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**EDITORIAL.**

**THE MISUSE OF PROFESSIONAL UNIFORM.**

Trained nurses have for many years complained of the abuse of their professional uniform by all kinds of persons not entitled to wear it. It has figured in the dock when prisoners have been tried on charges varying from theft, bigamy, and abortion, to murder. It has been worn by pedlars on the public market place, by vendors of soap and patent medicines, by employees of houses of ill-fame. Still the abuse goes on unchecked, in spite of appeals to Cabinet Ministers, and the publicity given in the press.

But the case is far different when the uniform is that of the Voluntary Aid Detachments. On the suspicion of this being worn by persons not entitled to it, the majesty of the law is invoked, and its machinery put in motion. We do not complain of the members of these Detachments desiring to protect the uniform to which they are entitled. At the same time what about their wholesale adoption of the indoor uniform of the trained nurse when engaged in occupations other than nursing, such as those of cooks, kitchen maids, laundry maids, hall-porters, &c.

The flagrant misuse of this uniform by Voluntary Aid Detachment members, and by society ladies posing as nurses, is testified to by the illustrated press, and the Government, War Office, and Scotland Yard have looked on unmoved.

An incident which occurred at a recent meeting of the Hull Watch Committee is therefore instructive. Mrs. Hatfield, of the Hull Guild of Help, was present at this meeting and took part in a discussion arising out of a letter which she had addressed to the committee, in which she complained that two police officers on two occasions came to the front and back door of her

house, and their actions had caused her husband and herself to be treated by some persons as suspected felons. Finally, when they secured an interview with her on June 21st, they told her they had been told to enquire where she had obtained the "nurse's uniform and badge she was wearing, and whether she had passed any examinations which entitled her to wear the uniform." The letter further stated that she had passed with honours the highest possible examination, and if this and other persecutions went on she would place the matter in the hands of the Public Prosecutor.

The Assistant Commissioner of the Northern District of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, the Chief Constable, and the Superintendent and constables concerned in the case were present. The Chairman of the Committee warned Mrs. Hatfield that a prosecution might take place, and anything she said might be taken down and used in evidence against her. The Chief Constable said that the allegation against Mrs. Hatfield was that she was wearing a Voluntary Aid Detachment Badge, and that she was not a member of a Voluntary Aid Detachment. These Detachments were at present a part of the Territorial Force organization, and the badge was authorized by the Army Council. Consequently any person wearing that Badge without authority was committing an offence under the Defence of the Realm Regulations, and could be prosecuted for it.

Mrs. Hatfield said she was prepared to meet this allegation.

As this case is now under consideration it would manifestly be improper for us to comment upon it. The point to which we wish to draw attention is that it is possible to devise means for the protection of a uniform worn by many persons who are socially influential, and the consequent injustice of the lack of regulation concerning that of the trained nurse.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)