London.

The prisoner, a pretty and attractive looking woman, who appeared to be about twenty-one, but whose age proved to be twenty-seven, pleaded not guilty, her tale being that things were being

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