

PENAL CASES AND THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL.

Naturally registered nurses who had hoped that when they had statutory governing bodies—the General Nursing Councils, which function under the Nurses' Registration Acts—a very high moral standard would be maintained, have learned to their sorrow and indignation that this mixed body of nominated lay persons, and nurses, have on more than one occasion retained the names of nurses of criminal and immoral records upon the State Register. On only two occasions did the G.N.C. summon up courage to remove a convicted thief from the list.

But what of the future? We quote the following paragraph from the *Daily Mail* of July 10th last:—

WOMEN ARRESTED IN SHOP.

Annie Wiffen, aged 58, and her daughter, Ivy Edna Wiffen, aged 27, a mental nurse, both of Bruce Grove, Watford, Hertfordshire, pleaded guilty at Westminster yesterday to shoplifting at Harrods' Stores, Brompton Road, S.W.

It was stated that they were seen to leave the stores and enter the cloakroom of Knightsbridge underground station. There the daughter apparently put on four articles of stolen underwear. They returned to Harrods, and were arrested.

Mr. Boyd, the magistrate, bound them over.

Ivy Edna Wiffen is registered on the supplementary part of the Register for Mental Nurses. No doubt her case will be considered by the General Nursing Council at an early date, and it is to be hoped that the Register will be cleansed of her name.

It is high time more publicity was given by the General Nursing Council to these cases. It might prove a deterrent, as retaining the names of thieves on the register is in our opinion most dangerous, not only to the morale of the Nursing Profession, but to the security of public property.

VICTIM OF SLEEPY SICKNESS.

We are satisfied to note that Mr. Roland Oliver, K.C., the Recorder, made an order to send William Henry Hills, 26, of Cheriton, near Folkestone, to an institution instead of to prison, for assaults on women, at the Folkestone Quarter Sessions. Dr. Higson, medical officer of Maidstone Prison, said he had kept the prisoner under his observation since his remand. In his opinion he was a mental defective and certifiable under the Mental Deficiency Acts, 1913 and 1927. He was a moral defective. At the age of 16 Hills contracted sleepy sickness, and he was quite a different lad, both in morals and general behaviour, after that.

After the prisoner had been removed the Recorder told the jury that the new statute gave him power to deal with a person in whose case there existed mental defectiveness coupled with strongly vicious or criminal propensities, and who required care, supervision, and control for the protection of others.

The Council of the British College of Nurses has been urging upon the Home Secretary for some time that such cases of post-encephalitis lethargica should be treated as invalids and not as criminals, and we hope Prison Medical Officers will invariably make enquiries into the past histories of such prisoners. We shall not then be shocked by these tragic cases being sent to penal servitude for offences they are mentally unable to control.

The Minister of Health, Mr. Arthur Greenwood, M.P., has appointed Mr. H. W. S. Francis, O.B.E., to be a principal assistant secretary and Mr. R. H. H. Keenlyside, O.B.E., and Mr. J. N. Beckett to be assistant secretaries of the Ministry.

THE HOSPITAL WORLD.

Mr. Frederick Dempster-Smith, of Hotel Victoria, Northumberland Avenue, W.C., and of the Imperial Hotel, Bournemouth, who died on March 25th, left £25,000 to the Governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital "for the endowment of a ward at such hospital to be named and kept in perpetuity as having been founded by me in memory of my late dear friend William James Marriage ('Sol'), a corporal-major in the Household Battalion, who was killed in France while serving his country in the Great War, such ward to be called the Sol Memorial Ward."

A gift of £20,000, in seven annual instalments, has been offered to St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, by Lord Iveagh, who writes to Lieut.-Colonel H. E. Verey, Chairman of the hospital, that he has for many years been interested in the development of the Therapeutic Inoculation Department and the work of Sir Almroth Wright, and the money is to be given to help forward the project for the extension of the Laboratory.

Three anonymous donations of £3,000, £2,500, and £500 have been made for the hostel for patients attending out-patient psycho-therapeutic clinics in London, and for the observation homes for difficult children. These projects form part of the big £300,000 scheme for an Institute of Medical Psychology for the prevention and early treatment of nervous disorders, which is being promoted by a Joint Committee of the National Council for Mental Hygiene and the Tavistock Square Clinic.

Before the Committee of Enquiry was appointed to enquire into the conditions of the Lock Hospital, the public were fully aware that conditions required drastic improvements. Now we have the conclusions and recommendations of a majority, and of the minority, but so far the Reports have not been published. We have had enough "Hush, Hush" on conditions at the Lock Hospital, and what the public in its own interests should demand is the truth, and that the Reports should be published without further delay. Mr. Reginald Ward Poole states in a letter to the *Times*:

"It appears that some time ago the board of management dismissed the matron, assistant matron, and a nursing sister, and that they now propose, as 'an act of grace,' that some monetary payment should be made to these not altogether unimportant members of the nursing staff.

It is obvious to anybody that this action must have been prompted by something in one or other of the reports, or in both. In fairness to these three ladies, the public should have a chance of judging of at least the 'moral responsibility' now repudiated by the board of management. The public cannot judge of the adequacy of the Committee's conclusions without reading the reports, and in the interest of all hospitals, and of this one in particular, they should surely be published."

WHERE TO SECURE A GOOD PORTRAIT.

The gift of a good portrait of oneself to a friend is one which is sure to give pleasure, but the question of where that photograph shall be taken is an important one.

We advise anyone considering this question to pay a visit to Mr. Stuart of the Photographic Studios, 47 and 49, Brompton Road, London, S.W.3, who considers no pains too great to secure a good portrait. We speak with some confidence, because we have seen several portraits of nurses taken by Mr. Stuart, and we know that they have been pleased with the result. Moreover, his charges are moderate, and he gives special terms to nurses.

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