

to declaim and agitate. To convince the public and Parliament, chapter and verse, proving the scandals of which we complain, must be given; and so, as our readers are aware, we have collected and published from many sources, some of the many flagrant cases which are continually occurring, and which bring discredit on our calling, and certainly involve more or less injury to the public. When Parliament is approached, for the purpose of obtaining a Nursing Act, these cases will be available to prove the contention, which leading nurses have now for many years advanced, as to the urgent need for reforms.

As the latest instance, in another column this week, there will be found a report of a case from Cheshire, which is important in more than one way. It is described by our contemporary as the "Downfall of a Nurse," and the case itself is sad enough; the woman being charged at the police court with deserting her illegitimate child. It was stated that she was "a certificated nurse"; but it appears that her sole training had been obtained at Queen Charlotte's Lying-in Hospital; and that, less because of that, than upon the ground that she was a widow, she obtained nursing work in London, Liverpool, and elsewhere. The prisoner stated that she had lost her certificates and references. At any rate, it is clear from the evidence that she is not a thoroughly trained nurse, but has been undertaking the care of the sick, upon an amount of education and experience which was most inadequate to enable her to perform her duties efficiently. Still she described herself, and the public accepted her, as a "Nurse;" and her misdeeds are therefore, quite naturally, assumed to reflect discredit upon the whole of the profession.

The case once more shows the fact—which has been proved, again and again, before—that some means are urgently needed to protect the sick from bogus nurses who are as destitute of character as of professional experience. On the other hand, it illustrates the equal importance of some means being adopted which shall safeguard the Nursing profession against women who are able to assume a character to which they are not entitled, and to bring the gravest disgrace upon every trained nurse. We earnestly hope that one effect of our "Pillory" will be to make well-trained nurses realise the vital importance to themselves—to their own professional good name, reputation, and success—that some means should be taken to purify their calling from the black sheep which infest it.

We especially commend these facts to the notice and attention of hospital Matrons, as it is clearly their duty, as leaders of the profession, to give their personal assistance, and to guide the rank and file in demanding reforms. As we have frequently explained, these can only be obtained by an Act of Parliament, which, as the Medical Acts did for the medical profession, shall form a governing body for our calling—which shall control the education, registration, and work of Nurses, and shall be able for the first time to expel from their recognised ranks those who prove to be unworthy of trust and confidence.

Annotations.

POST-GRADUATE COURSES.

NURSES have from time to time felt the need of post-graduate lectures and practical work, in order that they may keep themselves acquainted and in touch with modern methods: they have pleaded for post-graduate opportunities, and they have discussed the possibilities of obtaining them in their debating societies. The need for such opportunities is obvious. For instance, a nurse whose hospital education ended ten, or even five years ago, will find in private nursing that she is quite unacquainted with many of the requirements of modern surgeons, and the technique of modern surgery, unless she has managed by reading, and visits to her old training school, to keep herself abreast with the times. Even so, however, the information she is able to gather must be somewhat desultory and unsatisfactory. What she learns she learns as a favour, and is dependent for her instruction upon the kindness of some busy ward sister or nurse. The need of post-graduate classes, has been frequently felt and expressed; but, with the exception of a valuable series of lectures organized by the Matrons' Council during the winter session, 1895-6, little has been done in this direction, and, indeed, nurses are quite accustomed to be snubbed when they express the not unnatural and praiseworthy desire for opportunities of keeping in touch with modern methods, and so rendering themselves efficient servants of the public. They will, therefore, be interested to learn that the need of post-graduate opportunities of study has, of recent years, been widely felt by the Medical profession, and that the Post-Graduate Union of Metropolitan

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)