

But the first sentence of this last paragraph is completely beyond our comprehension. It almost impels us to believe that Mr. Bonham-Carter's idea of a Register must be widely different from other people's knowledge of the thing; and his views as to the manner in which Trained Nurses are obtained by the public, essentially unlike what happens in real "every-day life."

Let us for a moment contrast the picture he draws with the stern reality. "Those who know what they are about" evidently do not have anyone near and dear to them taken suddenly ill: the onset of their diseases is quiet and gradual; it enables a Doctor to be sent for in a leisurely fashion—perchance for an advertisement for a Nurse to be inserted in the daily papers; certainly for a number of Nurses to present themselves at the patient's house for consideration and exhibition of their "qualities." Then, one or more having been selected, "those who know what they are about" require recent evidence, and confidential evidence, probably necessitating at least one, if not more, personal interviews at different ends of the town, or at least the lapse of several Posts in the interchange of epistles, before "the nature and degree of the qualities" possessed by Nurse are satisfactorily determined. We presume, of course, if, by any accident, the confidential kind of evidence were not obtainable for a week or so, the patient would placidly postpone the necessity for Nurse's services till everything in this direction was quite completed.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of the public must belong to those who do *not* know what they are about, for a very different kind of drama than this is played in a hundred homes every week. Let us tell what happened only the other day. In the middle of the night a child was seized with an attack of croup. In five minutes the household was all roused; everything was trouble and confusion. A Doctor was dragged from his bed and hurried in; the case was seen to be critical, the child rapidly became worse, and tracheotomy became imminent. A servant was sent off in a cab, with instructions to go all over London rather than come back without a Nurse. After applying at two well-known Nursing Institutions and finding no Nurse at home in either, he heard of and brought back an old Hospital cook, who for some months had been practising, with considerable profit to herself, as a Trained Nurse. Fortunately, the case was so critical, that the Doctor remained with it himself; the woman's ignorance was discovered, and inquiry revealed her antecedents.

This is not a singular case. We have the best reasons for believing that exactly similar events are occurring every day in our midst. And yet it seems to be thought, in cases of emergency, when

the Doctor stands, watch in hand, missing appointment after appointment, beside a serious case, waiting for the arrival of a Nurse, that he, or the patient, or the patient's friends, would dream for a single second of postponing the assistance of the Nurse, in order to obtain recent evidence, and evidence which must be of a confidential kind, as to her moral qualities! We cannot but think that we must be at cross purposes with Mr. Bonham Carter, and that he cannot really be aware of the intention and effect of Registration.

The pamphlet confirms us in this belief, for it continues: "But it is said that the public does not take its Doctors from the Register, nor will it take its Nurses; that the Register is only required as a safeguard, a preventative against untrained Nurses being employed by a necessarily ignorant public; that the public and Medical men will thus gain great benefit, and may still continue to require further evidence of a private character." To this, of course, we can cordially agree, for it is merely, in other words, what we have ourselves frequently expressed as our opinion; but that being granted, there is no sequence of ideas or of argument in what follows: "To this it may be safely answered, that there cannot be a doubt that the great mass of the public, as well as of Medical men, will be content to take their Nurses from the Register, and the Register only; and even assuming that it may be of value at first, the effect will be that, in the course of no long time after its establishment, the Register will become a very untrustworthy guide."

Let us recall the fact that the Register is a book, published and corrected annually by law, and in which will be enrolled merely the names of those who have given satisfactory proof that they are Trained Nurses. And then we would ask, how, in the name of everything that is wonderful, either the public or Medical men, separately or collectively, will be able to extract from the pages of this book, one real live Nurse! We can well believe, and confidently grant, that they would be quite "content" to do so, if they could perform this miracle. The cruse of oil, told of in Holy Writ, sinks into insignificance as a wonder, when one reflects that the effect of Registration in this light would be that anyone, rich or poor, old or young, would only have to purchase a copy of the Nursing Register, and straightway take a Nurse from between its leaves. If this were so, of course we can understand that, though it would be very valuable at first—that is to say, before the Nurse was taken out, we presume—it would greatly diminish in value after her removal.

But, speaking seriously, we would quietly ask, What shadow of argument or proof is adduced to support these statements as to the future action

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)