

convicted thieves have been treated recently by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

According to further information received we find difficulty in discriminating between the offences of those nurses retained on probation, and those removed from the Register, and the sooner a firm stand is taken by the G.N.C., and convicted thieves removed *ipso facto* from the Register the better, cause for complaint at discrimination would then cease.

LEGAL MATTERS.

COLLINS v. FROGGATT AND OTHERS.

Hot Water-bottle Burns Again.

The above case was tried in the King's Bench Division before Mr. Justice McCardie and a special jury.

A settlement was arrived at of this action in which Mrs. Elizabeth Collins, a widow, of "Oswalds," Queen's Road, Llandudno, claimed damages for alleged negligence from Miss Sarah Elizabeth Froggatt, of "St. Helen's," Rumania Crescent, Llandudno; Dr. Edith Annie Shaw, of Colwyn Bay; and Dr. A. Gwenllian Lewis, of Rhos-on-Sea, Denbighshire.

Miss Froggatt was the proprietress of the St. Helen's nursing home at Llandudno.

It was stated for the plaintiff that about the end of 1928 she consulted Dr. Lewis, and on February 22nd, 1929, an operation was performed on Mrs. Collins by Dr. Shaw at Miss Froggatt's nursing home. Dr. Lewis administered the anæsthetic, and Miss Froggatt and a nurse (Margaret Norris Scott) were also present at the operation. After the operation, Mrs. Collins was removed, still unconscious, to her bedroom on a stretcher, and, with the stretcher, was placed on the bed. The four persons who had been present at the operation were present in the bedroom when the stretcher bearing Mrs. Collins was placed on the bed. The stretcher was removed under the superintendence of Miss Froggatt after the departure of the doctors. A rubber hot-water bottle was then found, it was alleged, on which Mrs. Collins had been lying, and which had inflicted on her a very severe burn.

It was stated that Mrs. Collins was under an immense disability at the present time, and, in all probability, would be disabled for life.

Miss Froggatt admitted negligence, but Dr. Shaw and Dr. Lewis denied it. All the defendants denied that Mrs. Collins had suffered any damage. Dr. Shaw counterclaimed £200 for fees which she alleged were due to her from Mrs. Collins.

Judgment was entered for the plaintiff for £600 and agreed costs against Miss Froggatt, and for the two doctors—against whom the allegations of negligence were withdrawn—who said that they would not enforce their judgment.

The Maid's Evidence.

During the hearing of the case, Miss Alice Jones, a domestic servant, said that she was employed as a maid at the nursing home in 1929. On the day of the operation on the plaintiff Nurse Scott asked her to fill the hot-water bottle and put it in Mrs. Collins' bed. The witness took the bottle downstairs to the kitchen, and from a quarter to half-filled it with water from the kettle. The water was not boiling. She lifted the top sheet and placed the bottle in the bed. She did not know how the bed was made. If anyone had turned down the sheet the bottle would have been seen.

The witness said that she did not know that there was a draw sheet and a mackintosh sheet on the bed.

Mr. Leonard Gamagee, professor of surgery in Birmingham University, said that he saw the plaintiff on March 24th, 1929, a month after the accident. She was

suffering from a deep burn over the bone at the extreme end of the spine, and across the buttocks. Part of it went down to the bone.

He had never been more astonished at the depth of a burn from a hot-water bottle. The operation had been comparatively slight. If it had not been for the terrible burn all the subsequent medical treatment would have been unnecessary.

Points of Importance.

(1)—How about the evidence of Miss Alice Jones, a domestic servant, who was entrusted by Nurse Scott to perform a nursing duty in connection with the preparation of the patient's bed, which it was her own duty to most carefully perform, and which resulted in such a terrible injury to the patient, and disastrous financial costs? It is high time persons conducting Nursing Homes enforced a strict rule that only highly trained Registered Nurses are entrusted with the care of the patients admitted, and that the preparation of the bed is one of the nurse's most important duties. Cleanliness and comfort can alone be secured by strict adherence to this rule, and had it been enforced in the case under discussion, danger and disaster might have been avoided.

(2)—We cannot find the name of Miss Margaret Norris Scott upon the State Register of Nurses, and although the medical women in the case were in no way responsible for the accident, in our opinion it is their duty to ascertain—if the nurses employed in an institution to which they recommend patients for operation—are State Registered Nurses, and qualified for the responsible professional duties they undertake, and for which their patients pay and have a right to secure. We hope that in the future the two medical practitioners in this case will realise the importance of recognising the Nurses' Registration Acts, and save themselves and their patients from the dangers of unprofessional nursing.

NURSES BEHAVE WITH THE GREATEST HEROISM.

In the terrible earthquake which devastated the town of Napier and rocked the Hawke's Bay district in the North Island of New Zealand, many lives were lost and hundreds wounded, and to add to the general terror the oil tanks outside the town took fire and swept the city.

Alas! an outstanding tragedy of the disaster was the collapse and crumbling of the Nurses' Home and the Jellicoe Ward of the General Hospital, the former being destroyed while members of the night staff were asleep. Some of them got to safety, but the bodies of others were buried beneath heaps of fallen bricks and mortar. Jellicoe Ward collapsed like a pack of cards burying the patients. As ever the nurses behaved with the greatest heroism, dashing into the rocking building to rescue their patients, and many of them were caught by the tumbling walls. The Government at once dispatched doctors and 20 nurses from Wellington and many nurses from other centres were soon on the spot doing what was humanly possible for the relief of suffering.

The authorities fear a serious outbreak of disease if the inhabitants do not leave the town as speedily as possible.

The message of sympathy from the King sent to the suffering people, through the Governor General, was warmly appreciated throughout the Dominion.

To the President of the New Zealand Trained Nurses Association, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (President of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain) cabled, without delay, a message of deep sympathy in its name, as through the International Council of Nurses relations with this Dominion have always been specially cordial.

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