

statement, and this is what we find, and which our readers will find, on page 302 of our issue of Sept. 6:—"It is the opinion of many of those who have had the longest and widest experience, as Matrons of Hospitals and Heads of Training Schools, that the effect of a General Register upon the standard of Training will have the very reverse effect to that contemplated by its supporters, namely, to lower, instead of raising the standard." Now, we have not the slightest hesitation in saying that this statement is entirely erroneous, because we have made diligent inquiries, and find that there are only four Matrons of General Hospitals or Training Schools in the Metropolis, who are not staunch supporters of the Registration scheme; and with the greatest respect to these ladies, they are well known not to have had anything approaching the wide and long experience possessed by some of the Matrons who are most strongly in favour of the legal Registration of Nurses. If Mr. Bonham-Carter will inquire into the matter, he will find that we are correct, and that his information has been very misleading upon this matter—indeed, that the facts are precisely in the opposite direction.

But the next paragraph is as follows:—"This result must be a necessary consequence, if my previous contention be correct, that the real character of the Nurse will not find a place on the Register." But, as we showed last week, it is not only impossible, but unnecessary, to place the Nurse's moral qualities upon a Register, whose only object is to give a guarantee to the public that she is qualified, by training and experience, to tend the sick efficiently. Consequently, Mr. Bonham-Carter's "previous contention" not being correct, the result is not a "necessary consequence," and once more the argument becomes void and of none effect.

But the pamphlet continues:—"In the next place, it is obvious that the conditions for admission on the Register must be so framed as to conform to the capabilities of the average Nurse, and to meet the requirements of the average Training School." We cannot understand this at all. The Medical Register contains the name of every Medical man who has obtained a medical or surgical qualification from any one of the nineteen or twenty Corporations permitted by law to grant such authorisation to practice. By the same reasoning, the Nursing Register might contain the names of women licensed to Nurse by an equal, or even greater, number of Training Schools. The Medical Register contains the names of Physicians and Surgeons, who possess the highest and most respected English University Degrees, next to those of gentlemen who only hold the barest qualification recognised by law.

We cannot, of course, pretend to know what decision the British Nurses' Association will come to upon this point; but we conceive that the object of Registration is not to insist upon "higher standards," but merely to Register the names of those who come up to a definite given standard of professional knowledge. How that standard is to be gauged is not our province here to discuss. Suffice it to say, that unless one hard and fast standard of knowledge is to be insisted upon as necessary for Registration—and we cannot for one moment believe that such a standard either would be fixed, could be fixed, or even could be adhered to—the whole of the argument here used against Registration, based upon the evident supposition that some such standard is intended to be drawn, fails completely and altogether.

The contention upon this point concludes with the long quotation of the opinion of an "Experienced Hospital Matron." For this lady's own sake, we much regret that this should have been published. Her sweeping condemnation of large numbers of young women is neither to be admired, nor implicitly believed; and we fear her own reputation in the Hospital world will not be enhanced by the implied fact that she either has not exercised, or she does not possess, much discernment in her selection of Probationers, or she would never have had so many of these "young women" under her control. But the main point of her letter is directed to prove the necessity of granting certificates, after examination, to Nurses, by the authorities of the School which has trained them. In this we cordially agree with her, though we cannot refrain from expressing our surprise that Mr. Bonham-Carter should have quoted her opinion with such approval. For it is, we believe, a fact, that St. Thomas's Hospital is still behind other Training Schools in not having adopted this most salutary measure. The statements, therefore, which are brought forward to support the third argument of the pamphlet, prove, upon critical examination, to be as baseless and shadowy as those we have previously discussed. The third argument, therefore, may be delegated, with its two predecessors, to the Scotch category of "not proven" things. Once more, therefore, we can claim that, inasmuch as there are no arguments proved tenable against it, the desirability of a General Register for Nurses may be concluded to be established.

There are only a few final words to be said. We have at some length, in earlier numbers of this Journal, proved the great advantages which must accrue to Medical men, to the public, to the Art of Nursing, and to Nurses themselves, from the establishment of a Legal Nursing Register. No valid arguments have been advanced against the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)