

before them. A fortnight ago we commented on the curious fact that *The Hospital*, while reproducing a good deal of the evidence given by Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK, entirely omitted to quote much which very intimately affected the Editor of that periodical. The examination of this gentleman by the Chairman commenced thus: "You wish to come and give evidence, I believe, in regard to the Registration of Nurses?" "I do." "You understand that we must not go into any fresh controversial matters at this stage of our proceedings. If you wish to contradict anything put in by a former witness you may do so." "I desire to contradict briefly the statements made by Mr. HENRY C. BURDETT, on July 4, with reference to the Registration of Trained Nurses, and the statements made in the papers which he handed in." Dr. FENWICK, then, in regard to the assertion of Mr. BURDETT's, which we have above quoted, said, "The Register shows that that statement is inaccurate; the Registration only affects Nurses who have been trained. It does not give 'a bogus complexion' to anyone; it cannot make the public believe a Nurse is trained when she is not, because the training a Nurse has received, is stated plainly against her name." Dr. FENWICK, it will be noticed, only contradicted the direct assertions. But we would like to ask Mr. BURDETT what he meant—if anything—by saying that if Registration "only affected Nurses after they leave the Hospital, there would not be the objection to it that there is." He is well aware that it only affects Nurses after they have finished their *training*, which is clearly what Lord SANDHURST meant by his question. He must surely know that the great majority of Nurses leave their Training School as soon as they receive their Certificate, and, according to his own showing, therefore, in the case of most Nurses, "the objection that there is" to Registration is removed, because they will have left their Hospital before they become Registered. While, as regards those who are registered while remaining in the service of the Institution which trained them, Mr. BURDETT cannot have forgotten the regulation, which he has doubtless most carefully conned, which clearly makes it impossible for a Nurse at a Hospital to be Registered, except with the approval of its authorities. We cannot regard this suggestion of Mr. BURDETT's, therefore, as either ingenious or ingenuous.

But to pass on to the other statements, and their contradictions, it would simplify the argument to arrange them thus in parallel columns:—

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STATEMENTS.

"You have, at present, registration in regard to all Nurses adequately trained; that is to say, that every Nurses' Training School keeps a Register of their Nurses, and issues a Certificate to all who have had three years' service."

"Well, if the public want to know if a Nurse is trained, they have only got to ask her to produce her Certificate from her Nurses' Training School; and that is the Registration pure and simple, which is a voucher they can rely upon."

"If they are dissatisfied with the Nurse, they can write to the Matron at the School where she was trained, and then the Matron will go into her case, and, if necessary, they will call up the Nurse and deal with it."

CONTRADICTIONS.

"That is very inaccurate; because some Nurses' Training Schools do not issue Certificates, and a good many do not train for three years."

"A Nurse cannot produce a Certificate if she has not got one. A Certificate in a Nurse's pocket is not Registration of that Certificate in a published book. Besides which, it is a very common fraud to steal or forge a Hospital Certificate, and even medical men and Nurses have accepted such as genuine without being able to detect the difference."

"That is very misleading. For example, if a Nurse has never been trained at any Hospital (and there are hundreds of Nurses who are at work who have never had any training at all), she cannot refer to her Training School; and in the next place, when a Nurse obtains her Certificate, and leaves her Hospital, she becomes a free agent. It is absurd to state that the Matron can call up and deal with a person who is not under her authority."

Comment, we imagine, is quite superfluous. Our readers will have no difficulty in drawing certain very clear conclusions from these conflicting statements, and upon others to which we will, next week, draw their attention.

A ROYAL COMMISSION ON HOSPITALS.

It is futile to attempt to disguise the fact that there is a very uneasy feeling growing in the public mind with regard to our Hospitals. Until quite recently, the cloak of charity was popularly supposed to be unnecessary, in their case, to subserve its traditional use, because it was presumed that they had no sins to cover. Various revelations, however, have given a fatal shock to this most comfortable conviction, and the natural danger is, now, that a revulsion of feeling may take place that will work irreparable injury to Institutions which are an integral part of the national life, and the efficient maintenance of which is a matter of life or death to tens of thousands of the labouring classes. It is generally believed that the appointment of the Select Committee of the House of Lords to

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