

a Nurses' Uniform Department, and we consider that the courtly Mr. Thomas, of Messrs. Debenham and Freebody, would have acquitted himself in this connection with more general satisfaction to the nurses. He would, at least, have been able to suggest to certain Matrons the adoption of a more becoming style of uniform for the nursing staff. It is not every Matron, or even Chairman, who has a nice taste, even in sleeves.

But, joking apart. We are not surprised that the Hon. Secretary of the Prince of Wales' Fund does not "consider it expedient to make public the names of the gentlemen who are serving on the Committee," now that the very "formal" and superficial manner in which this so-called "investigation" is being conducted has leaked out. The suggestion to hold an *in camera* inquiry into the conduct of our public hospitals, supported by public subscriptions, was unwise; it has given the public the impression that there is something to hide, which must not be discussed in the light of day. Now that this so-called investigation has been reduced to a farce, it will arouse still further distrust in the minds of those sections of the public who pay for and who use the hospitals.

Our hospitals are doing a splendid national work, but they are not quite perfect. Such reforms as are needed in their management will be sooner and more satisfactorily effected by a straightforward and conscientious course of procedure than by these anti-British mysterious manœuvres, initiated by mischievous meddlers on the Prince of Wales Hospital Fund.

#### "NURSE BRANDISH."

THE trial of "Nurse Brandish" for the murder of her illegitimate child is now concluded, and although she has been exonerated by the jury upon the capital charge, in spite of the fact that the summing-up of the Judge was strongly against her, yet the lessons to be learnt by trained nurses are plain. The fact that this woman appeared in the dock in nursing uniform—a garb which should be the badge of an honourable profession—has caused widespread indignation; and, there is no doubt that in the future, either the uniform of the trained nurse will have to be protected, or its use will be discarded by many who have, up to the present time, been proud to wear it. The fact that Mrs. Manning was hanged in a black satin rendered it taboo for a quarter of a century.

It must also come home to trained nurses that they have no means of dissociating themselves from women who disgrace their calling, or of removing them from its ranks. A better proof of the need for nursing reforms, and for the legislation for which the most thoughtful members of the Nursing profession are pleading, could scarcely be given than is afforded by the history of "Nurse Brandish." When engaged as a barmaid, she became the unhappy mother of an illegitimate child; she was then, by the mistaken kindness of some philanthropic lady, sent, for a few weeks, to a Lying-In Hospital for training, and emerged at the end of this period a quasi-trained nurse. It is at least certain that she donned the uniform supposed to be the distinctive mark of professional nurses, and undertook nursing work. It is also certain that she subsequently became engaged to be married to the widower of one of her patients, and this, without acquainting him with her past history—thus not hesitating to deceive and bring disgrace on an honourable man. Having been exonerated on the capital charge, "Nurse Brandish" left the dock, presumably as she entered it, (thereby showing her wisdom and her knowledge of human nature) in nursing uniform, free to undertake once more the duties of a trained nurse, without let or hindrance; the nursing profession having no power to remove her from their ranks, nor to protect themselves or the public from association with a woman proved to be devoid of moral rectitude.

#### THE NEED OF NURSING SISTERS.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Civil Military Gazette*, Lahore, writes to that Journal emphasising the need of Nursing Sisters in Mian Mir. He states that he counted eighty-one beds in the Station, and twenty-nine in the Section Military Hospital. The cases included heat apoplexy, enteric, dysentery, and sun fever, all of them, as our readers will recognise, being cases in which skilled nursing frequently means the difference of life and death to the patient. There was, however, no nursing for these sick men except the kindly but untrained ministrations of their comrades in arms. The writer, with the experience of three hot seasons, states that this is a fair hot weather average. It is therefore evident that there is urgent need that these hospitals should be supplied with fully trained nurses. The sooner the better for the credit of all who are responsible for the well being of Tommy Atkins in Mian Mir.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)